

BALLINASLOELIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 6: Feb '15 - Mar '15

FREE



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SPORTS SUPPORTER**



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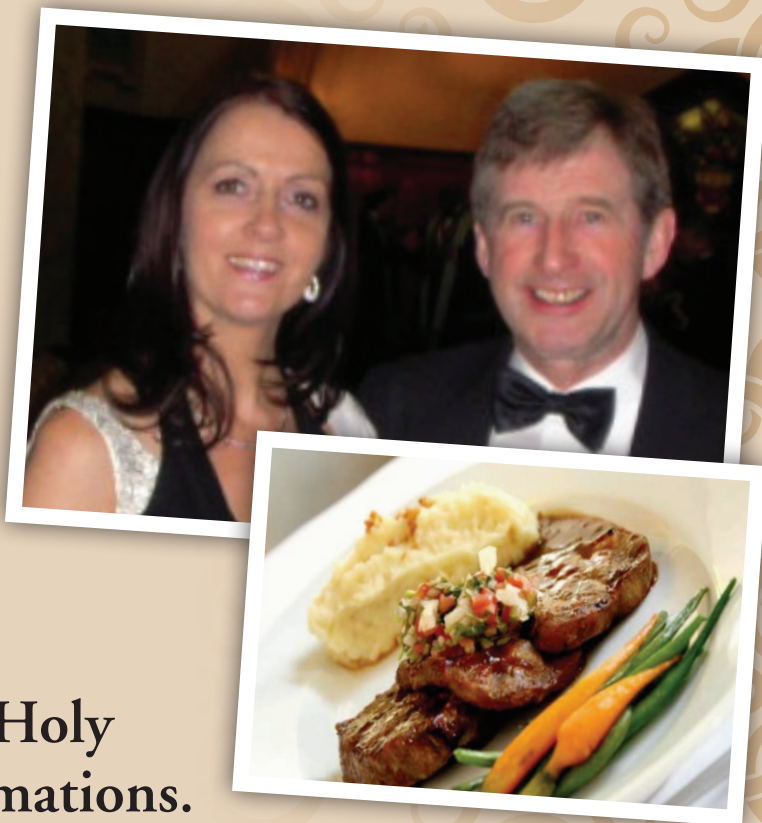


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AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 4: Oct-Nov 2014

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REAMHRÁ



So hope springs eternal ! as the saying goes and here we are facing into hopefully a better few months of Austerity Light. The story of how – the Troika team were in Dublin in January and couldn't get a table in a restaurant on a mid week night – tells it's own tale of a country of two halves.

The Metropolitan cities have really been stealing a march on their provincial and rural counterparts in the last few months and the surging house prices, pressure on rents and dare we say it salaries and wages is being felt. The State has a duty to ALL its citizens and not just those who live in cities -our newly elected TD Michael Fitzmaurice (Replacing Ming) – has hit a strong raw

nerve with people on how the rural and provincial are really having to play catch up for basics whether in employment, transport or as reported in this edition again – Health.

Places like here still have a lot of catching up to do, and only ourselves to do it. First time in a long time though, that Christmas shopping was reported as better than years before and situations vacant signs have been appearing in firms, as well as another handful of entrepreneurs – kick starting their businesses.

As most Clubs, societies and organisations tend to have Annual General Meetings in this quarter would they PLEASE take the time out to update the LIFE team with who their P.R.O. is and how we are very keen to profile the good news of over 100 organisations who are doing Trojan work to keep the community vibrant.

This edition also marks the changing of the Reporters Guard – big hello to Clare lass Zara Hill and huge Mile Buiochas to the Ballinamore Bridge Buachaill Conor Finnerty who since summer has been a huge help in driving the fortunes of this Magazine and in particular our online presence – whilst trying to keep what's left of my hair intact in Society Street and elsewhere.

Le Gach de Ghui

Colm Croffy, Editor
Ballinasloe Life.



Spring is in the air again, how time moves on. This is our 24th edition of Ballinasloe Life and we will be launching Volume 5 Mid February. As always we look forward to hearing your views and opinions on how we can improve your 48 page Bimonthly local magazine.

We now print 6,500 editions for free. 3,000 of these go into every letterbox in the Urban Area, a further 1,500 go into the National Schools in the catchment area. The balance are distributed through our local Hotels and four local shops namely Concannons, Salmons, Corrib Oil & Dolans Service Station.

At the launch of Volume 5 we will be updating you on progress with our town team benchmarking project from which we will be developing an action plan to help revitalise our catchment area.

On the Economic front it is good to hear Advertisers talk positive about a lift in sales in the last 12 months, hopefully this will translate into more jobs and a vibrant community.

Keep those articles coming in so that we can share all that is good about our Community

Seamus Duffy, Chairman,
Ballinasloe Area Community Development.

Disclaimer: The opinions and views in this publication are those of the contributors. In the compilation of this publication, every care is taken to ensure accuracy. Any errors or omissions should be brought to the attention of the editor. Ballinasloe Life does not accept any liability to any person for loss or damage arising from anything contained in this publication or for any error or omission in it. All material is copyright.

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Noel Mannion – Passionate Sports Supporter

By Conor Finnerty



Noel Mannion believes the time of regional towns attracting large scale factories are behind us and we should be more appreciative of local employers. With the 15 year anniversary of the closure of AT Cross upon us it is another stark reminder of the decimation of manufacturing jobs in the area and how they were never replaced.

"I could never understand why a factory was never brought in to replace the ones that left, given our geographical location, our proximity to AIT, NUIG and GMIT. There was plenty of positives, including two large buildings that are now lying idle," said the local business man.

Unfortunately all the jobs are gravitating towards the urban centres, but that has

made us more aware of the contribution of local employers such as KPW and Brian Conneely remarked Noel.

The recent changes in the electoral boundaries has left Mr Mannion worried that the town will be forgotten by both Roscommon and Galway County Councils when important decisions are to be made and pointed out that both Fine Gael TD Paul Connaughton and Labour TD Lorraine Higgins moved their constituency offices once the recent boundary changes were announced.

Born and raised in the town, Mr Mannion worked as a rep for Puma and Store Design before returning to the area to work for Dubarry. It was then that he decided the time was right to do something for himself and he opened his own sports store.

Being a former rugby player himself, winning 16 caps for Ireland while also playing for Lansdowne, Buccaneers and Connacht, he found that his playing experience opened a lot of doors in the beginning but stressed that if the simple things weren't done right then a business would fail.

"The internet and online shopping has hit shops like ours in the last few years, it's very hard for a local retailer to compete when their stock is changing four or five times a year," revealed Mr Mannion.

The store, which stocks a wide variety of sportswear, has been opened since 2002 and according to the former Garbally student, sporting icons such as Lionel Messi influence the choice of footwear that is in demand.

Playing as both a No. 8 and flanker for his country, Mr Mannion most notably played in the World Cup against Japan in 1991 and played against the All Blacks twice in one week in 1989. He is remembered most for his try against Wales in Cardiff Arms Park in 1989 when he blocked a kick on the Irish 22-metre line and ran almost 70 yards before touching down.

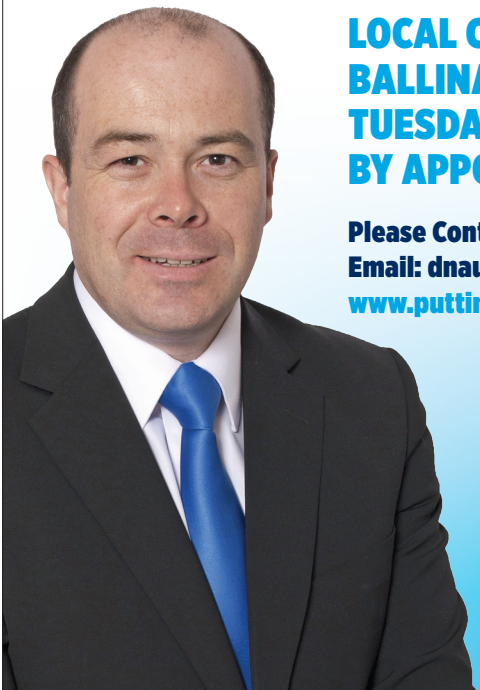
Married to Fiona, the father of three prioritises winning his first cap for the Irish team against Western Samoa as one of his proudest moments. "Obviously your first cap and try for your country are special, and the try against Wales was a standout moment, but there were some victories that meant more on a personal level, for instance Buccaneers being promoted to play in the AIL and when Ballinasloe won an U18 All-Ireland Cup," stated Mr Mannion.

The rugby fanatic also graced the field as a Galway senior footballer. He has also had some success as a manager of a variety of rugby underage teams locally and is currently involved with the towns senior men's team.



The former player describes a good manager as close to having a "degree in psychology" as good man management skills are imperative. Mr Mannion described the long term aim of the club is to gain promotion to the senior rugby leagues, with the team currently competing in the Junior 1A league. Constant progression is a realistic target thanks to a committed group of players and great facilities.

DENIS NAUGHTEN T.D.



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Local Woman Starts Healthy Eating Blog

By Conor Finnerty

Marion Ruane has begun her very own healthy eating blog, "Bia Natural", to share some of her knowledge and to demonstrate how simple it can be to prepare healthy meals for yourself and your family.



"I have been studying nutrition for almost two years now and am finding one resounding theme in much of the research and literature I am reading - the importance of eating quality, seasonal and locally produced foods," said the foodie. Beginning her blog in November, the fledgling social media guru, is amazed by the level of support out there.

Marion who is originally from Ballymacward is married to Stephen Ruane and they are rearing a young family from their Cahircross home.

Her interest in locally produced foods and the health benefits it can have was ignited by the birth of her first child. Since then Mrs Ruane has studied at The Irish School of Herbal Medicine, the College of Naturopathic Medicine and the Soul Food Company under Maggie Lynch.

"The benefits of eating local produce do not end at our health and well-being. Foods which have had a nice short jaunt from farm to fork are more nutritionally dense than foods which have taken miles and miles to travel across the globe. Not forgetting the impact that journey has on our carbon footprint," remarked Mrs Ruane.

The town resident believes that the area is blessed with many quality producers and a great tradition of country markets. However aside from the well-known names there are many local producers out there that the general public might not be aware of.

Mrs Ruane hopes to create a comprehensive listing of local producers on her blog for the general public to view. Any producers interested in


twinning with the blog can email their ybusiness details to bianaturalgalway@gmail.com.

"The directory will allow readers to have a comprehensive listing of good quality local food producers to assist them in making decisions in relation to their food choices, and by default their health," said Mrs Ruane.

The budding blogger hopes that the blog and continued networking will lead to a viable business in the future with co-operation from new and upcoming natural food producers.

The healthy eating enthusiast believes in keeping recipes as simple as possible without compromise. She likes to use quality, locally sourced, and where possible seasonal ingredients making the meals tastier and cleaner ideal for a healthy lifestyle.

With obesity becoming a growing problem for society Mrs Ruane believes it is key to educate children and get them involved in planting, caring, harvesting and cooking healthy produce.

For more information check out the site at www.bianatural.net, or search "Bia Natural" on Facebook 

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Downeys Refurbished Bar and Restaurant

Downeys of Society Street have just completed a refurbishment programme and have launched a new look exciting bar food menu and with specials changing daily.

Proprietor Marina Downey and her team have been running the busy hostelry for a number of years to regulars and visitors alike.

They do a great Breakfast menu with prices starting at €5 for a mini breakfast - ranging for the true farmer fare where the tasty breakfast platter will set you up with your calorie count for the day.

In fairness though, the Chef includes light and healthy and gluten free options, for all variety of lunches and tasty bites up to 4.00 p.m each day.

This year they are again catering for all types of party needs on the premises but new to this season they are now doing outside catering so you can arrange the party at your house and they will provide the food, crockery, etc. to take the hassle out of your event.

They are currently taking bookings for First Communions or Confirmations with prices starting at €15 per person. With catering for all your parties, 18ths, 21sts, they will provide the music, decorations, free of charge.

With live music every Sat Night and on Sunday evenings from 8pm to 10 why don't you pop any time to discuss your requirements or check out their Facebook page to see what events are coming up.

Local Young Entrepreneurs Shortlisted To 16 Finalists

By Zara Hill

Following the launch of the seventh annual BEST Competition in November, 16 lucky finalists have been chosen to go forward to the next stage of the annual Entrepreneurial Skills Tournament.

This year's judges Mr John Power, Mr Gerry Kelly and Mr Pat Ward had the difficult task of choosing the 16 finalists from the three participating schools, Ard Scoil Mhuire, Garbally College and Holy Rosary College to go through to the next round of the competition.

"Although entries were down from 102 last year to 85 this year, we received high quality projects and had to work hard to whittle this down to just a selected few", said Mr John Power.

Finalists will now go forward to the Dragon's Den stage of the competition

on March 3, where they will pitch their projects to the judges and battle it out with the hope of claiming the top prize of €1,000.

Prizes totalling €1,500 will be rewarded to the runners-up. All participants will attend an awards ceremony on March 31 at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, where the winners will be announced.


There will be a guest appearance on the day from a prominent entrepreneur who will give a speech to the students and parents. The public are invited to attend the awards night to witness the amazing entrepreneurial skills that the local youth have to offer.

The following students are shortlisted for the final stage:

Sally Anne Parsons - 3rd Yr Ard Scoil Mhuire, Elaine Brady - TY Ard Scoil

Mhuire, Hilary Bleahen - TY Ard Scoil Mhuire, Leo White and Tony Finn - 2nd Yr Garbally College, Joshua Naughton & Cathal Whyte - 1st Yr Garbally College, Rowan Harley - 1st Yr Garbally College, Lonan Broderick, Cathal Riddel & Fintan Parsons - 5 Yr Garbally College, Ailbhe Coyle - TY Holy Rosary College, Micheal Lyons - TY Holy Rosary College, Katie O'Sullivan - TY Holy Rosary College, Darragh French - TY Holy Rosary College and Shauna Carr - TY Holy Rosary College.

The competition is sponsored by The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre (BEC) and the Credit Union.

For full details of the competition and Awards ceremony, log on to www.ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie or contact Lyn Donnelly at the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre: (090) 9646516. 

LIFE Delivered To Over 6,000 Readers!

By Conor Finnerty



Current reporters Conor Finnerty, Zara Hill with original reporter Ruari Moore and second reporter Catrina Ní Catháin

BALLINASLOE LIFE welcomes articles, notes and photographs from Clubs, organisations or individuals on any topics of interest in the area. Photographs of outings, special occasions or historical nature are always welcome for possible inclusion in our publication. Feel free to contact the office at 085 1481911 or email: ballinasloeelife@hotmail.com

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Every two months 6,000 copies of

the Magazine are distributed to every household in town as well as to the following locations in the hinterland.

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Copies are also distributed to Maldron Hotel in LIMERICK, Maldron Hotel in ORANMORE, Tuthill's in LEIXLIP, Centra in MULLINGAR, Topaz in GORT,

Cloonan's in ATHENRY as well as other outlets. Between the Facebook, Blog and Website we also have over 4,000 online readers !!

This month we say good bye and a huge thanks to erstwhile UL undergraduate and cub reporter Conor Finnerty who is heading back to his studies with a five month stint in Scotland on Erasmus. Conor a Ballinamorebridge man - was one of only two locally resident reporters and we hope he enjoyed being on manoeuvres as the AOIFE PR and Communications Assistant at the LIFE desk.

Stepping into the breach from now till the August edition is another UL New Media and English undergraduate, Zara Hill from the parish of Lissycasey West, Clare - our first ever Clare woman on the project! She is very much looking forward to meeting and working with our community and all the contributors. When she is not honing her writing craft - she also has a huge interest in traditional music and dancing from competing in Set-Dancing and Céili Band competitions in Fleadh Ceoil na hÉireann to running her own successful set-dancing classes. We wish her well. 

Matt Carey Embarks On New Business Service

By Conor Finnerty

Matthew Carey, a former Bank Manager with 35 years retail banking experience, has recently opened an office in the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre where he will offer a number of financial services.



Living in Ballinasloe since 1994 Mr Carey is an active member of the GAA, the Rugby Club and the Lions Club. The former Senior Banking Manager

of ACC Bank / Rabobank will offer guidance and information to clients who wish to propose financial solutions to commercial, personal and agriculture debt.

In addition to this service, he will also assist with new borrowings and help organise proposals for clients who wish to apply for funding. He will also act as an intermediary for clients with their accountants or legal advisors in dealings with financial institutions along with handling general financial enquiries.

Holding a Bachelor of Financial Services Degree (B.F.S.), Mr Carey managed loan portfolios across western counties of Galway, Roscommon and Mayo to name a few. He began work as a Clerical Officer in Dublin in the 1970s, before working his way up the ranks. In 2008, he was selected as ACC Bank's representative on the Rabobank European Works Council, a position he held until 2013.

The father of three began his new role in September 2014 and is now building up a client base stretching across the midlands and Galway County, and he deals with clients from various business and personal sectors. According to the former UCD student, there is currently a huge amount of un-sustainable debt and non-performing loans weighing heavily on businesses and families across the region.

Working on a one to one basis, the

Tipperary native believes that his vast experience and banking knowledge gives him an advantage as regards how to put forward a proposition and find solutions to deal with unsustainable financial predicaments. This benefits both the borrower and the financial institution, and allows for possible future business opportunities.

"Banks are willing to co-operate with clients who put forward a workable proposal on how debt can be worked out effectively, but banks are very often waiting for clients to make the first move" states Matt.

The experienced former Bank Official believes that in the future, there will be less competition between banks, and future lending will strictly comply with the Banking Regulator and proposals for new loans will need to be supported by the certainty of future income streams.

When the economy turns a corner, banks will start lending if the required criteria are met, this should lead to some commercial development in the county and given its accessibility, strategic location and local amenities, Ballinasloe should prosper as a residential and commercial town into the future according to Mr Carey.

For any enquiries about his services please call Mr. Carey on 086-2435112, or email him directly to careymatt58@gmail.com.

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BUSINESS 07

Revolutionary New Injury Treatment Clinic For Centre

By Conor Finnerty

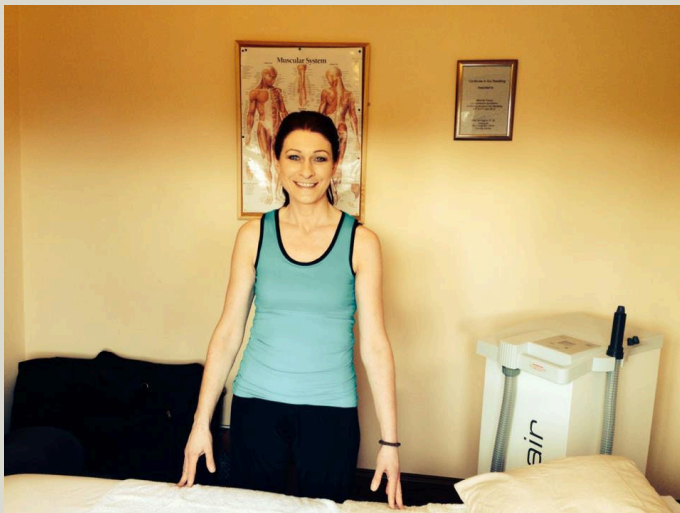
Michelle Treacy, a qualified physical therapist is offering a rare form of cryogenic therapy to treat sport injuries and arthritis – targeting the inflamed or damaged zone, from her new suite at the Enterprise Centre.

The treatment which is widely used in the States and Europe kills off the pain and quells inflamed areas using cold air. Her unit is one of very few in East Galway as it allows a single area to be treated rather than the more common full body chamber.

Ms Treacy hopes to have a smaller mobile unit by the summer to treat clients on the move. Having studied Sports Massage and Sports Injury Therapy in GMIT she operates every Tuesday on an appointment basis and hopes to add a second day in the near future. The Athenry native also offers services from her home in Craughwell.

Also offering massage injury therapy,

Ms Treacy identifies her most common encountered problem areas as the back, neck and shoulder. She has a wide range of clients varying in age, with a variety of injuries.



“Surprisingly there a lot of 16 and 17 year olds coming to me with back problems due to constant sitting down. Students are sitting down for the majority of school hours, and most at that age attend study after school and then go home to watch TV or play video games,” said the concerned professional.

A cryogenic therapy costs in the region of €25 which consists of an assessment

and treatment lasting anywhere between three and ten minutes. A full one hour treatment costs between €40 and €50 with a few minutes of cryogenic therapy at the end of the session.

Until now the only widely used form of cryogenic therapy were ice baths, but Ms Treacy offers a treatment of a temperature that drops well below freezing for a few short minutes to numb pain and reduce inflammation in the muscles.

Ms Treacy has been in contact with the majority of clubs in the area to publicise the benefits of her specialist treatment. Her affordable prices make it easier for a player to be seen and taken care of properly rather than rushing through a session in a clubhouse.

“An injury might be caused by something very simple, like the way you stand or walk for example. It is very common that your problem area is only a symptom and not the actual site of your injury,” said the experienced physical therapist.

For any extra information or if you wish to book an appointment call Michelle on 087 695 8688 or email shellysadress@gmail.com. Her website can be viewed www.cryotireland.com.

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New Solid Fitness Business

By Conor Finnerty

Town native, Eilis Ryan has set up a women's only exercise gym called "Solid Fitness". Located in Croffy's Yard Ms Ryan offers classes which she describes as crossfit training with weights.



"Solid Fitness" operates on a class basis Monday to Thursday. Classes run for approximately 1 hour at 10am in the morning and 6, 7 and 8pm in the evening.

The former Ard Scoil Mhuire student had a keen interest in sports and excelled playing camogie and soccer at both a school and county level. Following on from that she went to study Sports Management in AIT.

After college Ms Ryan joined the team in The Carlton Shearwater Leisure Centre where she filled the role of a fitness instructor and swim teacher. During this time she decided to further her studies earning her personal trainer and group fitness instructor qualifications with the ISSA, FETAC AND A.C.E.

Ms Ryan first noticed the change in

confidence and mental strength fitness for ladies in a ladies only gym when she decided to challenge herself by taking on a management role in a gym in Tullamore, managing a ladies only gym.

"I saw an opening in my home town and decided to go for it. The satisfaction I get out of my job is to see a woman come through my door anxious, nervous and fearful, to see the transformation from that to a confident, chatty, woman enjoying exercise and embracing how it makes her feel mentally, that's the real benefit, the weight loss is only a bonus," said the budding business woman.

The fully qualified personal trainer tries to keep her class size small so she can concentrate on each client. She tailors the classes to suit the ladies present. To supplement the class benefits she also gives nutritional advice to the ladies.

"I am very lucky to enjoy my job and had an interest in it, but not everyone is a natural when it comes to exercise and not everyone knows what they are doing. In a male dominant industry I saw an opening to provide a comfortable,

fun, environment for women to enjoy exercise," said the fitness enthusiast.

Ms Ryan also wished to underline the positive aspects exercise has for mental health for both men and women, a subject she cares deeply for.

Anyone looking for more information about Solid Fitness can contact Eilis at 0879606137 or by searching Solid Fitness on Facebook.

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Ciaran Doherty - A Lot Of Living

By Colm Croffy



Losing anyone close is terrible at the best of times, but to lose a loving husband and wonderful father on Christmas Eve is a nightmare that no family should have to experience.

Ciaran Doherty a pioneer Computer Engineer and respected businessman, died tragically young in his home on Christmas Eve. His wife Fidelma and family have been bravely coping with the poignancy of his passing since.

As a teenager, soccer was a huge part of Ciaran's youth. He played Junior with Star of the Sea in Belfast and was a lifelong Manchester United fan; a hobby he shared with his youngest son Ruairi.

St. Patricks Armagh saw him as a boarder for two years before choosing to study Electronic Engineering in U.C.G. During his undergraduate days his summers were spent in Stuggart as a line operator with The Mercedes Benz Plant, these times and travels gave him a huge appetite for exploring and globe trotting - a passion he was to share with his family.

He moved to London in 1983 working with IT Companies and growing his repair skills and his knowledge of the emerging technology. All throughout this he had a huge aim to be his own boss and to be an entrepreneur, but his skills were in demand all over the UK in the late 80s.

He met the love of his life Fidelma from Ballymahon Co. Longford who was nursing in 1986 and they wed in Ballymahon in 1990.

They moved back to Ireland in 1991. In realising his dream 1993, he finished working fulltime in Dublin and set on his own with his Microvideo Store in Dunlo St. specialising in Computer Systems, office and home technology support. His was the first speciality store for the area's businesses, schools and families to have their IT needs and problems addressed locally.

Deeply knowledgable & upto date info on modern IT - he was ahead of the of the curve on the markets move from the bulky desktop to the laptop and that training persons on correct use and adoption for personal computing - involved more dedicated floor space.

He rebranded the company to G Max Computers and moved to Marina Point In 1998. He took on Jason O' Leary as a web and design programmer -who delivered some of the in house training and he concentrated on delivering on site support to a variety of clients both in business, schools and home.

Himself and Jason launched among other innovative design and IT products - the first dedicated website for the town - Ballinasloe.com and ran it for a number of years before transferring it to the Chamber of Commerce.



Recession caused the Retail end of his business to close in 2008 and he transferred his technical support and repair aspect to his residence. A great deal of his original clients kept his technical services and as the online and discounted sales happened, families repaired more than traded up for the lap top needs.

Family Holidays were a huge campaign for Ciaran - with no detail be left out of the planning - giving countless warm special memories to his family - whether it was New York Xmas Eve 2007, Ice skating on Central Park, or Tenerife or indeed Iceland for the Northern Lights - and he smiling at the wonder in their eyes.

He loved to eat spicy food and his cuisine was always redolent of his travels. He loved to laugh and had a huge sense of humour, his house special Beef Chili was reknowned but he could always handle the plainer faire with a little HP Sauce & Guinness !

Taking away the fear of newer horizons for Emma born in 1993 and Ruairi in 1997 was a constant, for kindly Ciaran.

Eldest Declan took the computing skills and followed his Dad, with a Computer Science Degree DIT, working with Keelings in their Software section developing APS for fruit distribution - internationally. Emma qualified in Marketing Innovation and Technology in DCU, working as a beauty buyer in Brown Thomas. Ruairi is currently a Garbally leaving Cert student

From their perspective he was innovative and Entrepreneurial, his brain never ceased to conjure up new projects, new concepts, new travels but he knew what was important for him.

Whilst they might not know how they will go on - with the huge loss, there is huge gratitude for the amount of wonderful experiences and memories shared for the short time that they had him.

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Seamus Duffy - Pastures New

By Conor Finnerty

After 35 very successful years with AIB Bank local Branch Manager Seamus Duffy has decided on a career change and has stepped down from his position.



Since joining the Bank in April 1980 in Sligo he has seen many changes. He remembers the first Christmas Eve working when queues were down the street with customers withdrawing money for the festive period. "Nowadays this is one of the quietest days of the year in the Bank as the majority of cash withdrawals are electronic", chuckles Seamus.

He recalls an Economic climate in the mid 80's not dissimilar to now when the country was going through difficult times. Very few Mortgages were done through the big banks at that time as Building Societies were really the only lenders in that area to young couples.

On moving to his native county of Mayo, Seamus was promoted to Assistant Manager in Ballina and subsequently managed the Bank's Ballyhaunis Outlet.

Following on from this he lived and worked in Donegal Town for 3 years and Claremorris for a similar term before finally moving to Ballinasloe 13 years ago.

Over the years Seamus has built up numerous friends and contacts across the North West, West, Midlands & Mid West

and can readily identify many businesses he supported in the embryo stage and who are now well established and creating much needed employment. He has also mentored existing local business and supported them in expanding and growing.

In recent years support of a different kind was required and Seamus has always been available to advise and guide customers through an obvious difficult time.

Both Seamus and wife Yvonne along with their family Alison, Ian and Clodagh are very much part of the local community, where they are involved in many organisations.

Currently Seamus is Chairman of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Limited, a company which has promoted the area in a very positive light, including the Enterprise Centre where 160 people work and which has 95% occupancy. He is also Chairman of the magazine project group since inception which is now in its fifth year.

In the rest of his spare time he is Chairman of the local GAA Football club (which has undergone a Capital Expenditure programme of €1.75m) for the last 2 years - this role sees him chairing, coaching, selecting, fundraising, even taking back to the saddle and PELETON - being one of the first home in the famous Croke to Clubhouse run last August which raised a considerable sum for Galway East Life Support and the GAA.

He is also the parents' representative on the Board of Management for Ard Scoil Mhuire. He was recently appointed for a four year term as one of 5 external Auditors to Galway County Council.

Looking towards the future Seamus is adamant he is not taking to the slippers and pipe stage in his lifetime just yet "To be honest I want to take a bit of time off and consider my future options - I have some projects that could be of interest to me and I will be exploring the pros and cons of any new post, project or adventure over the next few months", states Seamus.

Whatever the future holds for this die hard Green and Red Mayo supporter Seamus, Yvonne & family it is hoped they remain anchored in Ballinasloe as they have been a hugely influential addition to the Community.

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Dan Dowling's New Role



Dan Dowling of Creagh has been elected to the Local Community Development Committee of Galway County Council, as a community and voluntary representative; he is joined alongside Councillor Dermot Connolly.

Whilst it is an official Committee of the Council, it is independent in its functions and all

members have equal standing. Dan, a retired Cattle breeding assistant with Kerry origins - serves also as Director for B.A.C.D., Director of Ballinasloe Training For Employment, Assist Sec and Assist Event Co-ordinator for Duggan Park, Director of Galway Rural Development.

Its purpose is to prepare and adopt the community elements of a six year local economic and community plan in accordance with any Department regulations made or policy guidelines. Its function is to co - ordinate all local and community development plans within

the LCDC area so as to optimize resources and improve the efficiency with which publicly-funded local and community development projects are resourced.

This group has a pivotal role in the economic development of Galway County. Each year by March 31st, it has to submit a report in relations to its performance and functions the previous year to the Council.

"Now that the town council has been disbanded it is heartening to see two representatives from Ballinasloe on this county committee," said Mr. Dowling.

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KPW Score with Match Programme

By Conor Finnerty

A GAA match programme, designed and printed by KPW Print in Ballinasloe has won the coveted MacNamee Award for the best match programme of the year during 2014. The trophy is one of the GAA's National and Communication Awards and is the first time it has been won in Galway.

The 64-page full colour programme was for the Galway GAA county senior hurling final between Portumna and Gort, played last December. It was compiled and edited by Jarlath Cloonan, Athenry who is a former manager of the Galway county senior hurlers and who received the award from Uachtaran CLG, Liam O'Neill at a function in GAA headquarters, Croke Park.

The programme has been described as "a comprehensive

publication that offered a wide range of content to suit every taste and interest. It also focuses on underage activity, camogie and overseas activity as well as on the competing clubs." It was designed and typeset at KPW by Siobhan Kiernan, who was praised by Editor Cloonan for her commitment and professionalism during its preparation for printing.



Brendan Kelly, MD of KPW Print said it was great honour for all concerned, adding that KPW had been printing match programmes for Galway GAA for over sixty years. "It's always a pleasure dealing with the personnel there and especially Jarlath Cloonan whose commitment to detail is unparalleled. We have a wonderful team of typesetters, printers and finishers here who pride themselves in their work and that is

greatly appreciated" he said.

Photo shows Jarlath Cloonan receiving the MacNamee Award from Uachtaran CLG, Liam O'Neill, with Ken Kelly and Gerry Glynn of KPW Print.

Just under 90 Employees at Dubarry

Based locally in Glentaun, Dubarry of Ireland continues its international expansion with the appointment of 23 new employees and an annual turnover in excess of €20 million in 2014.

In the past year Dubarry have hired six new employees in Ireland, a further six in the UK and one new employee has been hired in the USA.

Dubarry opened a new European sales and distribution centre in Utrecht, the

Netherlands in June of last year with 10 new employees. A total of 23 new employees were hired by Dubarry in 2014, bringing the total number of employment to 86.

With operations now based in five different countries, Dubarry has evolved from its origins in footwear since 1937 into a premium performance lifestyle brand with clothing, accessories and leather goods.

There are two flagship stores in Dublin

and London as well as an extensive network of international retail stockists. With a successful year including a sponsorship deal with the Irish Eventing Team at the World Equestrian Games as well as major developments in the Swedish market, 2015 is set to be a good year for the company.

Dubarry are actively recruiting in 2015 in various countries including Denmark, Germany, USA and UK. See www.dubarry.com.

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Tom Madden Elected To New Forum

Tom Madden, a native of Creagh and former Chairperson of the Ballinasloe Area Forum has been elected as a representative on the community panel to the Public Participation Network (PPN) of Galway County Council. He is joined on the PPN by another Creagh resident, Dan Dowling who was elected through the municipal panel.

Mr Madden works with the probation services and is chairman of both Galway Rural Development and R.A.P.I.D. The father of two is also a leader in the Moore Foróige club and a member of the local IFA.

Galway Public Participation Network is a new framework for public engagement and participation and is the successor to the former Community and Voluntary Forum. The new structure is designed to strengthen relationships with and between groups and to assist in the communications process from and to the Local Authority. Membership of the PPN may be a requirement or could enhance a group's application when seeking grant assistance from the local authority.

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Get Lippy Group – Enjoy The Winter Snows of Finland

By Lauren Duignan Fallon



Six members of the local 'Get Lippy!' Youth Democracy Group recently embarked on a youth exchange to Finland.

The exchange was funded by the Erasmus+ programme and incorporated young people from Ireland, Finland, Italy, Spain and Turkey for a fantastic week of outdoor activities and workshops; all connected by the theme of 'Cultural Stereotypes'.

"The Group travelled to the large city of Kokkola – the capital of central Ostrobothnia – on the most Northern end of the Gulf of Bothnia Coast. The town has a population of some 47,000 people and is a significant employment location for industry and chemical companies.

Our time in Finland was an experience the 'Get Lippy' group and I will never forget. Of course, I was scared and anxious; flying isn't my strongest point. However, despite the 12 hour journey, Kokkola turned out to be the most beautiful place I've ever seen. The snow covered literally everything. It fell perfectly and made a beautiful landscape. One thing I noticed about Finland was the amount of cycling people do. Sylvia,

an EVS volunteer from Slovakia, who was living in Kokkola for the year, cycled through a foot of snow from the town to Villa Elba, every morning and every evening. I couldn't even walk in that snow.

We spent one day in Kokkola for a city adventure. We split into groups and set out exploring the city with a translator on hand to help us get around easily. We sang nursery rhymes in Finnish, danced and had a good time.

This trip was also beneficial to me. One of the highlights was the great friends we made in Finland; who we all contact and talk to every day. A second advantage of the trip is that we all received a Youth Pass. This is a European recognition tool; a certificate that allows us to show what we have done and learnt. This is something I can put on my CV, which is very beneficial. A personal highlight for me was winning a Frisbee for taking part in the City Adventure.

One of the many great things about the trip was the landscape; from walking on the frozen sea and night-time forest adventures to snowball fights and the beautiful city of Kokkola. On international night, we gained a cultural insight on each of the adjoining countries including different foods and traditional dance. This was an unbelievable experience. Different workshops gave us the opportunity to make our own newspaper and a comic, 'The Ideal world' in which we were asked to describe a perfect world".

Students found many differences between Finland and Ireland. 'Get Lippy!' member, Sarah Rickard Ardscoil Mhuire student noticed "there were fewer cars on the roads and a lot more walking and cycling".

Joseph Burke added, "Finland is more concerned about the landscape", suggesting that "The Nature School at Villa Elba" is something he would like to see in schools across Ireland. "We learned how to broaden our social skills by interacting with people from different countries", said Garbally student Joseph Burke.

The group was accompanied by Youth Leader Michael Ward and Youth Worker, Helen Butler, who believes in the importance of such programmes, "that enable the youth to develop as people, build self-confidence and self-esteem".

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New Health and Safety Training Business

By Conor Finnerty



Denis Larkin has started up a new Health and Safety training business. Following 17 years as a section manager and team leader in Tesco Mr Larkin took the opportunity to open his own business. "During my time in Tesco I was involved in training staff in food safety and fire training, manual handling etc and I knew that I enjoyed getting up in front of a class," remarked the Derrymullen resident.

He successfully completed an Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) course in Dublin and then completed a course in Galway which allows him to train Health and Safety in forklift driving, both beginner and refresher course, fire safety, manual handling, abrasive wheel training, teleporter training, and safety at height training.

A person who has a business that employs five or more staff must have a safety statement. "A safety statement must spell out all aspects of safety within your organisation, in order to get this right you must first do a risk assessment. The risk assessment will define all risks that may lead to serious injury or worse. A safety statement must be current and reflect all changes that may have taken place in

your business," stated the father of three.

Mr Larkin is also writing up his own safety courses and once inspected and passed by the National Safety Association of Ireland he can then deliver them. One which he is working on at the moment is for Gold courses, which covers everything from risk assessments, safety statements, gaining of staff in manual handling, fire, use of mowers, buggies, tractor and trailer, handheld machinery, safety of patrons and greens keepers, something he hopes to roll out in the coming weeks.

The former Meelick Eyrecourt hurler, who won an All-Ireland with CR Bard Inter firms hurling, is currently studying for his Diploma in Management graduate with CMI Communications at the Management Institute in Dublin. Married to Catherine, he was also the chairman of An Scoil Chroi Naofa for 8 years.

Mr Larkin can be contacted on 09096 49897 or 0872776237 or by emailing info@denislarkinsafety.com. For further information about the services he offers visit his website denislarkinsafety.ie. Mr Larkin is also open to writing up

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Hopes & Dreams For Year Ahead

By Maureen Cahalan



My hopes and dreams for our town are that we cherish the community spirit which has been fostered and loaned to us for hundreds of years, and is very much part of our history and hopefully our future.

We are geographically located in the Heart of Ireland which is accessible by water, road and rail. Because of our history in education, trade, sport, industry and hospitality - the community spirit is very much alive and well. There is a friendship which is part and parcel of Ballinasloe and is

unique to rural Ireland. We look out for each other in a quiet and respectful way. Our support services like An Gardaí & Health Services bring a very positive vibe too which reinforces

our community spirit.

Despite our community and neighbourly spirit, support and friendship, the wind of change is evident too in Ballinasloe with the introduction of the M6 motorway, pay parking and the arrival of the bigger stores on the edge of our town. We also had to work through the most challenging economic recession in the history of the State.

However as I approach the celebration of my 40th Anniversary in business I have over the past few years partnered with the world's Diamond Centre in Antwerp to source and supply diamonds directly for my customers at fair and reliable prices. It is all about the quality and the customer experience that results in huge savings for couples and individuals. My aim in Cahalan Jewellers is to be the most cost effective diamond supplier on the island of Ireland. We also have taken on board highly trained goldsmiths with excellent track records to repair all types of Jewellery as well as design and create wonderful designs to customer's specifications.

At this point it is important for me on behalf of my family and my staff to thank each of you for your support over the last four decades. I wish everybody who reads this, lots of success and inspiration over the years ahead. **Advertorial**

New Town Website to Be Developed



Sinead Collier, a Creagh native having lived 8 years in France, (where she set up her own business) has recently returned to her roots. She became interested in web design originally back in 1999 when she did a web design course and created her first website for an architect's firm in Cork.

Since then she has completed several Web Design, Social Media and SEO courses as well as many websites. She is now the PR and Office Manager for Community Games HQ and redesigned their website in 2013. She is also studying part-time for a BA in Community Development. She has been appointed by B.A.C.D. to lead the rebuild

of a new Website for the Town - on the site of the old Town Council Website. www.ballinasloe.ie - to represent all social and economic interests in the town with an emphasis on further enriching the wider community as well as helping to investment through tourism and enterprise. The .com site will be used to redirect traffic.

Most of the Focus of the Rebranding and Online Marketing Strategy will feed in from the Town Benchmarking Report and the Town Team Action Group.

A sub of the Town Team is being formed to finalise the creative brief required for the rebranding of the town's online communications presence but it is envisaged that the new website will be a one-stop-shop for all information pertaining to the town.

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53 Years of Architectural Work - Kempster's Living Legacy

By Conor Finnerty

The recent sale of the mock Tudor Gothic style Railway Hotel (on the market for a very small sum) has spiked interest in just who was the architect behind it and some of the other prominent stone buildings in the town.



James Forth Kempster worked as a surveyor for East Co. Galway. The son of William Henry Kempster was born in Piccadilly, London on the 3rd of August 1816. In May 1838 he was appointed county surveyor for the East of Co. Galway at the tender age of 21, a position he held for almost 53 years.

Based initially in Portumna before moving to Ballinasloe, he also engaged in a considerable amount of private architectural work, and he is described as the diocesan architect - presumably of the dioceses of Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert

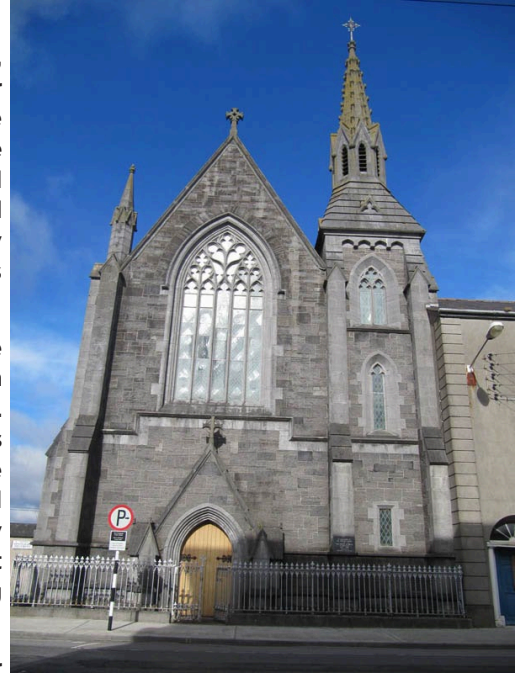
and Kilmacduagh in 1865.

According to an article on Ballinasloe, which appeared in the Dublin Builder on the 15th of March 1862, his name was associated with almost all the recent building works in the town and its surroundings, carried out for the Earl Clancarty. He retired from the county surveyorship in 1891, when he was succeeded by John Smith.

Kempster died at his home at the age of 76 in August 1893 and was buried in Glenlahaune graveyard near Aughrim. He was a treasured member of St. John's Church of Ireland, where there is a plaque on display in his memory. He married Catherine Maher, a town native in July 1841. The couple lived in Mount Pleasant where they had nine children including sons John and William Henry.

After his wife's death in 1858, Mr Kempster's parents came from England and settled in Ballinasloe to help look after the young children. When they passed away in the early 1860's they were also buried in Glenlahaune graveyard. The family plot can be seen in the graveyard surrounded by a wrought iron fence.

Mr Kempster's architectural work can still be seen today throughout East Co. Galway, but he also carried out work in Borrisokane, Stradbally and Castlerea. They include the design of St Mary's Convent Chapel,



The Railway Hotel, Garbally Lodge, the Railway Station, Woodlawn Church of Ireland, alterations to Woodlawn house.

He also worked on the Bank of Ireland building, St Brigid's Hospital, the Union Workhouse and a number of houses along Station Road and Main Street to name a few.

The Kempster name can also be seen over the door of the Golf club, commemorating the clubs foundation in 1894.

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Hospital Watch

By Conor Finnerty

Despite the apparent hatchet job done in the National Media on the maternity unit, where a significant media briefing and spin is being used to continue the campaign to undermine confidence in the service which had 2000 safe and successful births last year, Portiuncula continues to provide a staggering number of services to patients in the region.

The Accident and Emergency had 24,000 cases in 2014 (imagine if all these have to head to UCHG?), some 50,000 outpatients were treated which was a 3% rise on last year, in patients were up 5% to 13,000 cases treated and day cases were in the order of 10,000

Patients in trolleys figures have been on the rise since September but the most recent jump is the most concerning. However allowances must be made for the traditionally busy winter period where flues, viruses and vomiting bugs are more common.

With the average number of people

on trolleys both on wards and in the emergency department rising to 11.33 in Portiuncula it is still considerably behind University College Hospital Galway who increased their numbers slightly to just



over 20.

On a national level the overcrowding and understaffing of hospitals reached worrying new heights as the number of trolleys in use across the country reached 601 during the first week in January, a record high.

On the www.ratemyhospital.ie website there is also a wake up call for Portiuncula who dropped outside the top ten leader board of public hospitals in Ireland, dropping three places to 13th position. The leader board is now topped by St. Luke's, Rathgar knocking St. John's Hospital Limerick from first place. Portiuncula's neighbours, Roscommon General Hospital sit in 18th while Merlin Park and UCHG fell a handful of places to 24th and 49th respectively (third from bottom).

Rumours of an amalgamation of services between Portiuncula and Roscommon appears to have quietened since they emerged last November. It was proposed that the services provided by both hospitals would be shared across the two sites.

LIFE will update readers in every edition with a summary of key facts and media reportage on our local and regional hospital.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------|
| Trolley Watch Numbers Portiuncula | September 2.8 per day | |
| | November 4.8 per day | 71% |
| | Dec/Jan 11.33 | 136% |
| Trolley Watch Numbers UCHG | September 13.6 | |
| | November 19.8 | 46% |
| | Dec/Jan 20.4 | 3% |

Men's Shed



The newly established "Men's Shed" in the town are looking for new members and equipment to help grow their club and activities in 2015. Operating from Cullen's Yard, just off Main Street, the group are looking for members who have some spare time and are interested in project work.

The Irish Men's Sheds Association was set up in January 2011 and since then local sheds have sprouted up all over the country. The aim of these groups is to promote

community education and to encourage men to socialise and talk about their health and well-being.

"There is a very strong social aspect, where men can come have a chat, learn a new skill or service their own equipment under supervision," said Charles Doherty, a member of the town's shed. There is no age restriction for joining and current projects being undertaken by members include the building of bee hives and bird's nests.

The group would also welcome the donation of some furniture to kit out upstairs where they hope to hold arts classes or play chess. Anyone interested in joining the group can contact Arthur Carr 087 275 9647 or email ballinasloe@menssheds.ie.

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Mental Health Services Remain Under Severe Pressure Since Closure

By Zara Hill

Since the HSE's closure of the 22-bed psychiatric admission unit at St. Brigid's Hospital over a year ago, there has been an noticeable reduction in the attention paid to mental health services, staff and patients in the East Galway region.

The decision to close the only 24-hour mental health service in the town was confirmed on August 26, 2013 by Minister of State for Primary Care, Mental Health and Disability, Kathleen Lynch - promising an enhanced service delivery plan for the region.

The decision has had a devastating effect on the area, resulting in local staff, patients and families feeling extremely dissatisfied with the Health Service Executive.

"Everyone is aware that the situation has changed dramatically since the closure of the service in St. Brigid's. It is absolutely outrageous to see patients put in situations in the Galway Regional Hospital where they suffer difficulties such as severe overcrowding and waiting times. This is certainly not the case in Dublin or Mullingar", said Impact Trade Union Official, Pádraic Mulligan.

The loss of St. Brigid's has resulted in the deployment of 24 staff to day care services in Ballinasloe and Roscommon where patients are receiving limited care. Councillor Dermot Connolly stated, "this has had a huge negative effect in the relation to the delivery of services in the area".

Speaking of the Action Group, Mr. Mulligan said, "at the moment we are keeping a very close eye on the current situation and are awaiting the opportunity where somebody will listen and allow us to negotiate adequately the issues at hand".

Councillor Tim Broderick has expressed his disappointment with the HSE regarding promises made to improve the situation in the town.

"The Action Group have been denied of its one request

to keep the 22-bed unit at St. Brigid's open. We are being assured every year that changes will be made to improve the current situation yet the Regional is creaking at the seams and nothing is being done about it".

In assessing the local facilities for people with mental health disabilities, Mr. Mulligan has confirmed that there is in fact no respite beds in the town at present.

"Services in the region have endured a further downgrading, despite promises from the HSE to improve them", noted Pádraic. Core nursing staff have been redeployed and a number of posts have been downgraded with some current staff have to manage patients and attend meetings between Roscommon, Portlanna in a working week.



A major problem is the limited access to the mental health unit at the Galway Regional Hospital. "It is the busiest A&E in the country and is under severe pressure every day with overcrowding and this has resulted in an extreme worsening of the service", claims Mr. Mulligan.

Expressing his increased concern for the facilities as well as the standard of care being delivered in A&E, Councillor Tim Broderick has attributed this depletion of services to the inability of

the Health Service Executive to provide and manage its staff.

"The bottom line is the HSE have dismantled a perfectly good service here due to their inability to manage staff and this is completely unacceptable".

Many public representatives have expressed huge concern for the number of deaths by suicide in the area as a result of limited care and access to mental health services as well as the lack of compliancy to the Mental Health Commission Reports for services and clients on the area.

According to Mulligan, the pressure on the admission unit in Galway needs to be dramatically reduced in order to deliver timely, clinically effective and standardised safe services to service users.

BEC

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Christmas Giving For Community Worthy Causes

By Zara Hill

The town got into the festive spirit over the Christmas, showing incredible generosity and kindness. Many local people and organisations raised funds as well as awareness for several worthy causes and charities in the area.

William Duthie from The Lions Club said their Christmas Food Appeal is "one of the highlights of our club year and Christmas 2014 saw more than 100 food hampers (worth €10,000) distributed to families in Ballinasloe and its hinterland". This was made possible by generous donations of food and cash from the public, schools and the support of some shops and suppliers, in particular Tesco and its customers who gave so generously. "We really thank you to all who assisted in any way" added Mr. Duthie.

A successful fundraising event ran by local DJ Darragh Purcell in Egan's Bar on December 20th raised just under €600 for the local Chapter of St. Vincent De Paul. "It was great to see such a large crowd of people turning up on the night", remarked SVP Committee Member Margaret Moran. A number of church collections also amounted to a total in the region

of €5,500 for the St. Vincent De Paul Charity. President Joan Hynes spoke of the increased demand for services in the area over Christmas. "Demands for services are up big time from last year. This year we delivered fuel, vouchers and hampers to over 700 families" estimated Joan.

St. Michael's Church Folk Choir ran their by now traditional carol service at Christmas Eve on Main St. raising a combined total of €7,500 for two local causes – the Meals on Wheels Service and Ballinasloe Care and Repair. Committee Member Ann Jordan was thrilled with the response of the local shoppers and drivers to their collection – "Every year we are just amazed by the willingness of others to give to freely" she said.

The Social Services collected €640 through the running of a card game. In addition, the Xmas Sale of Work collected a further €2,500. Social services manager Teresa Coughlan mentioned their utmost appreciation to those who contributed so generously. "We are very appreciative of the on-going support shown throughout the year by the community, but especially at Christmas time which helps fund our much needed services".



Meals on Wheels staff. L-R in photo is:
Anna Oubla, Kay Cunningham,
Regina Higgins.

POP UP Boutique For New Van!

In 2014, over 14,000 meals were delivered to some 70 homes. Anyone who is elderly or is unable to prepare meals themselves due to illness or poor mobility may avail of this service. For further details, phone Kay at 0872 2325162.

The van, which is used for these deliveries, covers a huge amount of mileage and now needs to be replaced. The service has no capital funds to do this and a fundraising drive has been launched to raise the €15,000 needed.

A pop up boutique sale is being organised at the Social Services Centre late Feb early March. Phone Teresa at 090 9643217 or Kay at 087 2325163 to organise drop off or collection of toys, new clothes, unwanted Xmas gifts, unused household goods. So if you are looking for a genuine bargain, don't forget to watch out for confirmation of when the "pop-up" boutique will be taking place in social and print media.

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Society Street, Ballinasloe www.fletchers.ie

FEBRUARY Events Guide

| | | |
|--|------------------------|--------|
| February 1st | | |
| Buzz the Agent | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Anchormen | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Trad Session-John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| Sara O'Kane | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Mick Flavin | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe vs. Connemara | Ballinasloe Rugby Club | 2.30pm |
| February 2nd | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| February 3rd | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| February 4th | | |
| Active Retirement AGM | Gullane's hotel | 3pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| February 5th | | |
| Open Acoustic Session | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| February 6th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Beggars Velvet | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Frank | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Ken and Steve | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| Trad Session | The Dunlo Tavern | 9pm |
| Taken 2 | Town Hall Theatre | 9.15pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| February 7th | | |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| DJ | East Nightclub | 12pm |
| Tradstone Live | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Imposter | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Ray Dolan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Maggie Dunne | Pillar House | 10pm |
| DJ John | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Chris and Tara | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| How To Train Your Dragon | Town Hall Cinema | 4pm |
| The Hunger Games | Town Hall Cinema | 8.30pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| February 8th | | |
| Shane Moore | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| The Nudie Suits | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Live Music | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| Steven Smith | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| 8 km Run/Walk | Scoil an Chroí Naofa | 12pm |
| Kids 1km Fun Run | Scoil an Chroí Naofa | 11am |
| February 9th | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| February 10th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| February 11th | | |
| Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club | Gullane's Hotel | 8pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 7pm |
| February 12th | | |
| Open Acoustic Session | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Singer's Circle | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| February 13th | | |
| Texas Holdem poker | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Macey South | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Johnny F | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Brian Kennedy- Pillar House Folk Club | Pillar House | 9pm |
| The High Reel | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| The Fault in Our Stars | Town Hall Cinema | 9.15pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| February 14th | | |
| 4-person Mexican Scramble | Golf Club | 11am |
| Valentine's night with Sarah Kane | Joe's Bar | 10pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Toxic Twins | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Lee Johnson | East Nightclub | 12pm |
| Sway | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| The Hoppy Bar Stars | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Last Man Standing | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Music With Ultan Conlon | Pillar House | 10pm |
| Kensy 3 | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| Brave | Town Hall Cinema | 4pm |
| The Other Woman | Town Hall Cinema | 8.30pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| February 15th | | |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| Anchormen | Maud Millers | 8pm |

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|--|------------------------|--------|
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| Paddy O'Brien | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| Tom Wolf | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Shane Moore | Downey's Bar | 8pm |
| February 16th | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| February 17th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| February 18th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| February 19th | | |
| Open Jam Session | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| February 20th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Strange Brew | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Frank | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Pink Panter Jazz Band | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Dunlo Trad Session | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| P.S I Love You | Town Hall Cinema | 9.15pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| February 21st | | |
| Driftwood | Joe's Bar | 10pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Red Tape | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Shakes | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| DJ | East Nightclub | 12pm |
| Joe Wynne | Pillar House | 10pm |
| Amy Brennan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Shane Moore | Hayden's Hotel | 9pm |
| The Livewires | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| Despicable Me | Town Hall Cinema | 4pm |
| The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey | Town Hall Cinema | 8.30pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| February 22nd | | |
| Streetwise | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| Reigning Day | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Live Music | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| The Indians | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| Black Shadow | Downey's Bar | 8pm |
| February 23rd | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| February 24th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| February 25th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| February 26th | | |
| Open Jam Session | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| February 27th | | |
| Texas Holdem Poker | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Strung Out | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Johnny F | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Backstage | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Trad Session | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| The Hangover 3 | Town Hall Cinema | 9.15pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| February 28th | | |
| Anything Goes | Joe's Bar | 10pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| The Wheeler Johnsons | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Nightowls | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| DJ Lee Johnson | East Nightclub | 12pm |
| G2 | Pillar House | 10pm |
| DJ John | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Ken and Steve | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Too Tall Paul | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| The Wizard of Oz | Town Hall Cinema | 4pm |
| The Equalizer | Town Hall Cinema | 8.30pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| March 1st | | |
| Buzz the Agent | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| Anchormen | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Live Music | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| Robert Mizzell | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| David Maguire | Downey's Bar | 8pm |
| March 2nd | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |

MARCH Events Guide

| | | |
|--|------------------------|---------|
| March 3rd | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| March 4th | | |
| Tráth na gCeist (Bunscoileanna) | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| March 5th | | |
| Open Jam Sessions | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| March 6th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Toxic Twins | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Frank | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Matt Keane | Pillar House | 10pm |
| Ken and Steve | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Trad Session | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| March 7th | | |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Red Tape | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Sara O'Kane | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Geagan Pagans | Pillar House | 10pm |
| DJ Lee Johnson | East Nightclub | 12pm |
| The High Reel | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Top Note | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Paul Burns | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| March 8th | | |
| Captain's Drive-In | Golf Club | 12pm |
| Sway | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| Strung Out | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Live Music | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| John McNicholl | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| To be confirmed | Downey's Bar | 8pm |
| March 9th | | |
| Tráth na gCeist (Meanscoileanna) | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| March 10th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Addams Family | Town Hall Theatre | 8pm |
| March 11th | | |
| Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club | Gullane's Hotel | 8pm |
| Addams Family | Town Hall Theatre | 8pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| March 12th | | |
| Addams Family | Town Hall Theatre | 8pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Open Jam Session | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| 10th Anniversary Singer's Circle | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| March 13th | | |
| Addams Family | Town Hall Theatre | 8pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| The Hoppy Bar Stars | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Johnny F | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Joe Wynne | Pillar House | 10pm |
| Pink Panther Jazz Band | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Buzz the Agent | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| March 14th | | |
| Sara O'Kane | Joe's Bar | 10pm |
| Addams Family Matinee | Town Hall Theatre | 2pm |
| Addams Family | Town Hall Theatre | 8pm |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| The Wheeler Johnsons | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| The Hoppy Bar Stars | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Sway | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Last Man Standing | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Kensley 3 | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| March 15th | | |
| Mother's Day with Slider | Joe's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Imposter | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Live Music | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Limelite | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| To be confirmed | Downey's Bar | 8pm |
| March 16th | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| The Hush | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| St. Patrick's Day Mass | Creagh | 10.30am |
| St. Patrick's Day Mass | St. Michael's Church | 7pm |
| March 17th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |

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|--|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Anchormen | Maud Millers | 7pm |
| Transessiún | Pillar House | 4pm |
| The High Reel | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| BoJangle | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| ST Patrick's Day Trad Session | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Sweet Sensations | Downey's Bar | 5-8pm |
| St. Patrick's Day Mass | Creagh | 6.30pm |
| St. Patrick's Day Mass | St. Michael's Church | 9am, 11am & 12.15pm |
| March 18th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| March 19th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Open Jam Session | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| March 20th | | |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Beggars Velvet | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Frank | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Ray Dolan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Trad Session | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| The Guard | Town Hall Cinema | 9.15pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| March 21st | | |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| Party Rockers | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| The Crime | the Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| DJ Lee Johnson | East Nightclub | 12pm |
| Ultan Conlon | Pillar House | 10pm |
| Backstage | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Shane Moore | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| The Livewires | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| Miles For Emma | St. Michael's Square | 9am |
| Toy Story | Town Hall Cinema | 4pm |
| Michael Collins | Town Hall Cinema | 8.30pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| March 22nd | | |
| The Nudie Suits | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Live Music | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| "Walk a Mile For Emma" | Pillar House | 8pm |
| Jim Devine | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| Anything Goes | Downey's Bar | 8pm |
| March 23rd | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotels | 6.30pm |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotels | 8.30pm |
| March 24th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| March 25th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| Irish Blood Transfusion (Day 1) | Gullane's Hotel | 5pm |
| March 26th | | |
| Open Jam Session | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| Irish Blood Transfusion (Day 2) | Gullane's Hotel | 5pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| March 27th | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 9pm |
| Macey South | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| DJ Johnny F | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Moore Foróige | Moore Community Centre | 8pm |
| Pride & Prejudice | Town Hall Cinema | 9.15pm |
| Country Market | Town Hall | 9am |
| Comhaltas Session | Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| March 28th | | |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| The Fanzines | Maud Millers | 10pm |
| The Jordans | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| DJ Lee Johnson | East Nightclub | 12pm |
| Sharon Turley | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Chris and Tara | The Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Live DJ | Downey's Bar | 10pm |
| The Lion King | Town Hall Cinema | 4pm |
| Captain America: The Winter Soldier | Town Hall Cinema | 8.30pm |
| The Living Room | Egans Bar | 9pm |
| March 29th | | |
| Live Trad | An Táin | 7pm |
| Loose Rooster | Maud Millers | 8pm |
| Live Music | The Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session- John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Pillar House | 6pm |
| Céilí | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Michael English | Carlton Shearwater | 9pm |
| Buzz The Agent | Downey's Bar | 8pm |
| March 30th | | |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| March 31st | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |

To advertise your events here, Contact: ballinasloelife@hotmail.com or Call 090 964 3779 or 085 148 1911

'The Living Room'

By Zara Hill



Creative producer and local DJ Darragh Purcell hopes to transform the newly refurbished back-room of Egan's Bar into a contemporary creative art gallery.

'The Living Room', will exhibit the outstanding work of local artists in an informal environment and create a unique experience for art enthusiasts.

Having recently moved back to the town, the former UCD student and successful website developer wants to provide artists with a serene space to exhibit their work and offer young musicians a platform

to showcase their talent.

"I wanted to contribute in some way. I thought it might be nice to create a regular Saturday night vibe that incorporates different creative elements", said Darragh.

Impressed by the talent of local artists and musicians alike, Darragh decided he wanted it to be "a great night out for our community" that might cultivate interest in the work of local artists.

Darragh has been inspired by the excellent work being carried out in the locality to support young people.

"Mike O'Brien is doing such a great job in Maud Millar's to create a place for people to play. Local artists like Sarah Corcoran, Ben Parker, Milan Jay and Barry Power are as good as anybody in Ireland right now. It's exciting times for the town".

'The Living Room' is open to the public on Saturday nights at Egan's Bar from 9 p.m.

Plans Underway For St. Patricks Day Parade

By Zara Hill

Preparations are well under way for this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade which will assemble at the Fairgreen at 1.30 p.m. on the National Feastday - 17th.

The annual parade will move off from 2 p.m. at the Fair Green car park on Society St and make its way through Main St and Slí na hAbhann onto Dunlo St. and will come to an end at the St. Michael's Square Review Platform.

There will be lots of fun outdoor activities and street entertainment for spectators to enjoy on the day, including music performances from local musicians.

This year's organising committee are targeting school groups, underage sports clubs and dancing clubs to participate in this year's event.

With the loss of the Town Council Funding the organisers are appealing to the business community to assist in



sponsoring the costs of the parade and the prizes

For those interested in getting involved, it is free to enter and entries should be to the committee in advance of March 13.

There is an open theme on the day and participants may choose from categories such as Education, Culture, Voluntary, Sport and Commercial.

Everyone is encouraged to come along on the day and join in on the celebrations - it's a lively day of commemoration and celebration for the Community and always exemplifies the positives in our locality.

For further information contact Carmel on (087) 6207477 or Johnny (087) 9973008.

Arrabawn
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Ronan Wows The Judges in The Voice

By Zara Hill

Hillcrest native and GAA star, Ronan O'Healy made his television debut recently on the new series of The Voice of Ireland.



The singer made it through the first round of auditions with his unconventional

rendition of Bruno Mars' 'The Lazy Song', impressing former S Club 7 singer and new member of this year's judging panel, Rachel Stevens.

Music has always been a big part of life for the son of Seán and Margaret O'Healy, who completed his secondary school in Athlone Community College.

"I started hitting anything in the house that made a sound until I was rewarded with my first Sonor drum kit at the age of 15".

A keen learner, Ronan taught

himself how to play the guitar and drums, taking inspiration from Noel Gallagher.

"I always kept playing to myself. Very few of the lads knew I had such a keen interest in it".

The Music Production and Engineering graduate describes his experience on The Voice as "a nerve wrecking process", however, "a huge plus to being on the show is the attention it brings".

For 2015, Ronan is looking forward to writing new music and performing locally as part of his new two-piece band, 'On Rail' with Neil Harney, while continuing to perform in regular venues in Athlone including; Seán's Bar, Naughton's Bar and Luker's Bar in Shannonbridge.

"I'm lucky to be from a town where there are such incredible musicians. I don't think people realise the talent we have in this town", said a proud Ronan.

Ronan advises young musicians to "make the jump that many are scared to take. It's better to do something and fail than live with regret".

Ballinasloe Singers Circle 10th Anniversary March 2015



The Singers Circle, in the Dunlo Tavern is now ten years running and to celebrate this milestone a special night in March is being organised.

The idea to start a Singers Circle came about in 2005 when the local Comhaltas Branch was approached to try and promote and encourage the art of solo singing and storytelling in the area.

Comhaltas Chairman at the time, Tom Corcoran established the club having witnessed the success of a similar club in Knockcroghery in

Co. Roscommon.

The Singers Club has developed over the last ten years and offers a diverse enjoyable night of entertainment. Central to the aim of the singers club is the gathering of singers and story-tellers to engage together as well as displaying their unique style, be it Folk, Rock, Bluegrass or even original material.

The Singers Club takes place on every second Thursday of the month, from Thursday March 12 at The Dunlo Tavern.



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Spring Activities for Active Retired

By Conor Finnerty

Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association have finalised their timetable for Spring 2015. Members meetings take place on the first Wednesday of every month in Gullanes at 3pm. There will also be informal meetings held every other Wednesday in the same venue.

The club runs numerous activities throughout the week all are encouraged to take part in an activity of their choice, in keeping with their motto of "Be Active, Be Healthy".

The very popular bridge classes are held every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 8pm in the bridge rooms. The association's book club runs on the second Tuesday of every month at 4pm in the library.

Bowls takes place in the John O'Shea Hall in Creagh between 7.30pm and 10pm every Monday night. The singing group takes place

every Monday between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm in the family centre in Brackernagh while the Knitting and crafts group takes place in Gullanes at the same time.



For those interested in exercise the club have aquarobics classes every Monday and Thursday at 2-3 pm in the Kingfisher leisure center. The walking club visit the athletic track in Brackernagh or various other places of interest during good weather on a Tuesday between the hours of 10.30 am and 12.30 pm.

There will be various trips, holidays, outings, shows, courses, informative talks and activities arranged throughout the year. For any enquiries please contact John Boland (Chairman) at 090 96 46676 or Margaret Brennan (Secretary) at 087 7731 707.

Miles For Emma Awareness Walk

By Conor Finnerty

Local man Ken Campbell is organising a walk from St Michael's Square to Temple Street Children's hospital to raise funds for the metabolic unit in Temple Street children's Hospital. He is also promoting equality and awareness for children with special needs and to highlight the lack of services available.

Mr Campbell's daughter Emma was diagnosed with a rare metabolic disorder which approximately 450 people have worldwide when she was 8 months old in 2011. "A special Journey for Special needs, Miles for Emma" is a non-stop endurance walk from town to Dublin that takes place in the third week of March.

"A one day event or a 10 kilometre run would be lost in the grand scheme of things, it needed something symbolic to highlight the cause, the 24 hour endurance test, not sleeping pushing yourself to your limits is something parents go through every day", said the experienced marathon runner.

"Over the years I have raised money for children with cancer, Pieta House, Join Our Boys Trust - all of which are worthy causes, but this is personal. No parent with a child diagnosed with cancer or that is terminally should have to go to these lengths just to make a statement," according to the proud Dad.



Emma attends Springfield pre-school in Creagh two days a week, a facility that provides an educational placement for children aged 3 - 6 years who have a learning and/or physical disability. Mr Campbell could not be more complimentary of the teachers and carers there.

People are invited to walk as far as they like and are welcome to join or leave at any stage. Donations can be made via I-Donate at www.idonate.ie/milesforemma or sponsorship cards will be available from Mr Campbell on request, donations can also be made on the day.

Information on the walk can be found on Facebook or by contacting Ken Campbell on 087 7654 200 or emailing kencam74@gmail.com.



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Mike Mansfield – Head of Marketing For Plan Ireland

By Zara Hill



Head of Marketing and Sponsorship for Plan Ireland and local Cleaghmore man Michael Mansfield is looking forward to another exciting year with the company as well as the birth of his first child in July.

Graduating with a degree in History and French from Trinity College Dublin, as well as a postgrad in PR and Advertising, Mike began his career working for the Irish Independent Group.

From there, he took the leap into Public Relations in 1999, looking after various brands such as Meteor, Coca Cola, Lee Jeans and Becks Bier. With the opening up of the telecoms sector in the late 90's, the charity advocate soon made the transition into telecoms, working for Eircom for a period of eight years.

His time in the company was spent spanning a number of roles, latterly as Head of Training. One of his most significant responsibilities while working for Eircom was managing the Training and Sales Support Function in the company's Business Market Division.

"Eircom gave me some great insights into business", says the local sports enthusiast, who is married to Sophie.

December 2008 brought about another decision for Michael. A growing interest in matters humanitarian, he took the step into the NGO (non-governmental organisation) sector with Plan Ireland. Mike recognises now that "it was a tough, but ultimately correct decision".

During his time with the company, Mike has visited Plan's projects in Togo, West Africa where he himself witnessed the resilience of a people struggling to get by. Growing up in the area, Michael associates his childhood and upbringing with a lot of support and encouragement.

"At home, there was always a 'follow your dreams' attitude. I was so lucky to have the moral and financial support of my family. It is something I am so grateful for".

Michael was greatly influenced by his parents, remembering a strong sense of humanitarianism in his house growing up. "Both Mam and Dad have been a huge influence in my life".

Through her involvement and work as a founder and active member of the Social Services Michael's mother became a strong advocate for those who suffer injustice across the world. Michael quips - "this must have seeped in somewhere along the line. Certainly the conversations around the dinner table were rarely boring!".

Mike was educated at St. Grellan's and Garbally and had some great teachers during this period including ex-Galway footballer Barry Brennan who provided him with his first major stepping stone and start in the Independent Group.


"Careers are often built and defined by one's past, and I have been very fortunate in this regard", said Mike fondly.

When asked what key learnings or concepts the town could adopt from hearing of Mike's experience with poverty in third world countries Mike responded,

"If anything, my experience has taught me that communities are not made up of bricks and mortar, but of people. I have seen it in Port-de-Prince in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake and across the Philippines in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. Collective involvement and responsibility for the town will lead to a sustainable and prosperous future".

Michael has achieved a lot in his six years with Plan Ireland and has travelled to places such as Nepal and Ethiopia raising awareness. The international development organisation has grown from a small organisation raising approximately €3m some six years ago for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children, to over €12m last year.

"I would like to think I have been central to the company's income growth" added Mike who enjoys the challenging but rewarding aspects of the charity sector.

Plan Ireland have recently launched a new website - www.plan.ie - and are getting geared up for a lot of digital activity, particularly around the new "Because I am a Girl" campaign. If you wish to support Plan Ireland, please visit www.plan.ie or call Mike directly on freephone 1800 829 829' 

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Out and About in Ballinasloe



Moore's 2014 Foróige Group Leaders join with other Roscommon Youth Work Volunteers for Induction and Child Protection Training with Foróige Regional Youth Officer Jim Maher, at the Quad Centre, Roscommon Town.



L-R: Head Coach Kayo Jagielski, Ethan Moran, Rowan Harley, Coach Cahal King



Masters Christmas Swimming Gala Presentation

Richie Carroll having a hole in one during the 2014 season



Creagh National School 3rd/4th class Connacht Primary School Cross Country Champions. Back Row L-R - Charlie Naughton, Niall Jennings, Joseph Tierney. Front Row - Eoin Connell, Jason Cunningham & Shane Fitzpatrick (who also got an individual silver medal).



Ballinasloe Women's Golf Team won the B.A.G.S competition. BR - Anne Greene, Aileen Bergin, Mary Uniacke, Rita Spellman, Catherine Owens. FR - Margaret Killeen, Teresa Coughlan, Noreen Kenny (Lady Captain 2014), Celine Grennan, Peggy Wong.



Head Coach Kayo Jagielski, Tara McKeon, James Mooney, Luke Galvin, Conor Hogan, Coach Cahal King. Front Row Ailbhe Hanrahan, Kayla McKeon, Ruth Dolan, Ava McKeon, Tani McCormack.



Black belt Dan grades in karate awarded. L-R (standing): David Feury, Jamie Brennan, Kian O'Reilly, David Azumanyan, Jean Kennedy, Shane O'Quigley, Nathan O'Reilly, Paul Davey. L-R: Grading Panel, John Dolphin, Marie Dolphin, Leo Mulvany (IKKI Chief Instructor), Claire Harte, Kevin Casey and Donal Monahan.



75th anniversary of Killalaghton Hall, Back row left to right, Frank Kelly, Michael O'Halloran, Assumpta O'Halloran, Michael Nash, Front Row Martin Loughnane, Teresa Smith, Mary Hannon.



pictured L-R are William Duthie, Maire Hughes and Mary O'Connell.



Paul Donohue presenting the Peter Donohue Memorial Cup to the Rambling Mimmers, winners of the senior of the competition in New Inn.



Serving the ladies Johnny Johnston serving Maureen Hession and Eileen Egan at Nollaig na mBan fundraiser in Gullanes Hotel



Group photograph of all the awardees of the Ballinasloe Credit Union Art Competition for the 11-13 year old age group



Michelle Geehan Ballinasloe and William O'Neill Ahascragh who returned from Australia to get married in Galway



Clare Smyth, Leader of Rambling Mimmers, receives the Des Finnerty Perpetual Trophy from Festival Secretary Michael Finnerty and Chairman Michael Mullins.



To mark the leaving of Fr Declan McInerney the Parish Pastoral Council made an official thank you presentation on his departure. Esther Kelly, Judith Roche, Fr. Declan McInerney, Geraldine Healy, Fr. John Garvey, Cindy Henry, Margaret Clarke, Eamon Conway.



William Duthie, Chairman of the Credit Union, presenting Maire Hughes, a member of the Theatre Society member, and Chairperson of the Town Hall Theatre Mary O'Connell with a sponsorship cheque towards the running of the Town Hall Cinema.

Late John Naughton

By Ken Kelly

John (Sean) Naughton, Mackney, Ballinasloe, who passed away recently



was one of a group of young farmers who helped set up the Ballinasloe Co-Operative Machinery Society in 1951. He became its first secretary of the body that carried out agricultural work

suck as ploughing, tilling, hay-cutting, drawing home turf and several other chores.

In the early sixties Sean Naughton was appointed secretary of the Ballinasloe Social Centre committee, which saw the opening of the Emerald Ballroom as the initial project. He was supervisor of the dance committee there and was a strict disciplinarian throughout his reign before retiring.

The late Mr. Naughton held many posts in the local Fianna Fail Cumann where he commanded the utmost respect from its members and was a herculean worker. Though in failing health for some years he still maintained a keen interest in both politics and the commercial life of the town and its people.

Sean Naughton is survived by wife Mona, son Oliver, daughter Elizabeth as well as many other relatives and friends.

Former Vocational Teacher Larry Duffy Passes Away

The passing of Larry Duffy, Moher, Ballinasloe, after a brief illness, leaves a great void in his home and in the community. A native of Taylor's Hill, Galway, he had been a popular teacher of Woodwork and Technical Drawing in St. Michael's Vocational School for nearly thirty years before an accident in his home confined him to a wheelchair.

Larry's skills as a draughtsman were invaluable in helping many of his friends and neighbours with house renovations and extensions. He also made a major contribution to the building of the Family Centre and the Social Services Centre in Brackernagh as well as helping out with a number of Community Centres. He was stage manager with both the local Choral Society and the Relays Drama Group, taking to the stage with the latter for some of their productions. As a family man he involved his children in the local Boy Scouts and was always willing to lend a hand or give friendly advice when needed.

Serving for many years on the National Executive of the Teachers' Union of Ireland, Larry was always concerned

with improving conditions and facilities for both students and teachers. Arriving in the Ballinasloe VS in 1965 after two years serving in Inish Mor, he quickly established himself as a popular teacher and workmate and was eager to get involved with the different aspects of his new town.



Despite being confined to a wheelchair following a simple accident at his home in 1994, which ended his teaching career, Larry took to the computer where he mastered many aspects of the new technology. Optimistic that he would walk

again, the former teacher studied every piece of research into spinal injury and exchanged information with those similarly affected during his many trips to Lourdes.

Never a man to complain, always cheerful and witty, Larry enjoyed having a conversation on any topic, in front of his turf fire when anybody dropped in. He is survived by his wife Ann, sons Niall, Fergal and Ciaran; daughters Fiona and Mairead, grandchildren as well as brother, sisters, extended family and friends.

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WE LOOK AT THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Building a School Bank

By James Grealy

Starting the savings habit young was the challenge posed to a team of nine Transition year students from Garbally College who are currently taking part in this year's AIB Build a Bank Challenge.



The nationwide competition is now entering its 13th year and since its launch in 2002 thousands of students have participated in the programme with over 200 schools registered in total.

The team have been working towards the upcoming regional final, which is taking place at the end of February 2015 in Cork. At these finals the team will showcase the bank concept they have formulated over the last few months, in the hope of

winning a coveted place in the national finals in May.

The AIB Build a Bank Challenge is one of the many activities on Garbally's Transition year programme, with the team selected through an interviewing process earlier in the year. The team selected to represent

Garbally are Adrian Kenny (Bank Manager), Billy McKenna (Assistant Manager), Michael Dolan (Financial Controller), Glenn Kelly (Sales and Marketing Executive), James Grealy and David Coffey (Customer Service Representatives). The reserve members are David Tumulty, Mark Haynes and Nathan Cooley.

Once selected, the team named the bank and came up with the idea of the "Phoenix Bank", with the campaign slogan "Rising from the ashes". There followed weeks of organising a business plan, marketing strategies and raising awareness throughout the school.


Bank Manager Adrian Kenny described the challenges faced by the team. "I underestimated the amount of work and determination it takes to run something

like a school bank! However, working with a team of eight strong supporters has made it easier to do".

With little or no funds, the team members took to the streets to look for financial support from local businesses. As usual, they weren't disappointed by the many local businesses who gave generously.

The businesses who kindly supported the project were: Fletcher's Expert, Gullane's Hotel, Hubert Dolan's Electricals, Murphy's Medical Hall, Ollie Colohan & Sons, Barry's Cycles, Broderick's Pharmacy, Salmon's Department Store, Cahalan's Jewelers, The Bread Basket, Haven Pharmacy and Costcutters.

With funds secured, the Bank Team decided to buy an X-box One console, which will now feature in an exclusive draw for all students who lodge €5 in their new account. Account holders will be able to receive a new debit card to access their account on the go and avail of 24 hour online banking, with services available during lunch time every Tuesday.

The bank team are also thankful to AIB staff members and student officers Sally-Ann Caulfield and Noelle Nilan. They have worked closely with the Transition Year students, advising and monitoring progress throughout the project. 

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Be Green be Seen - Clontuskert Leads The Way

By Ken Kelly

St. Augustine's National School in Clontuskert recently held a Green Schools Travel Safety and Cycling Workshop for the students from 2nd to 6th class as part of the Green School Travel Initiative.

This programme promotes sustainable modes of transport to school, these modes of transport include walking, cycling, car-sharing and public transport as an alternative to the private car on the school run. Sean and Ellie from Safer Cycling Galway came to the school to teach the students how to safely ride their bikes in traffic and on country roads. They showed the students how to stop safely and quickly and how to

maintain their bikes and keep them in top working condition.

An emphasis was put on wearing a helmet and hi-visibility clothing whilst on a bicycle. It is important that people make sure they are visible in the way they travel during the winter. Caitriona Cunningham, Green-Schools Education Officer, advises that walkers and cyclists always wear reflective clothes or a pair of reflective armbands which will be seen from a distance. You are visible to a driver 500 feet away when you are wearing reflective clothing compared to just 55 feet away when wearing dark colours. Caitriona also recommends that all cyclists and walkers carry a flashlight or flashing safety strobes. If you're a

cyclist, by law you must have a light in front and a red reflector in the back before sunrise and after sunset.

Last year the Green-Schools travel programme achieved a reduction in 25,000 cars on the school run every day. In promoting sustainable travel to school schools not only help the environment but they also improve the pupils' safety, health and fitness. The journey to school is an ideal way for children to take part in regular physical activity, to interact with their peers, and to develop the road sense children need as pedestrians and cyclists.

For more information please visit www.greenschoolsireland.org



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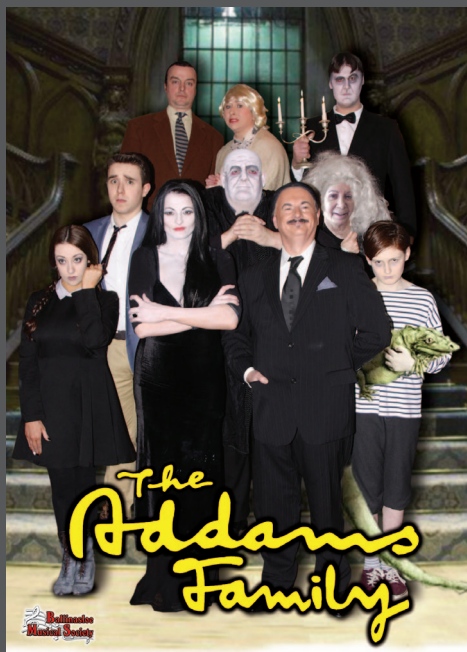
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RARE Production of ADDAMS Family The Musical

By Zara Hill

Members of the Music Society are busy preparing for a FIRST production of the highly anticipated 'Addams Family Musical', coming to the Town Hall Theatre in March.



Based on the well-known 'Addams Family' movie, this story seems to be every father's nightmare. Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness (Sarah Corcoran) falls in love with the sweet,

smart and respectable Lucas Beineke (5th year Garbally Student, Bryan Mulry). Wednesday confides in her father and pleads with him to desist from telling her mother of her new found love. Now, Gomez Addams, played by Seamus Ferrick must keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia (Bernie Dudgeon).

Bernie, who is no stranger to the stage, is just one of the talented cast members who has been looking forward to the opening night since auditions.

Everything changes for the Addams family when they host a dinner for Lucas and his parents; Mal, played by Patrick Byrne, and Alice Beineke, played by Joanne Kelly. Joanne is remembered for her role as Jacqueline in 'Me & My Girl'.

Among other much-loved characters who will appear on stage are; Uncle Fester, played by Brian Derrane, while David Kennedy takes on the role of Wednesday's younger brother Pugsley.

As the youngest member of the cast, the production will be David's first show with the society. The role of Grandma is played by a new member to the society, Amanda Stuart. Lurch, the butler and tallest member of the 'family' completes the line-up and this role will be fulfilled by Paul Drysdale.

The entire cast extends to over thirty members of the society including; Mike O'Reilly, Lisa Whyte, Robbie Newton, Catherine Madden and Roisin Lyons to

mention a few.

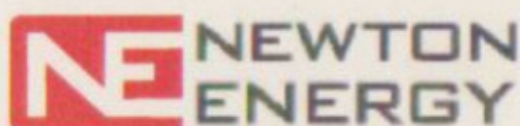
2014 Queen of the Fair, Avril Smyth joined the society for this special production, having returned to the town after four years teaching in London.

Speaking highly of the production, Avril expressed her appreciation to the society and feels "privileged to be sharing the stage with such talent", like the reknowned Seamus Ferrick, among other local personalities. The school teacher added, "it's going to be a brilliant show, so I encourage everyone to come along and support the show and help out in any way they can".

It is "a fantastic opportunity to showcase the incredible talent that the town has to offer", according to Chairperson for the Society, Frances Leahy. "We are one of the first musical societies in the country to produce 'The Addams family' and this is creating a lot of hype in the area", added Frances.

She also thanked Gullane's hotel for use of the premises over the last few months in preparation for the big week.

Tickets are available from Monday March 2 at the Town Hall Theatre, the Ballinasloe Credit Union and at Gerry Stronges photography. The Shows times are from 10th of March to 14th of March nightly at 8.00 pm. and a Matinee at 2.00 pm. on Saturday. Any further enquiries, call (083) 1085544.



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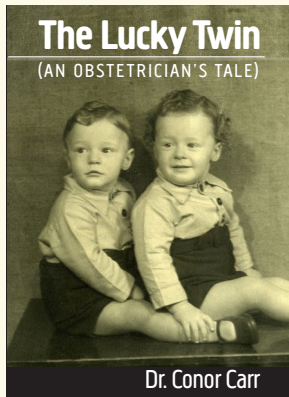


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Dr. Conor - "The Lucky Twin"

By Ken Kelly

The autobiography of a former Obstetrician/Gynaecologist at Portiuncula Hospital in Ballinasloe has been in such demand that it has gone for its second print run. The recently published 350-page book entitled "The Lucky Twin" recalls the life and work of Dr. Conor Carr, of Mount Pleasant, Ballinasloe who was a consultant at Portiuncula for thirty-two years.



Born in Cardiff, the son of a doctor, Conor was a twin but his brother suffered injury at birth which left him with cerebral palsy. "The Lucky Twin" title accounts for the fact that if Conor had not

been born first, he may never have come to Ballinasloe. Educated at Ampleforth College, the English Catholic Public School, Conor Carr studied medicine in Cambridge and St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London. He underwent eight years training in Obstetrics/Gynaecology, two and half years of which were spent working in Uganda, at a time when that

country was getting Independence.

The introduction of the Abortion Bill in the UK brought a change in Conor's life. He did not favour the new legislation and decided to move to Ireland. Following an interview in the Mother House of the FMDM order near London he was appointed Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist at Portiuncula Hospital, a post he held for thirty-two years, up to his retirement. He was involved in negotiations, over the years, for the federation of Portiuncula and Roscommon Hospitals, participated in many debates on the Abortion Referenda and was elected to the Chairmanship of the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Dr. Carr gave generously of his time to many charitable organisations including the St. Vincent de Paul and the Special Olympics World Games. He also spearheaded a project which will provide seventeen houses and a communal centre for the elderly, close to the town centre and on which work is to start later this year.

Conor's contribution to the local Rugby Club as an ardent supporter and official were rewarded when he was elected President of the Connacht Rugby Branch in 1977. A great lover of golf, he held a number of official positions in his local club and was an enthusiastic competitor.

The autobiography, which is printed by KPW Print, also deals with the influence his parents had on his life, the changes in medicine over the years, his integration into Irish life and his appreciation of the nursing staff and patients he worked with. Dedicated to his wife Audrey, "The Lucky Twin" is now available from Salmon's in Main St., Ballinasloe or directly from the author himself.



Any profits from the sale of the book will go to charity. 🌱

Photo shows Dr. Conor Carr with his family. Seated, l to r: daughters Clare and Anne with their mother Audrey and sister Fiona. At back, from left: sons Stephen and Nick with their dad.

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Community Sports Facilities

By Conor Finnerty



Ballinasloe Kingfisher Swimming Pool

Continuing the trend from the last edition of the magazine we have profiled and gathered information of the remaining clubs to be featured. The level of investment in these facilities is a huge advantage to the town in the future.

Derrymullen Handball Club is open to members only. There is one alley available at present with a newly installed glass wall thanks to a €27,000 investment from the former Town Council.

Along with the new glass wall, the viewing area, showers and kitchen area has been upgraded. Membership for the year costs €70 and a non-member can use the facilities three times with a fully paid member before they have to commit to paying membership. Anyone interested in joining can contact Darragh Cronin on 0877991466 or check out their Facebook page at "Derrymullen Handball Club Ballinasloe".

The Show Grounds have 2 sand arenas and 1 grass arena at their disposal that is floodlit with a full range of jumps. There has been €300,000 euro spent on the facility in the last five

years. Any queries contact John Harney on 0872105032. Charges are currently under review.

The Tennis clubs, situated in the grounds of the rugby club, membership for the year costs €15 for a junior or student and €25 for an adult. Family tickets are reasonably priced at €40. The club has two courts, one with the use of floodlights.

Junior open sessions are held on Sunday 11am to 1pm, while adult sessions are held on Wednesday and Fridays from 7 to 9pm. Non-members are welcome to sample the facilities by turning up to one of the sessions or contacting Garry on 0851124197. You can find the tennis club on facebook at www.facebook.com/bsloetennisclub.

The Driving range out the Athlone road, which was constructed at a cost of €200,000, is open from 9am to 10pm. It is operated on a pay as you basis. Prices range from 4-8 euro depending on the duration of your stay. Clubs can be provided for anyone that doesn't own a set.

The premise caters for up to 20 people at any one time. There are classes there every Tuesday and Thursday organised by the Murphy and Sweeney golf school. Alan Naughton can be contacted at 0909645801.

Padraig Pearses GAA club offers 2 full size pitches, 1 training pitch and 1 juvenile pitch. They also have a walking track around the pitches. Membership for the year costs €70 euro for an adult and €40 for a juvenile or student, a family ticket costs €130. Social membership for a non-playing adult costs €50, which gives them voting rights on matters within the club.

The running club train twice a week at the running track in Brackernagh on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The club are looking forward to using their new club house and hurdles thanks to recent investment. Contact Ann Burke 0876385575 for details regarding membership.

The snooker club, operating from the Social Centre, have weekly games and a number of tables at their disposal. They also hold regular juvenile and senior tournaments. They can

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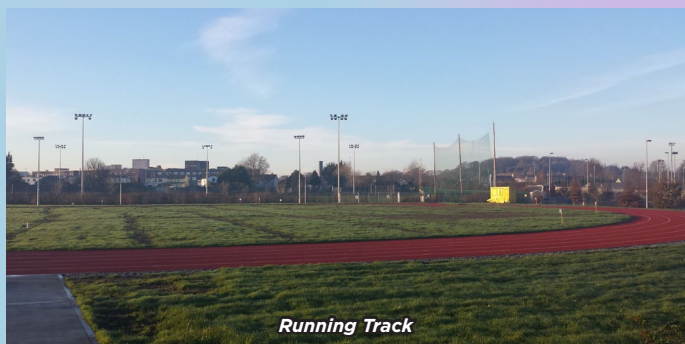


be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/snookerclub.ballinasloe.

The Bowls club hold their sessions in Creagh Hall every Monday from 7 o'clock and Thursday from 10.30am. Membership for the year costs €10 and non-members get to take part three times before having to join. Equipment is provided and the only requirement is participants must wear flat sole shoes.

More information can be got by emailing michaelkelly@kpw.ie.

The Kingfisher has similar facilities to those of the leisure centre in the Shearwater and can be contacted on 0909645755. They are opened Monday - Friday 7:00am - 10:00pm and Saturday & Sunday 9:00am - 6:00pm. The use of the gym and pool costs €10 and membership costs €300 for the year.



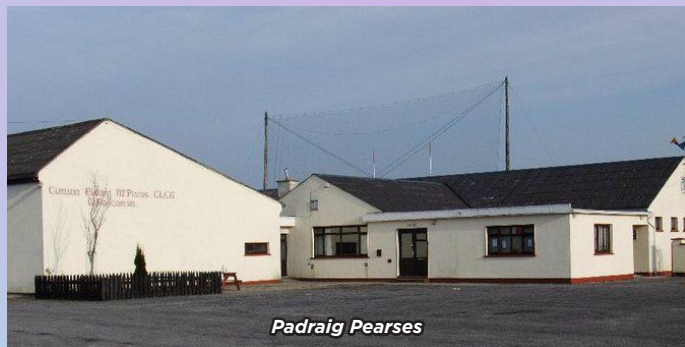
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Athletics County New Year Medal Success

By Conor Finnerty

The Galway Indoor Track & Field Championship was held in AIT, where the Ballinasloe & District Athletic Club

the 60m in the same age group. Shane Fitzpatrick won Gold, Charlie Naughton won Bronze, Conor Harley came 6th while Adam McGreal and Cathal Daly also had great sprints dominating the

& Eoin Connell all ran well coming in 7th place in the same race. Not to be outdone the U12 Girls Shauna & Emma Mitchaell, Mya Kelly, Ava McKeon & Roisin Grealy claimed 2nd place. Most athletes



athlete's brought home a fantastic haul of 20 medals.

The U10 Girls Kayla McKeon won Gold in the 60m and came 4th in the 400m. Aoibheann Fitzpatrick won Silver in the 400m and came 4th in the 60m. Clodagh Kileen, Sinead Daly & Leah Clarke all ran well in the 60m and 400m with the girls finishing in 7th, 9th & 11th position respectively in the 400. Ashlinn Arru put in a good performance in the 60m.

Ava McKeon continued to rack up the medals winning Gold in both the 60m & 600m in the U11 category. Mya Kelly and Roisin Grealy also performed well in

U12 Boys 60m event.

The U10 Girls relay team of Kayla McKeon, Clodagh Kileen, Leah Clarke, Sinead Daly & Ashlinn Arru continued their spectacular form winning Gold medals. Meanwhile the U11 Girls, Roisin Grealy, Aoibheann Fitzpatrick, Mya Kelly & Ava McKeon all ran well coming in 4th position. Mark Kilkenny, Eoin Connell, Niall Jennings & Fionn Ryann came in 5th position in the U11 boys relay.

The U12 Boys relay saw Conor Harley, Adam McGreal, Shane Fitzpatrick & Charlie Naughton claiming first position and bringing home the Gold medal. Joseph Tierney, Cahal Daly, Mark Kilkenny

mentioned competed in other events but were unlucky to miss out on a higher finish despite good performances.

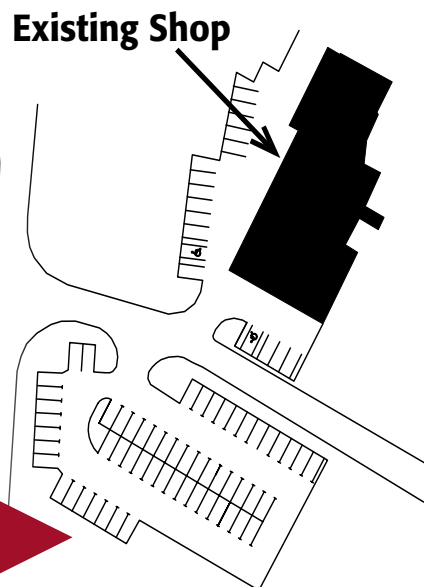
Tom Fitzpatrick had a splendid run in the 800m coming in 5th position in the U14 age group. Despite being two years underage Rowan Harley had two good runs finishing in 9th place in the 60m and 7th in the 1500m in the U15 age group.

The 12 & overs Indoor Connacht Championship will be held in Athlone IT over 2 days at the end of February, for additional information & results look up Ballinasloe Athletic Club on Facebook or the magazine's blog.

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Traditional Festive Tournament at Graigueawoneen

By Zara Hill

The annual Sean O'Flynn Cup fixture went ahead at the club grounds on St. Stephen's Day. A great crowd gathered at the event to see the selected Exiles team take victory over the local XV team.

Historically, the event has been a keenly contested game, seeing the return of

former players to form an Exiles team to challenge members of the current senior squad. This year, the Exiles selection managed and organised by the current first team prop J.J. Carey defeated the home team, with a final score of 28 points to 26.

"Both teams served up an exciting game

despite the difficult weather conditions on the day. It was good to see so many players from the U18 All Ireland Cup winning side of 2006 back and playing for the visitors", added Mr. Courtney.

Mrs. Chris O'Flynn, wife of the late Seán presented the O'Flynn Cup to the winning team captain, Chris McDermott, on behalf of the O'Flynn family.

In addition, the annual Oliver Flynn Cup tournament game will bring the curtain down on the home senior season in March. This is an invitation match in which Ballinasloe will take on one of their local rivals; Loughrea, Portumna or Buccaneers.

Further info on fixtures, and events contact Ballinasloe Rugby Club facebook page.



Vintage Annual Day at Pallas Karting

The Vintage Club members are busily preparing for their annual day out in Pallas Karting. The event which will take place on Sunday 22nd February will see over 50 classic cars travel to Tynagh.

The members are busy preparing their individual vehicles ensuring they are kept to their usual high standard. At this time of year invariably the questions surrounding the various types and classes of vintage and classic vehicles and their entitlements are always raised.

Tom Heavey from the Irish Vintage Scene magazine has put together a comprehensive definition which should answer everyone's queries. According to Mr Heavey, "The word 'vintage'

is frequently used as a generic term for an old vehicle." However it is much more complex than that, with classes such as Classic, Post-Vintage, Vintage, Veteran and Antique. FIVA (Federation Internationale des Vehicules Anciens) define a historic vehicle as at least 30 years old, which is preserved and maintained in a historically correct condition and not used as a means of daily transport. Vintage road tax

is substantially lower than the regular form, costing only €56 with the charge for motorcycles at €26. The full description and criteria for vintage vehicles is available on The Ballinasloe LIFE and Vintage Club Blog.



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New Premises for Karate



The local Karate and Kobudo club has moved to Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh, Garbally Drive and are looking for new members.

Various Karate Black Belt Dan grades were awarded to local club members last December David Feury (3rd Dan), Jamie Brennan (2nd Dan), Kian O'Reilly (1st Dan), David Azumanyan (1st Dan), Jean Kennedy (2nd Dan), Shane O'Quigley (1st Dan), Nathan O'Reilly (1st Dan) and Paul Davey (2nd Dan).

Among those on the grading panel were John Dolphin, Marie Dolphin, Leo Mulvany (IKKI

Chief Instructor), Claire Harte, Kevin Casey and Donal Monahan. Chief Instructor Leo Mulvany "congratulated to all IKKI students on a very successful 2014".

Junior Karate classes are held every Tuesday & Thursday at 6.30 - 7.30pm, followed by an adult class from 7.30 - 9pm.

Adult Kobudo Beginners classes will continue to take place every Tuesday at 7.30pm.

For more information on the IKKI activities see: www.itosukaiireland.org

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Showjumping

By Zara Hill

The annual Horse and Agricultural Show Winter League is around the corner and this year's event hopes to attract show jumpers from all over Connacht to the town.



The league, which is run by the show, will run over the course of 8 Saturdays, with events beginning on February 21.

Preparation for the league for cash will commence on Saturday 7th-14th of February. This involves a week of private training days for all participants, during which fences will be provided for participants.

A large number of show jumpers, trainers and spectators both locally and

from catchment areas as far as Meath are expected to attend this year's event. This will undoubtedly make for a day of friendly competition as well as excitement and activity in the town.

Course builder and local man Pádraic Geraghty is looking forward to the league, taking place here saying, "it is one of the oldest show grounds to still be located in an urban area".

Spectators will have free admission to the grounds on the day and are encouraged to come and support the show jumpers for this great annual event.

The timetable for this year is set to remain the same over the course of the week, with horses starting at 10 am and ponies taking over at approx. 3pm.

Safety officers on the day will be Fiona Donohue and Peter O'Connor.

For further enquiries, contact course builder Pádraic Geraghty at (089) 4804 582.

Cyclists in Training For Atlantic Challenge

By Conor Finnerty

The new Cycling club members are in practice to undertake the "Stephen Roche Atlantic Challenge" in County Clare this March. The 80km route takes participants through the rolling hills of the Burren and along the Atlantic Coast.

This event allows you to cycle alongside former Tour de France winner, Giro d'Italia winner and World Champion

The Cycling Club are currently looking for new members and offer five practice cycles a week. The club has a 6.30pm cycle on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and an 8am and 10am cycle on Sunday mornings all leaving from Barry Cycles. To facilitate new riders a "10km@10am" cycle takes place on Saturday mornings beginning from Barry Cycles, this cycle is in place to encourage people to get out on the bike regardless of experience.



L to R Shane Kindregan, Peter Mc Cormack, Collum Mc Conn, John Donnelly, Brenda Kelly, Aidan Dolan, Noel Slevin.

Stephen Roche. According Lonely Planet described this cycling route as the 5th Best Cycling Route in the World.

With the evenings slowly getting longer and the early signs of spring coming this means Irelands cycling sportive calendar is also about to start.

Ballinasloe Cycling Club have a team going to the Atlantic Challenge and can help anyone looking to join with training, advice and how to prepare for the 80km sportive. The club can be contacted at ballinasloecyclingclub@gmail.com.



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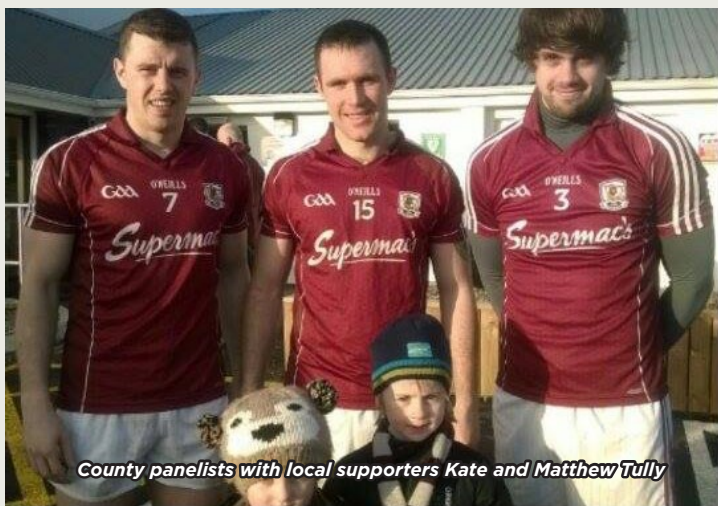


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GAA New Season Officers Appointed

By Zara Hill



County panelists with local supporters Kate and Matthew Tully

Clontuskert resident, and retired Garda Supertintendent John Burke has been re-elected as the GAA Club President, following a recent AGM.

Other roles appointed were Chairman Pat Sullivan, Secretary Conor Ryan, Treasurer Mairéad Mitchell, PRO Donal Fenton,

Membership and Registration Organiser Noreen Stankard and Insurance organiser Willie Stankard.

This year's Executive Committee will be made up of Pat Sullivan, Conor Ryan, Seamus Duffy, Vincent Parsons, Aidan Dooley, Brendan Kelly, Tom Fenton and Brendan Hayes.

Football Managers appointed are: Intermediate Seán Riddle, U21's Aidan Dooley, Minors Vincent Parsons and the new U16 Manager is Joby Kelly.

On the hurling front, the new Junior B Manager is Tom Fenton. The U21's will be managed by Dónal Tully, U16's by Eoin Hardiman and John Mitchell are taking over the U14 squad.

Bingo will continue every Tuesday night in Haydens at 8pm. The Lotto draw will remain at every Friday night. GAA membership fees are as follows: Family ticket €120, Single Adult ticket €60 and Student ticket €30. Those wishing to enrol underage players should contact Aiden Dooley at 086 3499719, for hurling contact Christine Kenny at 087 7994352.

Following the appointment of Kevin Walsh as the new Manager of the Galway Senior Football team in October, four local members from the Senior Club were invited to early Season Training with the Senior Panel. These players were Paul Whelehan, Keith Kelly, James Shaughnessy and Luke Tierney.

Eoin McCormac and Brian Shaughnessy are currently training with the Galway U21's and have recently played two games in the Hasting Cup Competition.

Swimming Club Success

The Swimming club were well represented at both the Connacht Minor School Swimming and The Connacht Secondary Schools Swimming Championship. The Minor event saw 14 young swimmers represent seven National Schools in the area while the club had two representatives at the Senior event.

Creagh National School was well represented at the event which took place in Tuam with a glut of medals and personal bests achieved at the gala, where some athletes were competing for the very

first time. Ava McKeon who won gold in the Freestyle, was disqualified from the Butterfly despite having the fastest time as she was deemed to have moved while on the starting blocks before the starting buzzer a decision the club will be appealing.

Rowan Harley and Ethan Moran represented Garbally College and St Raphael's Loughrea at the Senior event in Longford. Rowan competed in the U13 100m Freestyle achieving a new personal best while Ethan Moran swam

in the U15 100m Freestyle & Backstroke, qualifying for the freestyle Irish Division 2 championships later in the season.

Creagh school will be represented by Ava McKeon, Ruth Dolan, Tara McKeon, Adam McGreal and James Mooney in their respective categories at the National Minor School Championship in the National Aquatic Centre in Dublin this February.

A full report of both Gala's are available on the Ballinasloe Life blog.



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Successful Inaugural Nostalgic Christmas Swim Gala

By Zara Hill

A special Christmas Swimming Gala took place recently in The Kingfisher Swimming Club, which reunited 32 past and present members of the club for a fun-filled day of competitive and festive events.



Michael Walsh

Speaking highly of the event, former President of the Connacht Swimming Association and local GAA man, Michael Walsh said he was “astounded with the response” and the support of locals on the day.

The sports enthusiast attributes the success of the event to “the absolute

commitment and involvement of the local people”.

Michael (a retired Agricultural Officer) has a profound history of involvement with the swimming club, dating back to 1965, when the first of his seven children took an interest in swimming.

He soon became a member of the Connacht Swimming Association committee – now Swim Ireland – representing the town alongside Michael Cullen for several years before his election as President.

During his own involvement, Michael witnessed the growing development of the club which reached fifty members in its’ developing years.

Members of the club showed a huge interest and slowly became serious contenders within local and national events; many of whom travelled the length and breadth of the country to compete in competitions.

The club earned its place among the top three swimming clubs in Connacht, due to its success at a national level in the Community Games.

One considerable achievement of the club to date was when Michael’s daughter Anne Walsh became the first member of the club to claim the gold medal at the 1973 Community Games. Anne was

also involved in the initial set up of this year’s gala.


Among other projects Michael was involved in was the development of training programmes within the club. Following the closure of the old swimming pool as a result of damage to the existing roof, funds were raised for the new pool through swimming lessons offered to school children. The initiative came about when Michael saw the need for children to learn how to swim at primary level.

A successful campaign led by Mr. Walsh and Managing Director at Kingfisher, Joe Cosgrove, resulted in a very successful gala this year, on December 27.

Thirty-two swimmers, as well as a large group of spectators gathered on the day with free admission to show their support.

“One of the most amazing things about the day was the thrilling competitive element of the relays”, said Michael amusedly.

The day’s events included three relays as well as fourteen other races; one of the highlights being the Christmas hat relay, which generated great excitement among the spectators and competitors alike.

Astonished by the success of the event, Michael hopes it will be possible to run a similar event in 2015. 

Garbally View Nursing Home

Garbally View Nursing Home is a family run business providing convalescent, respite and long term care for the past 20 years in Ballinasloe. The Nursing home is registered with HIQA and provides a variety of services for its Residents.



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The Pillar House

The Pillar House Folk Club will present some of Ireland's best singer-songwriters in the coming months.

Established in June 2014, the premier live venue has been very successful to date with monthly concerts featuring the finest of Ireland's Folk Artists such as Sean Keane and Declan O'Rourke. The venue seats up to 80 patrons creating an "Up Close & Personal" evening of music and interaction with the artiste.

February 13, presents West Belfast native Brian Kennedy. Brian has performed on stages across the globe, sharing vocals with some of the greatest artistes in the music industry including Van Morrison, Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, Ray Charles and John Lee Hooker.

On April 17, the Pillar House Folk Club welcomes Ireland's internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter Eleanor McEvoy.

Freddie White makes a long awaited return to Ballinasloe on Friday 15 May. Freddie has been part of the fabric of the live music scene in Ireland since the 1970's and his albums continue to sell well, amongst his loyal and new-found fan base.

Tickets for all Folk Club Concerts are €20 and are available at The Pillar House or by calling 087 9046140 / 090 96 43939. Visit www.thepillarhouse.ie for more information.



Eleanor McEvoy

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Photo: Robbie Riddell

East of the Suck

A Moment's Memory by Declan Kelly

By Barry Lally

As you walk from Main Street across the bridge towards River Street you may notice on the left-hand parapet a crow's foot sapper's mark surmounting a blue-painted metal stud. It tells you that you are entering the parish of Creagh. Once upon a time, before the 1898 Local Government Reform Act, it also indicated the Galway-Roscommon border that ran down the centre stream of the Suck.

Creagh parish is thought to date back to the 1152 Synod of Kells. It's not known when precisely it was amalgamated with Kilclooney to form the united parish of Ballinasloe, but the general belief is that this occurred in the early part of the eighteenth century. Extending east as far as Cranberry Lough in Castlepark, Creagh consists of thirty-seven townlands, four of which are separated from the rest, being surrounded by the parish of Moore, and comprising of Culliaghbeg, Coolderry, Cloonbrack and Gortnasharvoe. (The latter name is intriguing, meaning "the field of the sour-faced woman").

The parish covers an area of 8,867 acres, making it 1,578 acres larger than Kilclooney.


It's possible that the town might have been called Creagh, because it grew from humble beginnings in River Street, which boasts the oldest inhabited buildings in Ballinasloe, including those stone-fronted houses dating from the early 1700's opposite Joe Murray's.

As St. Paul said of Tarsus, Creagh is "no mean city", for it has bred notable sportsmen in the persons of "Black" Jack Donnellan and Séan Meade, to mention just two, while back in the nineteenth century John O'Connor Power from Ballygill went on to become a celebrated orator and parliamentarian. Creagh's fame has apparently spread abroad if the following is anything to go by: the late English-born author Robert Russ, who achieved popular literary renown with his series of seafaring novels written under the pen-name of Patrick O'Brien, fraudulently claimed the parish as his birthplace. Seemingly he reckoned Creagh was a good place to say you come from.

Declan Kelly's latest publication is subtitled "A personal and historical reflection on Creagh National School and District". It is, though, much more than that. What we have here is an exhaustive history of the school in its three successive locations, a list of enrolments from 1871 to 1911, pen

pictures of the principal teachers, plus the reminiscences of several past pupils. Painstakingly researched, the volume is profusely illustrated and carefully annotated, complete with a bibliography; features not always found in books of this sort.

If we revert to the pre-1898 county boundary, Creagh National School is reputed to be the largest primary school in Roscommon, and in this publication it can be truthfully said that full justice has been done to the institution's long history and its formative influence on so many generations of pupils. The text is skilfully interspersed with entertaining digressions during which the writer brings us on hikes across the river to tell us such interesting things as the story of the devastating gunpowder explosion of 1853 in Dunlo Street and to explain the origins of the nomenclature of the town's lanes.

To say that reading this book makes for an unalloyed pleasure would be an understatement. It's more like spending a convivial evening in the company of a knowledgeable friend who constantly enthral you with the breadth and depth of his learning without ever lapsing into tiresome pedantry. No Creagh household should be without a copy. 

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Creagh NS Celebrates 75 Years



By Zara Hill

The occasion proved to be a great opportunity to remember and praise those for their commitment, dedication and loyalty to the school over the past 75 years.

The day's celebrations included a prayer service led by Dr. John Kirby, Bishop of Clonfert, and Chairperson of the Board of Management, Fr Daniel O'Donovan as well as former Chairperson Fr Declan McInerney and Fr John Garvey.

Principal Stephanie Keating spoke of how the school has developed through the years; from a small rural two-teacher school with a modest 87 pupils in 1939, to a significant 415 pupils today.

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The school's many achievements were highlighted in academic, sporting and musical fields. It was a great privilege for the school to welcome one of its most famous past pupils, Sean Meade, winner of three All-Ireland senior football medals, back for the special occasion.

The official opening of the school's new Astro Turf Pitch, supported by Galway County Council Ballinasloe Special Grant Scheme as well as the opening of the Creagh Museum were among many significant moments of the day.



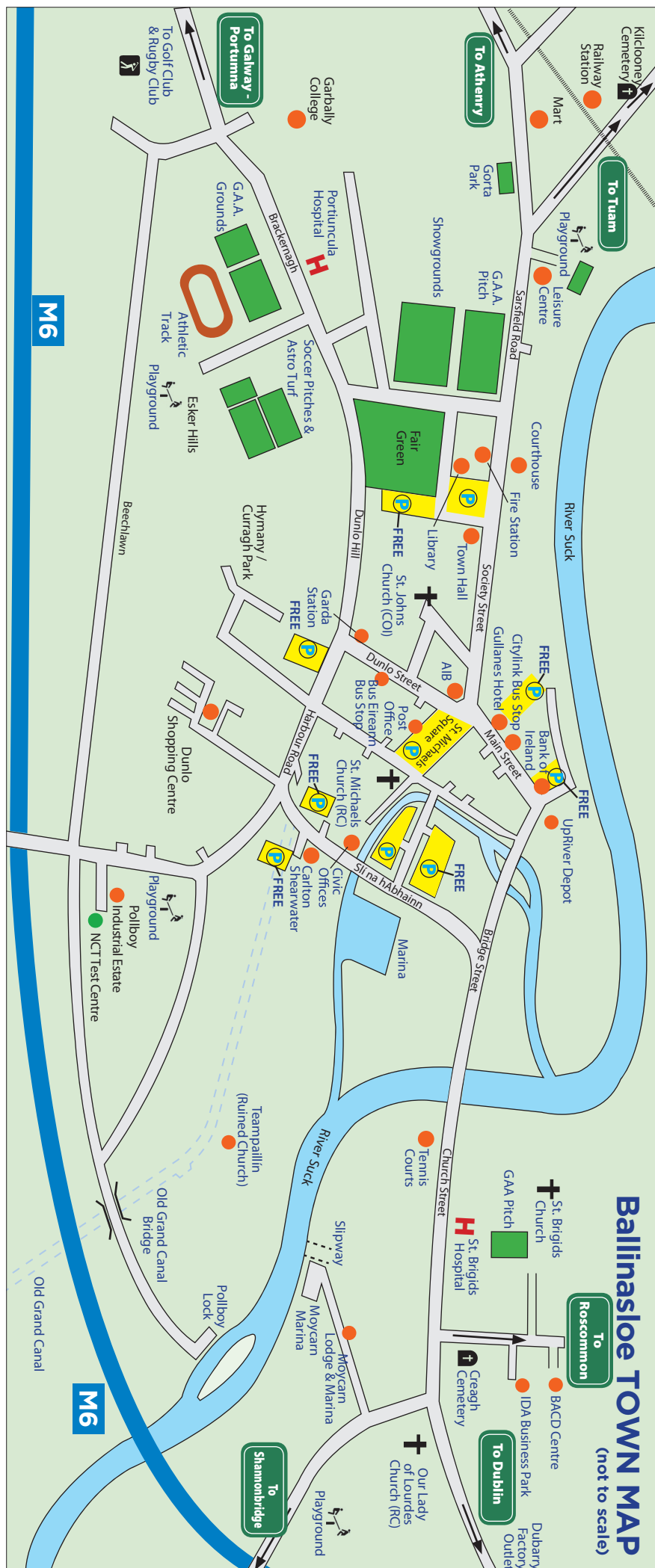
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| Date | Friday 9:15pm | Saturday Matinee 4pm | Saturday 8:30pm |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6th February & 7th February | Taken 2 | How to Train Your Dragon | The Hunger Games |
| 13th February & 14th February (Valentines Weekend) | The Fault in Our Stars | Brave | The Other Woman |
| 20th February & 21st February | P.S. I Love you ! | Despicable me | The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey |
| 27th February & 28th February | The Hangover 3 | Mr. Peabody & Sherman | Boyhood |
| 20th March & 21st March (St. Patrick's Weekend) | The Guard | The Lego Movie | Michael Collins |
| 27th March & 28th March | Pride & Prejudice | The Boxtrolls | Captain America: The Winter Soldier |

ADULT €7 • CONCESSION €5 • CHILDREN €3 • FAMILY (2 ADULTS AND 2 CHILDREN) €18



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.

Dalata Group Take Over Shearwater Plaza

By Zara Hill

After a very busy year at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, the year ended with the property undergoing a change of management group and joined Ireland's largest hotel operator: The Dalata Hotel Group.

Dalata is the largest hotel operator in



Ireland, currently operating 37 hotels with over 5,700 rooms. All of the hotels in the Group's portfolio are located in Ireland, other than the Maldron Hotel Cardiff.

Dalata was founded in June 2007 by Pat McCann, previously Chief Executive of Jurys Doyle Hotel Group from 2000 to 2006. Since 2007, Dalata has recruited a number of former senior executives from the former Jurys Doyle Hotel Group and has built a centralised management team with expertise across all areas of the hotel business.

"All of the Shearwater team are delighted to be working with the Dalata Hotel Group, who offer a huge amount of expertise and support, ensuring the "property offering" is continuously developed: enhancing the overall guest experience." Said Garrett McGuinness, General Manager.

The hotel name will undergo little change and will be named as "Shearwater Hotel." The Shearwater Hotel and Dalata team will remain focused on ensuring that the Shearwater Hotel continues to provide

Ballinasloe and the wider area; with a premier location for all types of events, be it a meal for two, memorable wedding day, productive conference or a simple relaxing drink.

The year ahead looks very positive, with Valentine's bookings already starting in earnest and Communion and Confirmation dates quickly filling. They look forward to welcoming Pat Shortt back on March 28th as part of his "selfie" tour, at which stage Shearwater weddings will be taking place most weekends and focus will be turning to Easter breaks.

"I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank all of Ballinasloe and the wider area for the continued support the hotel receives year-on-year and both the team and I look forward to continuing to welcome you back time and again." Stated Garrett.

All in all, business as usual at the Shearwater hotel, now with the added expertise and support of the Dalata Hotel Group.



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Shearwater Hotel & Spa, Marina Point, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

www.shearwaterhotel.com



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