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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 6 Issue 1: April '16 - May '16

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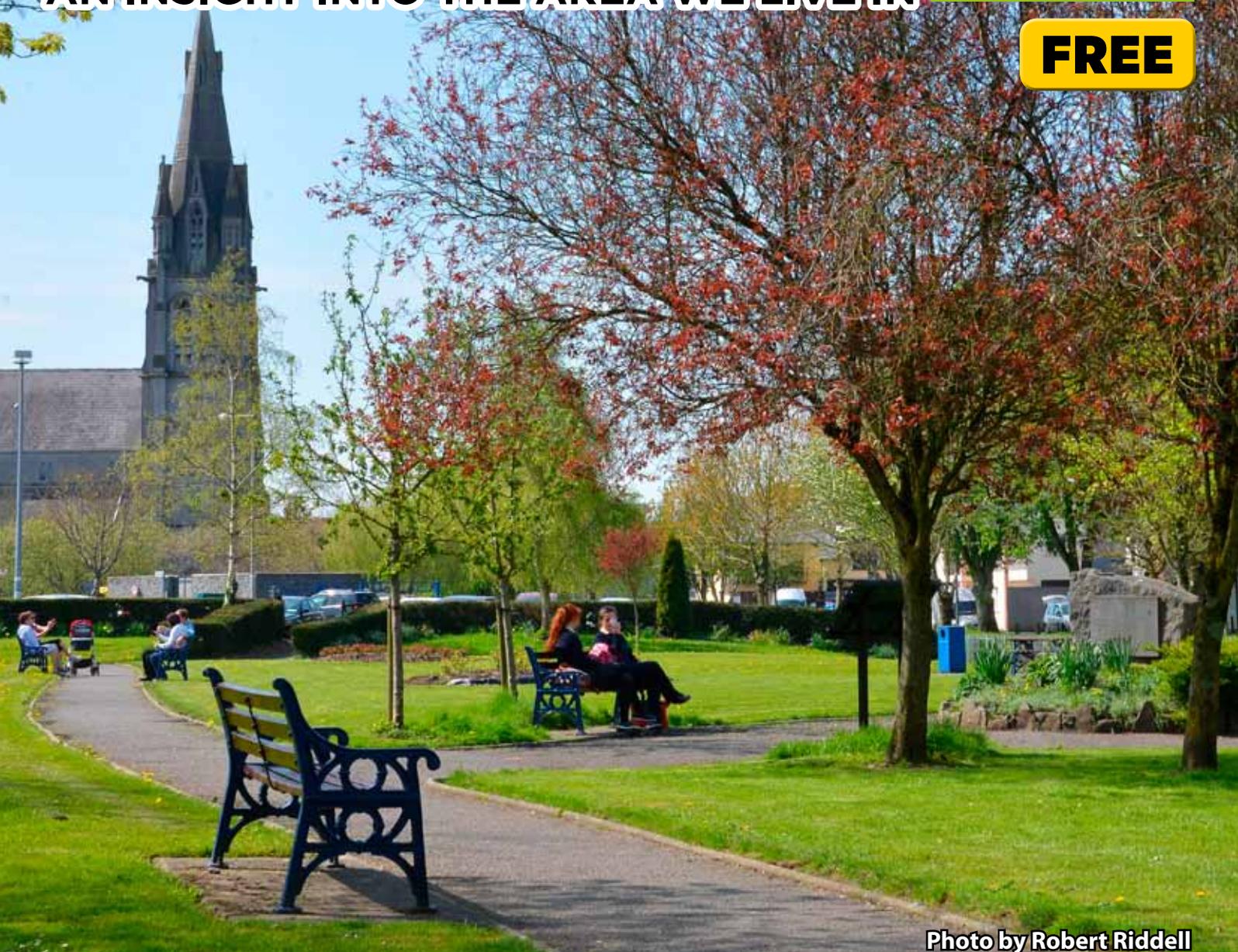


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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 6 Issue 1: April '16 - May '16

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REAMHRÁ

Welcome to the SIXTH Volume of this Community Publication or "Inflight Magazine" for our locale. Hard to believe that we began the project in the teeth of a recession and despite all the cynicism from the usual quarters, we are still here – with many community development groups looking to our example – off on line and off line as a template for success.

The fact that we have survived is a testament to the loyal subscribers who continually come up with the guts of €50,000 per year in advertising to cover the

costs of production. Please where you can, in your retail and service choices support those who have a longstanding community interest, unlike the minority percentage of businesses who in six years can't find any way to support this project for their own reasons.

Again this is a team effort and without the Trainee Reporters, the regular contributors and the engagement of various PROs from a variety of clubs and societies we would not be able to continue. However as we swing into season six we are still flabbergasted at the numbers of groups, organisations and indeed businesses who are reluctant to provide information on your activities in a timely fashion. 60% of the production cycle is spent harassing good folks for info that it is in their interest to give – that is if they are really interested in promotion. Our copy deadlines are set ANNUALLY – we should have our Autumn events typed up and online in late Spring – one would think that it might be possible to get Xmas dates from groups in early November but no, alas - we are having meetings.???? Could I implore everyone who is in control of events, activities and information to try and synchronise your watches and planning cycles to coincide to when you can get maximum publicity.

It has been a pleasure to act as Editor to chronicle, enthuse, support and sadly to note the passing of so many community stalwarts. As the people and the State commence an intensive period of commemoration – it's interesting to note in the backgrounds of so many of the Rising's leaders came and were deeply influenced by Rural Ireland that the incoming administration are to appoint a Minister for Rural Affairs - 100 years later.

As one of the lucky leaders who was not shot was oft to remark – "if you are good to your parish, you are great for your country", as the pages and contents of LIFE continue to portray.

Le Gach De Ghui
COLM CROFFY, Editor



If nothing else the inconclusive Election has brought a focus on Rural Ireland and there is no doubt that a Minister for Rural Affairs will have a portfolio in the next Cabinet.

Ireland has 79 towns with a population over 1,500 people and all these towns will be looking to get a slice of whatever cake is being divided up.

As those of you who attended our AGM last can see a lot of ground work is being done to try and make our town and hinterland a vibrant community but this does not happen without buy in and support from everyone. What are "THEY" doing is a common question asked but I always ask the question what "YOU" are doing to help. We have had tremendous support from individuals across a broad spectrum of gender, demographic & occupations for the various projects that we ran during the year and continue to rely on this goodwill to continue the job.

We need to work on the areas we can control and try to influence decision makers to ensure our Hospitals are continually upgraded, the IDA / EI have Ballinasloe on their map, services are retained, incentives are made available to create jobs in Town Centres and support new/existing Business to utilise vacant premises and Central Government need to provide greater funding for the Rural Economic Development Zones created last year.

We also need to develop what makes us unique from our Peers i.e. Historic Buildings, greater use of the River Suck and continue to develop Ballinasloe as a Sport Hubs for teams to base themselves here for weekends which will benefit the economy as a whole.

SEAMUS DUFFY, Chairman,
Ballinasloe Area Community Development.

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For submission of articles, please email ballinasloelife@hotmail.com. Deadline 13th May.

BEC

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SARITA JOHNSTON PROFILE

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

From helping in her parent's restaurant 'Ancels SteakHouse' at a young age to working with Enterprise Ireland for more than 20 years, Sarita Johnston has been a successful connoisseur of the world of business. She took time out of her busy schedule to talk to us about growing up in Ballinasloe, about some of her time in the world of business as a woman and the experiences she has had throughout it.

Growing up right in the bustling town centre, No 6 Society Street was home for her early years. As some may remember her parents, Ancel and Jo, owned a restaurant called Ancels SteakHouse 'There was always something to be done, people to be met and mischief to be had' she said. She recalled growing up in the area as a 'great' adventure. With some of her best memories being getting up to the before mentioned mischief with her still best friend Helen Clinton, and these stories are remaining top secret according to Sarita. 'I have really fond memories' she stated after.

From this early age she fell in love with business, finding anything to do with business catching her interest. With her parents being an entrepreneurial pair it is easy to see that this love runs in the genes! She went on to say "from an early age I worked either in the restaurant or at October Fair and Festival, both of which I really enjoyed. I think the enjoyment came from meeting and interacting with interesting characters at different stages in their journey... what we call 'life'!"

With these past life experiences guiding her, she entered the world of business as a profession and has been with Enterprise Ireland

in its various guises for over 20 years. Finding that the one thing that has continuously motivated her in her various roles is helping promoters through their entrepreneurial journey whether that's from start-up to established or scaling.

In her role as the Manager of Female Entrepreneurship for Enterprise Ireland, this role aims to help and give investment to female led companies across the country. Sarita spoke passionately saying "this is an important area which Enterprise Ireland puts a lot of focus on. In 2012 female led companies represented only 7% of High Potential Start-Up Investment from Enterprise Ireland. In 2015 Enterprise Ireland invested in 61 female led companies representing 28% of Start-Up investment."

Asking her opinion on the role that females have been having in the business world she noted that in recent years the number of females that have graduated from third level institutes has greatly increased in fact today more women hold higher level qualifications than men. Acknowledging that this wouldn't have been the case over 20 years ago when she was starting out in her career. The result of this now is more women in enterprise however there is a need for more females in leadership positions in these organisations. Sarita pointed out that currently only 10% of females in Ireland are represented on Corporate Boards which compared to our nearest neighbour the United Kingdom at 26%, is a rather low and worrying trend. "We need to see more females in influential decision making roles in companies." She further stated that numerous studies have been undertaken in this area and have found where companies have a more gender diverse team with females as part of the senior management team, these companies often have higher sales, better return on investment for shareholders, higher rates of success and innovation and also better corporate governance.

With these goals in mind as Manager of Female Entrepreneurship, her 2016/2017 plans have her aiming to encourage more female led businesses start and expand particularly in the regions. "I'm



working closely with Network Ireland and we are partnering on a series of roadshows in Qtr 2 2016 on the topic of 'Fuelling Ambition'." There will be one of these roadshows happening in Galway as well.

Sarita also gave some great advice to any women aspiring to be an entrepreneur. "It's very important for females starting a business to believe in their capability and to have the confidence to take the risk. Fear of failure is an inherent challenge for many a female entrepreneur but can be overcome. If you think of confidence and applying for a job, men for example are likely to apply for a job where they have only 60% of the competencies required. Females on the other hand feel they have to meet 100% of the competencies or they are not worthy of applying!!"

Particularly for women in the west of Ireland she began talking about the possibilities available to them. "The opportunities are all around us. Women traditionally set up businesses in service orientated sectors. This is changing. The whole area of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) is opening up new business opportunities. I would urge primary and secondary school educators to open up the world of STEM to young females and the opportunities that lie within these areas. Pitfalls are always there with new business, it's about taking a risk. A key learning with any new business is know your market and your customer. Product:Market fit is essential. If you don't have that you don't have a business."

She even gave her view on Ballinasloe's economic frustrations. She stated that the people of here are enterprising but to grow a local economy within a rural town such as ours, you need more indigenous businesses. Agencies are there to support but the idea generation needs to be local in order to stay local.

Noting how busy she must be we asked how she managed life at home, being the mother of her son Kyle, and find time to relax. She pointed to her husband Stephen as her greatest supporter. "Like most career focused females we need backup at home especially when you have kids. My work hours are not the normal 9-5 but can extend in to late evenings and weekends particularly as I travel the country extensively." Noting how important it is to be able to share the work load around the house. "My work is the

most enjoyable thing I do outside of family and friends. However when you like what you do it doesn't seem like work." She finds her outlet through the gym, saying that if she's not at work or at home, you will find her there working out!

When she comes back to visit her favourite thing to do is getting to spend time with her Mother. Calling her world class and a true inspiration. Sarita remarked "She is 78 and still works. In fact that's possibly where I get my work ethic!"

Sarita Johnston is just one of the many exemplary people to come out of Ballinasloe, and appreciates the town's history and the ability within it!



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Recently a Visual Windows Retail course was offered to the shopkeepers and businesses for free as a part of the Town Action Plan Project.

Facilitated by Kerry Meakin, Lecturer of Visual Merchandising and Display and of Interior Design and Furniture at the Dublin Institute of Technology, this two-day programme was designed to assist these retailers in boosting their sales and their stores aesthetic value.

Lectures covered a wide array of topics, from visual merchandising techniques to learning the current trends in their trade.

The modules focused on improving the look of their premises, the displays, shop windows and inside, to a more appealing one thereby increasing the likelihood of customer interaction and sales.

Miss Meakin showed these owners and retailers from the basics of explaining what is modern visual merchandising to the necessity of creative thinking and the use of different types of props, lighting and interior balance. The crash course went further than many probably expected, examining the importance of use of colour and display in their establishment, what grouping their produce can do, to keep up with and follow the ever changing trends and the issues associated with repetition.

She was adamant that "All retailers must be aware of and should be using the fundamental principles of display".

As a part of their programme, participants were brought on a field trip to the Dublin City Centre. They were to observe and take note of the department stores, markets and boutiques which put into practice these principles and trends. Hacketts, Brown Thomas and Avoca were all visited as ones to observe for changing trends.



Kerry Meakin,
Visual Windows Retail Display

Shortly after their two-day excursion, Kerry came to the area to hold 1 on 1 premises consultation with the 12 retailers to see how they have been progressing. She saw some very encouraging signs as it was evident that they had begun to put some of which they learned into practice "It was great to see. The retailers were very proactive and took on board a lot of what was covered, though there was still need for improvement it was a huge step in the right direction" noted Kerry.

She was quick to pay tribute to all the businesses in Ballinasloe though. Saying that since the Celtic Tiger crash it has been very hard and incredibly difficult for all retailers, especially the smaller ones to survive. "Any who has survived have worked incredibly hard to do so! Many have taken wage cuts and have had to let go staff to manage to still be here."

Her mantra is clear "Those who wish to remain around for a long time have to adapt with the changing world and yes it is difficult to do so but there is always help and options for those who look to advance themselves" states Kerry.

Lyn Donnelly BACD Manager reviewed the Internal Evaluation of the project from Kerry and while positive on the outcomes for those who attended, was disappointed that after the

Town Team sponsored the course - there was such a small take up.

Overall Lyn mentioned that little attention is being paid to emerging trends, no observance of patterns externally, not keeping up with times, more engagement with change, many windows not attractive. Many shopfronts don't convey the range of goods or the sizes of the stores - need for more intervention, more regular changing displays, better night time lighting - even displaying opening times or online presence all lag - in common with a lot of our provincial peers.

"It's obvious from this pilot project that while good inroads were made for the participants we have a road to travel cumulatively to enhance the retail experience and returnee shopping" said Lyn.

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€98,000 FOR EMERGENCY FLOOD RELIEF IN TOWN CENTRE

Caretaker Minister for the OPW Simon Harris has allocated €98,000 to Galway Co Co for a mobile flood barrier to protect St Michaels Square and the adjoining area.

When he visited the town at Christmas this was the top priority on a list of measures outlined to him on the day and his department along with Galway County Council engineering staff must be acknowledged for such a quick response on this issue.

Cllr Aidan Donohue welcomed the announcement. Well done to all involved, as this is the first part of a long list of works to be carried out in the Ballinasloe area to alleviate homes and businesses from future flooding.

The Inflatable Mobile Flood barrier can be deployed to any part of East Galway at the authorisation of the County Council, however it is hoped that it will be utilised mainly in the protection of the town centre businesses from floodwaters.



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OUR LOCAL AWARD WINNING FISHMONGERS OVER 10 YEARS SUPPLYING US BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

For more than 10 years, Friday is the day when scores of regulars from Town and Country converge on Mal's "Croffy's Yard" in Main St. For every Friday is the day, when the Gannet's fish van arrives in town in the morning, loaded with its great selection of fresh fish & seafood. Salmon, Whiting, Cod, Mackerel, Seabass, Haddock, Monkfish, Scallops, Mussels, etc....the list is longer...

Gannet's founder & fish buyer, Stefan travels to fish auctions in Rossaveal (Connemara), Union Hall (West Cork), Killibegs, and select their fresh catch as soon as landed.

25 years in the job, Stefan knows where and when, he can get the best quality and value for each species, and can proudly claim that 90 % of all their fish is locally caught, supporting Irish fishermen.

No tasteless imported fish fillets @ Gannet Fishmongers. The fish are purchased whole/on the bone and filleted in Gannet's modern fish factory in Galway, because quality and taste are always better when homeproduced. All the fillets are carefully deboned by hand to remove all the nasty bits so they can be enjoyed by everyone.



The Fishmongers at Gannet are working very hard to get all this fish ready, and they all get to travel to the markets themselves to present, meet and serve the many customers and regulars for whom they have prepared and filleted those fish.

Gannet fishmongers fame for their amazing fish

displays are recognised Nationally, and Gannet has received many Awards such as Board Bia "Best supplier of the Year" or The Irish Independent Newspaper "30 best Irish food stores."

When shopping for your fish at Gannet fish counter, you will always be served by a professional and experienced Fishmonger, so even if you lack the confidence to cook fish or to try something new, just ask them. They are always full of advice and tips on how to prepare an easy and tasty fish dinner for all the family.

They will typically advise you on how to get the best value according to the seasons, on portion sizes and everything you may want to know about their weekly selection.

Gannet Fish markets, Every Friday at 9am-2pm, Croffy's Yard, Ballinasloe.



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THE CASTLEGREGORY CAKE CREATOR



BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

Originally from Castlegregory, on the Dingle Peninsula, well known baker Grace Daniels moved to town for the age old reason of love!

While in college in Galway she met a girl from here and became great friends. Having met a local friend of hers at a wedding, ten months later she "temporarily" moved into his house and seven years later she is still here!

Grace has emphasised how much she loves living here, "even if I am a bit far from the beach considering where I grew up." She stated how it is very friendly town, "especially since I had my son last year as there are so many parent and baby groups."

Inheriting her passion for baking from her mother, she had a late start having only begun baking at 24 when she returned from a year in Toronto! Though she discovered she knew what looked right, going into and coming out of the oven from watching her Mother, so it all came quite easy and natural to her!

Having studied Art & Design she became interested in the "edible art" aspect of sugarcraft cake decorating. Combining creative skills with the baking knowledge her mom passed on and specialising in highly personalised designs with handmade decorations. She is renowned for making sure that her cakes are all baked perfectly and taste delicious, "as that is just as important as the appearance!"

She started her business, Grace Daniels Cakes, soon after she moved here and in her words "it has been a great benefit to be based in Ballinasloe." Working from home, she is perfectly located for wedding bookings all over Galway and the Midlands,



and clients find it easy to collect occasion cakes from her due to easy access from the motorway. "Without which it would also be impossible for me to deliver the fragile wedding cakes I create."

Grace has had amazing success and response using social media for her business. "As my business is incredibly visual it's well suited to social media, every week I take photos of new cakes so it's constantly being updated. Facebook and Instagram are great for reaching a large audience, by keeping my profiles up to date and interesting my images reach people searching for wedding suppliers or for custom cakes." She has recently started sharing more behind-the-scenes photos when baking and decorating, allowing for more interaction with her customers!

This is great news with wedding season beginning soon. Being the busiest time of the year for her she has found that there are more weddings spread throughout the seasons now but summer is still the busiest time. "I'll have little time for anything else between the baking, decorating and setting up wedding cakes which makes my weeks very full on. I do plan to keep adding to my blog and hopefully get that out there a bit more as it's going well so far."

When not working she finds plenty to do in the area! From walking around Pollboy, Garbally or Portumna Woods with her family on days off to kayaking on the river ways, which "are so beautiful for it." Saying it is a great way to see nature and history from an unusual viewpoint. Being a "big foodie" as well she finds Ballinasloe's location fantastic for being able to travel to different towns and cities so easily. "Kerry can be isolated that way, seven years later I'm still getting a kick out of how accessible everywhere is from here!"

If you would like to see some of her works visit her Facebook page at Grace Daniels Cakes.

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NEW STONE MASON BUSINESS

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

Local resident Slawomir (Steven) Probiez established "Ballinasloe Headstones" a little over a year ago - specialising in the erection of new headstones in granite, limestone or marble including the cleaning and restoration of old headstones and additional inscriptions. Originally from Poland he is living now in Creagh with his wife and 2 children.

His motivation to start up Ballinasloe Headstones was due to the high competition in stonemasonry. He decided then to start up his organisation to deliver a diligent work ethic, high standards and the highest quality combined with offering of a compassionate, sympathetic and sensitive service by ensuring that people under difficult circumstances receive the best advice and quality of goods.

Steven has 10 years' experience operating in this industry ever since his arrival to Ireland. On his apprenticeship he was taught how to skilfully cut, shape and polish headstones, fireplaces and granite worktops. Having a longstanding working relationship with the biggest and best quality suppliers, he is able to source his materials quickly. This allows him access to a "large selection of headstones in any colour and shape."

So far business has been slow, both a blessing and a curse in

terms of his line of work, but he believes that with the passing of winter restoration services will become more popular. With times difficult he has stated that "My motivation is my family, my dear wife and two little daughters", though it should be noted that with his high quality services and compassionate nature, one can be sure that his business will pick up soon.

His workshop is based in Ballydangan, Athlone Co. Roscommon or you can contact him at 085 772 2131 or on his Facebook page Ballinasloe Headstones.



SUCCESSFUL CHARITY DAY IN TINY TOTS CRECHE



Some of the preschool children from Tiny Tots Creche & Educational Preschool presenting Jackie from the Cancer Support Centre in Brackernagh with a cheque for €350. They raised the money by having a Christmas Jumper Day this winter.

The Tiny Tots Creche team led and managed by Jennifer Sheridan enjoy having fun Charity days in Tiny Tots.

Last year alone they participated in other fund raising events. The children wrapped and filled

shoe boxes for the Shoebox appeal and they also raised money for Childline by having a Cheerios breakfast morning.

"Giving to charity teaches children valuable life lessons, they learn to be considerate of others, to show compassion and it makes them aware that not everyone is as fortunate as them. Giving is an excellent way to build character" states Creche Owner / Manager Jennifer Sheridan.

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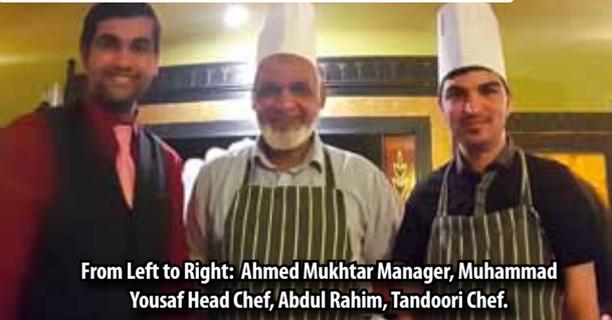
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NOOR TANDOORI – 7 Years Bringing Indian Cuisine to Town



BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



From Left to Right: Ahmed Mukhtar Manager, Muhammad Yousaf Head Chef, Abdul Rahim, Tandoori Chef.

Noor Tandoori was opened some seven years ago by Ahmed Mukhtar and his family. Situated on Society Street their Indian and Pakistani restaurant has transformed from a small and struggling business to a popular and exciting restaurant which offers a wide range of services to their customers and was nominated for a number of categories under the Restaurant Association of Ireland Awards 2015.

Almost closing their doors in 2014 for good, Ahmed recalls that “we had our mind made up of moving out of here as things got really quiet.” but thankfully they stayed and proceeded to undertake a massive renovation of their premises

inside and out. This was followed by their most successful year yet “Things did change big time!” Their new success can be pointed to the amazing services they have been offering for some time combined with a new direction they took.

They have been offering catering services for the last 4 years to their customers, looking at other restaurants successes with this as their inspiration, Noor Tandoori are capable of doing outdoor catering for up to 250 people and can seat 100 people in their premises. This combined with their excellent staff, Ahmed himself who is a hardworking undergraduate studying marketing management in NUIG and their head chef Muhammad Yousaf who has over 20 years’ experience in cooking Indian and Pakistani cuisine, promises top quality service.

This combined with their 100% gluten free and celiac friendly approach has made their food not only scrumptious, but also healthy! Inspired by a page he saw on Facebook Ahmed pointed out that to provide healthy food to his customers was imperative, both to him and his clientele. “I decided that things have to change in order for me to survive, I will have to give customers a healthier option and as a result I have a lot of regulars who come to me every second week for a takeaway if not once a week!”

So if you’re looking for not only a tasty bite to eat but a healthy one as well, visit Noor Tandoori!

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SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS APPLAUDED FOR THEIR ENTERPRISE

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



Ballinasloe Credit Union

BEC

Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre
An initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd.



2016 BEST Finalists along with teachers, judges and sponsors of the event.



2016 BEST Overall Winners Jared Mullin, Cathal Roddy, Nessian Leahy from Presentation College Headford with BCU chairman Adrian Ahern and BACD Ltd Chairman Seamus Duffy.

The 2016 BEST (Ballinasloe Entrepreneurial Skills Tournament), where the town's best and brightest young people saw in a marvellous display of entrepreneurial spirit, six winners, chosen out of 13 finalists, who had already beaten 121 entrants to this stage of the competition.

The 13 projects were displayed on the Awards night in the Shearwater Hotel by the students and showed a remarkably high level of creativity and ingenuity from Ballinasloe's young people.

This year's BEST Competition was boosted by the inclusion of an additional school, Presentation College Headford which competed along with the 3 schools from previous years :- Scoil Mhuire and Garbally College, Ballinasloe and Holy Rosary Mountbellew.

Sponsored by the Ballinasloe Credit Union and organised by the B.A.C.D. Ltd the competition again this year was deemed a huge success. The event was also supported by Bank of Ireland, Headford and Rothwell Staunton Auctioneers.

THE PRIZES AWARDED AS FOLLOWS:

PRIZE WINNER(S): Orla Madden, Abbie Cunningham, Clodagh Powell - Ard Schoil Mhiure

Hydea Cycle - This is a simple idea, a straw for cyclists which means they can hydrate without having to take bottles from the holder while cycling. Definite safety benefits with this product and could be developed for both casual and professional cyclists.

PRIZE WINNER(S): Gerard Colleran - Garbally College

My Notes App - A clever improvement on stuff already being used. The app allows video, rough notes, doodling, mind maps, pictures to be stored in the one app on a tablet or phone. Gerard presentation impressed the judges particularly the beta version which he has developed.

PRIZE WINNER(S): Rachel Whyte & Ailbhe Hanlon - Ard Schoil Mhiure

Waste Watches - A food waste app which monitors the best by dates on food in the fridge. Using a system of colours the app alert people when food dates are about to expire. This project has considerable market potential as waste food and food safety are major areas for cost savings and conservation.

PRIZE WINNER -JOINT RUNNER UP: Dean Connell - Holy Rosary College Mountbellew

Cyberflash - This is a good idea with considerable potential. It is a simple study tool with an intuitive interface. Dean's presentation was excellent and included a prototype which was impressive.

PRIZE WINNER -JOINT RUNNER UP: Mark Fitzpatrick - Holy Rosary College Mountbellew

White Board Marker & Eraser Combo - Anyone who uses white boards knows that it is a pain trying to wipe stuff off the board or make simple corrections. We use our fingers, sleeves or anything else we can find. Based on the model of a pencil, this marker has an eraser attached to its back for ease of use. Very clever.

OVERALL WINNERS 2016: Jared Mullin, Cathal Roddy, Nessian Leahy Presentation College Headford

School App - This app. is based on a lot of research by the three students on what will work for schools. The app includes a site plan of the school, time table, calendar, canteen menu, news stream, sms texting. The prototype is excellent and the app is scheduled to go live later in the year. The judges see excellent potential in selling the system to other schools.

Chairman of BACD Seamus Duffy thanked the Schools, the students and the sponsors for their contribution and efforts in keeping the tournament alive and keeping the idea of entrepreneurship and business making to the front in our second level schooling.

" I want to especially commend the winners and the runners up for their energy and creativity and hope that some years down the road when they are setting up a new business they will consider some of the attractive options supports and space that the BACD and our Enterprise Centre has to offer".

He also thanked Tournament Co - ordinator John Power and the judges Gerry Kelly and Pat Ward for their time and efforts.

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SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

The Ballinasloe Area Community Development Annual General Meeting reviewed a very busy and successful year which saw the Enterprise Centre enjoy 100% occupancy levels for the first time in 17 years; the LIFE Magazine almost break even on production costs, the launching & implementing of the Town Team Action Plan and the awarding of REDZ designation.

The AGM was attended by a large number of members, and individuals representing different sections of the community.

Chairman Seamus Duffy, in his address focused on areas of improvements to help Companies such as BACD to be able to make this a better town to work, socialise and live in.

Having highlighted the fact that BACD received €60,000 last year via the REDZ funding and that it was clear that a new senior minister for Rural Affairs will be appointed shortly, he listed some 13 separate proposals to be considered by any new Government serious about regional – balanced development. These ranged from applying further funding to further the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) with a fulltime employee who could reporting to the Director for Economic Development, to the reinvesting in the local Hospital, and to supporting the development of unique features of towns, such as utilising facilities to create a Sports Hub.

This had been a monumental amount of success found from their actions over the course of a year. The growth of the Business Centre itself, with the occupancy rate reaching over 100%, and some 19 enterprises within have grown since first entering! He then highlighted the steady progression of the LIFE magazine and the online reach of the LIFE Facebook page and Ballinasloe blog. The numbers were very impressive with one Facebook post reaching 90,000+ people and are averaging 24,000 people visiting our Blog. & website.

Further more the performance of the Town Team Action Plan Projects was praised. The 1st to the 8th have all met fantastic success, from the highly popular Christmas Lighting Ceremony to the Zombie Halloween Walk which saw over 2000 participants. The 9th project was also introduced, the Sports Hub scheme plans on making the area a place teams from across the country will come to take part in competition, train and stay. He thanked Jactina Divilly and her colleagues on the Town Team Group for their work and commitment in the programme. He also thanked his fellow directors, and the Manager Lyn Donnelly for her tireless commitment to the huge and growing workload that she continually gets through.

Following this the Financial Report of the Charitable Company was presented by Auditor George Coyle, with a total turnover of €243,785 and Expenses, including interests and similar charges, at €234,435 the Centre made a profit of €9,350.

Guest Speaker Mike Devane of Galway Chamber of Commerce who is heading up the economic strategy group, was introduced. Their main aim was to take away notional divide between city and county, as it's not a reality and doesn't make any sense and they started to reach out

and include the county in what they were doing.

The second objective was that they are going back to a project that they started a long time ago called "The Atlantic Corridor" and decided to reach out to other places along that access and build a counter balance to the East Coast. He stated that there are very obvious and significant assets on the access route in the West, such as the people, Road Networks, Airports, Media and Film and the Ports, and to invest in these will create a significant increase in jobs.

Ciaran Mullyooly The RTE Midlands Correspondent was then introduced and he spoke about his home of Lanesborough and the rise and fall of the town due to the presence of ESB and Bord na Mona and their cut backs. The crash in the economy of their town was only overcome through the community banding together and working tirelessly.

From his work as a Midlands correspondent and seeing rural towns struggling he was passionate that it is necessary for them all to create a better first impression. He also emphasised the importance of the Leader Programme to be reinstated to boost their chances of receiving rural grants and funding to foster and support micro enterprise.

Newly elected TD Eugene Murphy in his address pledged his commitment to work tirelessly for the community and business interests of the town and was very impressed by the "positivity and progress by those showing a genuine community interest".

At the meetings close, Seamus thanked the funders Galway County Council, Ballinasloe Credit Union and Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce for their wonderful and continued support.

The new Directors serving this year are Seamus Duffy, Michael Dolan, Paul Hardagon, Dan Dowling, Mike Dolan, Cllr. Donal Burke, Fergal Ryan, Joe Lyons, Tina Kelly, Ann Conlon, Sean Fletcher and Noel Madden.



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NEW TD EUGENE MURPHY IN CAMERA



BY COLM CROFFY



Signing the Register

Elected at this first ever tilt at a Dail Seat on the final count, serving alongside sitting TDs Michael Fitzmaurice and Denis Naughton - Eugene's connections to Ballinasloe might be few since he is a native of Strokestown in Roscommon, but they are memorable to him.

"My warmest memories of the town have to be the birth of my lovely two children Nadine (18) and Rian (13) in Portiuncula", they were very special moments and the drive home for me and my wife, like so many from the wider area, always brings back fond memories".

He also remembers doing a number of documentaries and live broadcasts with Shannonside FM where he was a presenter and of course he has a brother John living in Four Roads and he has shared many enjoyable visits for shopping and socialising with him in the town down through the years.

Eugene's political career may not have begun here in Ballinasloe but it is safe to say he has a vast amount of representative experience and a good record under his belt to bring to the town. Roscommon County Council was Eugene's first political victory as he "was the youngest ever Councillor elected at 24 years of age in 1985 and has held his seat at every local election since".

When speaking of the problems the town is facing Eugene believes "Ballinasloe has suffered as much as any town of its size." With job losses, especially in the manufacturing sector, Eugene says "the town is still suffering from lack of new employment opportunities."

He has proposed that joint initiatives of the Local Enterprise Officers of both Roscommon and Galway County Council be focused on the town to boost enterprise and jobs.

"The IDA and Enterprise Ireland have to reorientate their focus on spearheading investment into the County Town and not just letting the City or Athlone continue to choke up with congestion. There are 16 acres of zoned land in the IDA Business park in Creagh that could take any type of industry", states Eugene.

One of the greatest problems facing the town right now is the drastic changes to the face of Ballinasloe's healthcare sector. "People are rightly concerned about Portiuncula and the A&E," he said. Regarding the hospital in Roscommon and recent comparisons made between the facilities there and in Ballinasloe, Eugene's chief worry is that all the language, and reports from HSE and Saolta are exactly the same in the years leading up to the downgrading of the Roscommon General Hospital. "I don't buy this line that the HSE is answerable to no one in Government, it was a

Fianna Fail Government who directed the old Health Board to develop the ER in Roscommon and it will be a Government decision to continually develop Portiuncula or to reduce it to a day hospital – while everything centralises to UHG which our Taoiseach admitted was NOT fit for purpose recently".

A pressing matter for all towns of this size is the balanced development. Looking to the town's future Eugene sees a great challenge ahead" the Galway County Council Executive have to step up to the mark – they can't continue to allow the City CHOKe and apparently throw this fine once very vibrant County Town to the wolves." He is looking for an early meeting with the County Officials to discuss what strategy they are putting in place to reorientate their energies locally in the absence of a Town Council – which has allowed an accountability deficit to creep in. "Great pressure has to be placed on the Executive in relation to investment, parking, flooding, enhancement and a variety of other issues that can enhance the town core".

"A lot of good work is being done by various agencies," he said regarding events he witnessed at the BACD Annual General Meeting, including the provision of facilities, structures and work spaces. "Nothing in my career has ever been achieved by negativity and I must say in my canvass and in the last few days there are a mighty amount of groups and individuals who have a great community interest in the town and I will be supporting and working alongside them".

He is also very keen to push at national level the introduction of Flood Insurance for the business owner, home owners and indeed farmers who were devastated by the recent flooding. "If it can be done in Britain – it can be achieved here if there is a will".

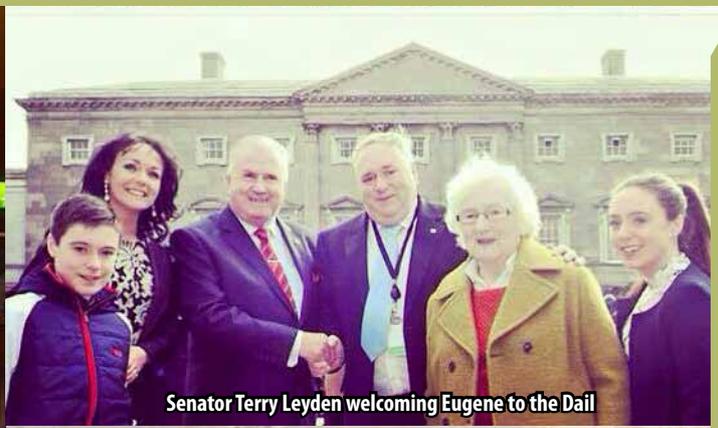
Another issue effecting the local economy according to the Fianna Fail TD is farming. "Farming is key to the rural economy, people sometime forget that this move to Large Corporate farming is a disaster for the country and the schemes and CAP programme will have to be reviewed to allow for adequate redistribution to the smaller holder". He also wants to see more younger farmers entitled to benefits from current schemes.

"The town has many positives; it needs employment and a new confidence. The time for analysis is long past – my focus will be on solving and tackling with energy the range of issues that have been around for the past number of years."

Eugene is opening a constituency office locally in a few weeks, will be meeting groups on a fortnightly basis and he is available to assist locally and can be contacted at on his mobile at (087) 4353834. Or his temporary old email address clleugenemurphy@eircom.net.



Talking with Peter Finnegan, Head Clerk of Dail Eireann



Senator Terry Leyden welcoming Eugene to the Dail



Eugene with his Family



Eugene with his Brother Joe, who was successfully co-opted onto his County Council Seat.



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PIETA HOUSE DARKNESS INTO LIGHT ...

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



Marion Ruane and Des Coughlan (DIL launch)

Committee Photo With Special Guests: (DIL Launch)

Back row (l-r): Seamus McCarthy, GELS Chairman Arthur Carr, Cathal Mannion, Joe Connolly, Padraic Mannion, Gerry Roche, John Scully, Brian Derrane.
Front row (l-r): Ber Coughlan, Ivan Smyth, Michelle Kelly, Avril Smyth, Miriam Mullery.

Photo taken at Ballinasloe Darkness Into Light launch on March 11th in the Shearwater Hotel. From left: Michaela Smyth, Deirdre Smyth, Christy Smyth, Gerry Roche

The town will host its second ever Darkness into Light 5km event for Pieta House, thanks to the sterling effort of the team behind Galway East Life Support G.E.L.S.

The community will join over 80 venues across Ireland on Saturday May 7th at 4.15 am for this symbolic event that invites people everywhere to walk together from darkness into light, in memory of those who have lost their lives through suicide.

GELS founder, co-ordinator and Chairperson of the Ballinasloe Darkness into Light committee, Arthur Carr is thrilled to have the opportunity again to facilitate this wonderful event.

"It's a great honour to host Darkness into Light for a second year. We had over 1000 people walk last year and it really created a wonderful sense of a community joined together. We hope that numbers will increase this year" stated Arthur.

Ber Coughlan, Treasurer, decided to get involved last year and found the Darkness into Light walk to be an incredibly unique experience "I got involved to give something back to the community" said Ber.

Also involved in the running of this event is Community Garda, Aiden Lonergan "I have seen how suicide has affected families from different backgrounds and anything that helps to prevent suicide is to be supported".

Pieta is currently "the only organisation providing a professional, face to face free service for people in the acute stages of distress", according to Pieta House's Director of Fundraising and Advocacy, Tom McEvoy.

Darkness into Light accounts for one third of Pieta House's annual income to fund its services and it is a truly poignant event, representing hope and solidarity for those in distress, while symbolising the work of

Pieta House, bringing people from darkness into light.

GELS PRO Avril Smyth was delighted with the turnout for the official launch. Committee member Ivan Smyth remarked, "After meeting people from Pieta House and people who have been helped them, I know I made the right decision to get involved with Galway East Life Support and Darkness Into Light."

Speakers on the night of the launch included Joan Freeman, the founder of Pieta House, 1980 All-Ireland winning hurling captain Joe Connolly, Pieta House Director of Fundraising and Advocacy, Tom McEvoy and TG4 presenter and representative of An Cheathru Rua's Darkness into Light walk Máire Treasa Ní Dhubhghaill, Kevin Molloy, a representative of Electric Ireland, Addiction Counsellor Liam Curley, Brian Derrane, representative of GELS and Arthur Carr, the Chairman of Ballinasloe's Darkness into Light Committee. Also in attendance on the night were current Galway hurlers Padraic and Cathal Mannion and TV Personality Seán Bán Breathnach.

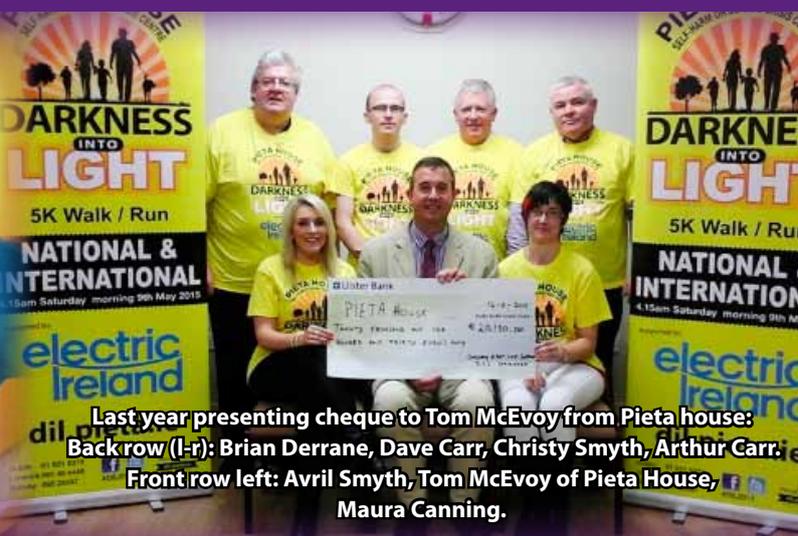
The GELS committee are looking forward to the 5km event in May and encourage people to get registering now rather than leaving it to the night of the event.

Early bird registration is closed and registration is €25. OAP/student registration is €15 and Family (2 Adults and children) registration is €65. Children under 14 go free but must be accompanied by an adult.

Register online now at dil.pieta.ie. For more information, contact GELS at (085) 1237878 or email ballinasloedil@gmail.com.

The Gels Committee are collecting clean label free jam jars for the event, and would like to ask anyone who has them to please drop them to the GELS centre in Cullen's yard from Monday to Wednesday 10am-2pm or contact Arthur on 085-1237878

... WALK TO RETURN IN MAY



Last year presenting cheque to Tom McEvoy from Pieta house:
 Back row (l-r): Brian Derrane, Dave Carr, Christy Smyth, Arthur Carr.
 Front row left: Avril Smyth, Tom McEvoy of Pieta House,
 Maura Canning.



Arthur Carr, Máire Treasa Ní Dhubhghaill and James Campbell (DIL launch)



TV students from Tuam and Corofin who attended the launch in the Shearwater hotel on 11th March

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Pictured at the Launch of the Ballinasloe Musical Society "Producers" Show in Gullanes Hotel - which was sponsored by Ballinasloe Credit Union were (l to r): Aidran Ahearn Chair BCU, Gerry Sweeney BMS, Noel Madden Manager BCU and Lisa Whyte Vice Chair of BMS.

At a time when you may be under financial strain, your Credit Union continues to be here for you. Whatever your circumstance, the credit union is here to assist, by offering you an affordable loan.

The Credit Union is welcoming new members every day and is providing loans to its members. In the past year it has provided loans to members worth over €12,000,000.

Credit Union Manager Noel Madden acknowledged that "we understand the positive effect a personal loan can have on your life, giving you the chance to get things when you need them, so we always look at your whole story. We only propose personal loans with realistic terms, which you can pay back in a way that works best for you".

Before taking out a loan of any kind, it's worth taking the time to

understand how lending works. That way you can compare the benefits and be aware of the risks.

The great thing about a personal loan at your Credit Union is that there are no hidden fees or transaction charges. The credit union interest rates are fair and reasonable and are capped by law. Repayments are calculated on your reducing balance, so you pay less interest with each repayment. Your credit union loan is also insured in the event of your death – subject to terms and conditions - at no direct cost to you. Other lenders charge for this. You can pay off your loan early, make additional lump sum repayments or increase your regular repayments all without a penalty.

Communion and Confirmation season is once more upon us and it can be an expensive time for parents, adding pressure to already stretched household budgets. It is important that families in the local area know that the credit union is here to help.

A loan from the Credit Union is a much better and more sensible option than borrowing from high interest rate moneylenders and we would urge you to come and talk to us first before you approach one of these companies. The ethos of the credit union is simple – we are here to offer friendly, accessible financial services in the local community through savings and competitive loan services. We would urge anyone who is planning for the costs of Communion or Confirmation to call in and speak to us.

Loans are only one of many services available to members at their local credit union, so whatever stage of life you are at - we are here to help. Savings in the Credit Union are safe and secure and are guaranteed by the Governments Depositor Guarantee Scheme. For more information on all of the services available at Ballinasloe Credit Union visit our website www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie.

Michael Wards



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WHERE ARE THEY NOW? LIAM KELLER

BY KEN KELLY



LIAM KELLER arrived as a student in Garbally College, Ballinasloe in 1949, following his late brother Michael, and since then has been one of the leading businessmen in his adopted town. Born in Enniscrone, Co. Sligo, the family moved to the town when their father, Bill, was employed in the local Solicitors firm of Patrick Hogan & Co. and their mother subsequently established Curra Mor Guesthouse.

Following his Leaving Cert., Liam gained employment in the well-known Rafter's Grocery outlet in Main St., before becoming a Laboratory Technician at the Burnhouse Factory in Poolboy. In the evenings he embarked on setting up a fuel supply business with the help of his close friend, the late Shay Darcy. This was a huge success and heralded his enthusiasm for greater challenges.

In 1955, Liam took to the entertainment business and succeeded in bringing Ireland's first showband, The Clipper Carlton, to perform at a dance in the local Town Hall. It was a sell-out with the limited number of 400 tickets being snapped up at ten shillings each. It was the first-ever appearance by the Strabane-based band in the West of Ireland and a major coup for Liam. He followed this up with promoting dances in the Town Hall for local groups and even staged a "Bachelor's Ball" in Moore Hall before moving to the Crystal Ballroom in Kiltormer where he booked top showbands of the time like Denis Cronin, Donie Collins, Jimmy Wiley etc.

A founder member of the Town Development Association in 1954, together with the late Tadhg O'Connor, Tadhg McLoughlin. Michael Ryan and Oliver O'Grady, the young entrepreneur helped to initiate the Industrial Parade for the opening of the Great October Fair, which

was led by the Artane Boys' Band; the election of a King of the Fair (Joe Higgins) and selection of a Horse of the Fair. Liam was one of the town's greatest promoters both at home and abroad, working tirelessly for the business community.

In 1958, Liam Keller and his late brother, Michael, decided to purchase the Travel Agency and hardware business of Cogavin & Co. in Main St. The long-established agency was only the 6th in Ireland to have been issued with a Travel licence and the brothers agreed that Michael would take charge of this outlet while Liam managed the hardware. Both businesses flourished and expanded but the sudden passing of Michael in 1976 came as a huge blow. With the help of his family, Liam continued with both operations and in 1980 set up Campotel to cater for camping holidays in French seaside resorts.



Today Keller Campotel are amongst the top family holiday specialists in Europe, have state-of-the-art sites in France (16), Spain (4) and Italy (2), employing up to eighty people in high season and accommodating up to 2,000 tourists on any one night. This enterprise is managed in France by Liam's daughter Sheena while sons Pearse is in charge of the Ballinasloe

Travel Agency and Bill manages the Hardware Business.

A lover of all sports, Liam was a member of the Ballinasloe Rugby team which won the Connacht Junior cup, beating OLBC Galway 3-0, in 1956. The team was captained by the late Shay Darcy and one of the props was future Ireland international captain and Lions stalwart Ray McLoughlin. In the Old Whigham Hall, Liam displayed his prowess at Table Tennis, competing in many inter-town competitions. As a valued member of the Golf Club,

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he initiated the President's-Captain's Mixed AM fund-raiser for the club, which ran over two days for nineteen years with the winning quartet qualifying for a holiday in France, compliments of Keller Travel.

A founder member of the Relays Drama Group, Liam took to the stage in 1958 as "Liam Scuab" in the John B. Keane blockbuster "Sive." The play was staged in each of the four provinces, helping to raise monies for a run of disastrous Relays Athletic Meetings. Throughout the three month campaign, Mr Keller supplied transport to bring the play's scenery to each venue. Some years later he teamed up with his late brother Michael and sister Maureen when Relays staged the Sean O'Casey play "The Plough and the Stars" with the producer being once again the late Fr. Kevin Ryle.

Always willing to do his bit for Ballinasloe, Liam was a founder member of the May Week Coarse Angling Festival, in the 70's, which attracted over 100 British anglers annually. The Angling Times decided to hold their Winter League Final on the River Suck, boosting the economy of the town for several years. He also travelled to Tourist Fairs and Exhibitions at home and abroad, highlighting the attractions of his home town and surrounding areas.

Entering political life in 1967, Liam Keller was elected to Ballinasloe Urban Council as a non-party candidate. He was selected as the Council's vice-chairman in his first year and was honoured to be voted in Chairman of the Council in 1969. He spent seven years on the Council before deciding not to seek re-election.

Recently celebrating his 80th birthday, Liam now lives in retirement with his wife Olive in the family home. Their offsprings Sheena, Pearse and Bill are now in charge and have kept the Keller name to the fore, both nationally and internationally. Being over sixty years in business, Liam has seen many changes in the business, sporting and cultural life of Ballinasloe.

"I suppose the closure of our big factories decimated the economic life of the town and without any new employers, things just got worse. I hope we will rise like the Phoenix from the ashes and prove to be a driving force once again. We are not unique with so many outlets closing down but I believe there is a spirit and a will there, by the business community to fight back" he concluded.

NEW KICK START FOR LAWRENCETOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



LAWRENCETOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEETING
 Back row: L-R Brendie Dervan, Jacqueline Nevin, Alan Pardy, Celine Donnelly, Noel Treacy, Meave Ryder, Colin Ryder, Tony McKeigue, Justin Donnelly
 Front Row: James Joyce, Ger Tully (Secretary), Loraine Treacy (Treasurer), Brian Kenny (Chairman), Seamus Duffy (Chairman BACD Ltd), Rose Muldoon.

The Lawrencetown Community Development Group held A Community Consultation Meeting recently in the Community Hall with over 60 attendees representing many different groups and ages from the area.

The meeting was for all Lawrencetown residents about community development and improving facilities and the community culture in the area.

It was a lively meeting with many proposals and suggestions put forward by the community with an excellent display of the national school children's ideas for the area. These included ideas as diverse as playgrounds, place to park bikes, more sports facilities to rollercoasters, a circus and an icecream van!

The next meeting takes place 20th April @ 9.00 in the Store in order to compile all the suggestions and begin to put together a new strategic plan for the area and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Further suggestions are welcome to lcg@lawrencetown.com or by contacting Chairman Brian Kenny 0876328793. Full details available at www.lawrencetown.com or the Lawrencetown Community development facebook page.

Paddy Keane I.P.A.V.

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PARISHIONERS COMBINE TO RESTORE KILLURE CHURCH

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



Over a decade after St. Theresa's Church, Killure, Ballinasloe, was last painted, the local community have banded together in an effort to raise funds to have the historical building restored to its former beauty.

A general meeting of Killure neighbours was headed up by Fr. Christy McCormack P.P. and principal of Killure National School Aingeal Ui Cheithearnaigh recently to form a committee.

The atmosphere of the lively gathering of parishioners certainly reflected the school's new colourful classroom where it was held, as suggestions were made about how the project will be funded.

The primary focus of the committee is to raise money for the costly scheme that aims to paint both the inside and outside of the church that was first built in 1835.

It is hoped that all restoration will be completed before the children of Killure N.S. make their First Holy Communion in early summer.

"We understand that it's not easy for people to give money in this economic climate," said committee member, Gerry Croffey. "But a little can go a long way."

He added: "It was also suggested at the meeting that people who were born and reared in the area and who have now moved away might like to give a little something back."

Donations can be made to Fr. Christy McCormack P.P. (087 6960279), Aingeal Ui Cheithearnaigh (090 9688094) and Gerry Croffey (087 2348687).

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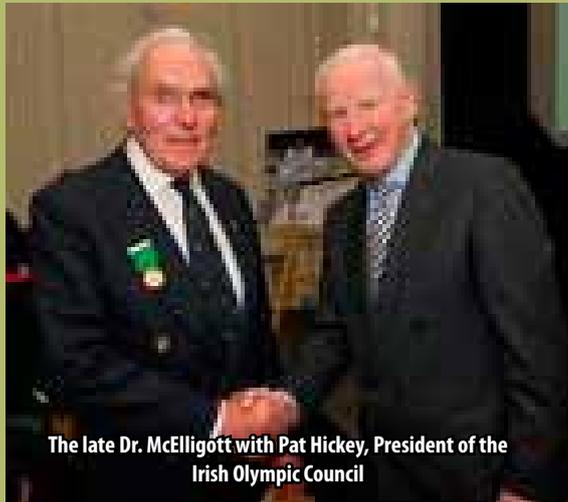
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DEATH OF FORMER CONSULTANT AND OLYMPIAN ROWER BY KEN KELLY

Dr. Morgan McElligott, who worked for over thirty years as a consultant in Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, passed away unexpectedly in Athlone, where he has lived for the last decade.

During his time in Ballinasloe where he specialised in cardiology, he was held in the highest regard both by his peers and patients. He will be remembered for the outstanding care he provided for patients during a distinguished career in the health service. His achievements at Portiuncula included help establish one of the first cardiac care units in Ireland, initiating the European Pacemaker Centre and staging almost 150 hours of teaching in coronary care for nurses. The Dublin-born consultant worked in Portiuncula from 1956 to 1989 before going to work in the Middle East, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Following an 18-month stint in Baghdad he was lucky to get back to Ireland just days before the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990. During his retirement,



The late Dr. McElligott with Pat Hickey, President of the Irish Olympic Council

Dr. McElligott continued to campaign for improvements to medical practise and health care.

Having won an All-Ireland Senior Rowing Championship in 1947, with UCD where he was studying medicine, he was one of the eight-man UCD team to represent Ireland at the 1948 Olympic Games in London. Morgan did not win any medal but it was there he met his future wife, Rena, and in 1953 they married and went on to have four daughters. Shortly after they moved to Ballinasloe and lived in Kilgarve before moving to Coosan, Athlone over a decade ago.

A sporting man all his life, Dr. McElligott was an active member of the East Galway Hunt while in Ballinasloe and in Athlone he was a regular attendee of club and international rugby games in Dubarry Park. Having reached his 91st year he recently reflected on his participation in the 1948 Olympics, stating "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part. The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well".

Dr. McElligott who is survived his wife Rena, four daughters, sister and many other relatives and friends was buried in Kiltoom Cemetery following the funeral Mass in Our Lady Queen of Peace Church.

NEW BOOK FROM SHEILA BUGLER

Author Sheila Bugler grew up in Ballinasloe and attended NUIG, studying Psychology. On graduating she left Ireland and worked around the world. After living in London for many years she settled down in East Sussex with her husband and two children.

Sheila has had 2 works published so far and soon her new crime fiction novel "All Things Nice" will be out! Her previous two have been met by great reviews and you can expect this next one to be no exception!



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RORY KILDUFF - SADDLER, HARNESS MAKER AND A BALLINASLOE LEGEND

BY KEN KELLY

Ballinasloe lost one of its best known and popular residents in the person of Rory Kilduff, Main St. whose passing evoked widespread regret. In his 94th year, Rory was a "mine of history" and has been often described as the town's first "Tourist information officer."

Rory went to the Boys' School at the rear of the Town Hall but following the sudden death of his father, he was drafted into the Saddlery business where six men were employed by his father. He became a highly popular Saddler and Harness Maker and could be easily seen, plying his trade inside the large plate-glass window. The door was always open and the jovial Rory had a word for everyone that passed. His friendliness led to many overseas visitors seeking his advice on attractions in the area or helping to seek out long lost relatives. "He was our first Tourist Unofficial Information Officer and did so much to promote his native town" said an old-time mourner at his funeral."



Witty, humorous and informative, Rory Kilduff lived in Main Street for over ninety years. He met his future wife, Dublin-born nurse Maura Quirke at a dance in the Town Hall. Just over sixty years ago they married, had the reception in Athlone and the honeymoon in London. An avid card player, Rory loved the game of Bridge and both he and Maura, together with John Madden, were instrumental

in establishing the "70 Bridge Club" which still gives wonderful enjoyment to a large number of patrons.

Never a person to say "no" Rory's role as a mascot for the Ballinasloe Brass Band at the 1938 All-Ireland football final was surely one of his greatest "coups.". With Brackernagh man Mattie McNally, they were chosen as flagbearers to head the Ballinasloe Band on the pre-match parade of the Galway and Kerry teams when the Artane Boys' Band had gone on strike. The game was a draw but the Ballinasloe Boys were not invited back for the replay as the Artane strike was settled.

As the cortege made its journey to Creagh Cemetery it paused briefly outside Rory's home in Main Street where members of the business community formed a guard of honour to bid farewell to a man of history, kindness and popularity. Ballinasloe will miss him but more so his devoted wife Maura and many, many friends and relations.



LIFE VOLUMN PUBLICATION DATES

JUNE/JULY:	May 27th	XMAS EDITION	
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER:	July 29th	DECEMBER/JANUARY:	Nov. 25th
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER:	Sept. 30th	FEBRUARY/MARCH:	Feb. 3rd

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A SPANISH VIEW OF THE LOCAL! BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



Inés Martínez Corrasco is a part of the European Voluntary Service and has been in Ballinasloe for some time now.. As a Spanish volunteer living locally with us – she has learned a great deal of the cultural differences and similarities of the two people and societies. Showing her already deep understanding of our culture, she decided to share it in one of our local pubs, Maud Millars.

As a Spanish person she is passionate about her culture, and to share it in a pub is as part of hers as it is ours. She recalls the first difference between the two however when she asked for tea in a pub, a man who passed near her table told her of her error and that "I would have to be drinking Guinness." She pulled out her notebook and took note and another two people came to know the "Spanish writer" sitting in the dark table of Maud Millars. Inés remarked "I didn't write at all, but it was funny, tough! Irish people are really social and they love talking, or perhaps said in another way, the silence is awkward for them."

"Before my EVS, I was searching to take some work experience and improve my English. I tried in another ten countries but they

never respond my emails, it was quite hard. Although, in the last moment, Youth Work Ireland contacted me and I said yes! I didn't know anything about Ireland, just that the weather is bad and they eat potatoes all the time, but I accepted anyways" related Ines.

Coming to work in Ballinasloe she compared some of the cultural stereotypes associated with the Irish. Funnily she noted that Irish people don't eat potatoes every time, but acknowledged that the weather is horrible! Though, the people are always joking or laughing which helped her adapt to her new job and life here. "I was so worried at the beginning because I never did before something related to youth work, but it is actually nice. We have different activities for

young people, like crafts and cooking group, zumba classes or a democracy group, so I help them to promote it, plan it and do it."

She also pointed to the wonderful family which she stayed with the first 3 months of her volunteering in Ballinasloe for her quick settling in. "I lived with a host family: a woman, one of the most creative people I have ever met, her son, her daughter and the cat. It was great to share my first time with them because I saw the real Irish life from the inside."

Though she is not studying here she says she is learning at every opportunity. "That's the point of EVS – or maybe of life in itself –. I learn a new kind of job, a different culture, a lot of people, but also, I learned things about myself, because further you go from your original life, more you learn about yourself, funny isn't it?"



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OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



Birthday Boy - St. Patrick's Day is Pat Joe Guinness's Birthday Too, Congrats!



Coletter, Rose and Bill Collier, Birchgrove enjoying the sunshine at St. Patrick's Day Parade.

ON JUDGE GEOFFREY BROWNE'S LAST DAY AT BALLINASLOE COURT



*Front Row, L to R: Corina Devine, Probation Officer, Amanda Harty and Dolores Gordon, District Court Staff, Judge Browne, Elaine Bannerton (Hutchinson Davidson) and Carmel Lyons (Noonan & Cuddy)
Back Row, L to R: Joe Jordan, Martina Moran & Ciara Macklin (Gearoid Geraghty & Co), Jack Duncan, Siobhan Byrne (Noonan & Cuddy) Karl O'Connor (Walker O'Carroll and Hogan) and Gearoid Geraghty.*



Garda Padraig Ganley makes an presentation to Judge Geoffrey Browne on behalf of the Ballinasloe Gardaí on the occasion of his retirement at Ballinasloe Court House.



At the promoting Cycle against Suicide / hosts families were: Stephen Ruane and Arthur Carr, chairman of GELS.



GARBALLY RUGBY JUNIOR SQUAD

Back row: S. Tierney, K. Flynn, D. Dolan, C. Barrett, S. Holland, D. Connolly, A. Mannion, J. Kilmartin, C. Lyons. Front row: D. O'Hara, R. Kelly, S. Keller, S. Lyons, J. Codyre, I. Fletcher, C. Dooley, I. Duffy, C. Noone. Seated: R. Glennon, S. Horan, P. Gilsenan, C. Donnellan



GARBALLY RUGBY SENIOR SQUAD

Back row: D. Curley, K. O'Neill, S. Curtin, T. Murphy, V. Naughton, P. McCormack, C. Dolphin, P. Connolly, G. Egan, K. Kelly. Front row: M. Tierney, N. Gibbons, D. Byrne, K. Gavin, D. Freeman, C. Loughrey, D. Murray, E. O'Donnell. Seated: D. Goode, R. Keller

OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



NEW OFFICERS OF BALLINASLOE GOLF CLUB AT THE CAPTAIN'S DRIVE IN Bernie Lally Lady Captain, Joe Molloy President, Tom Horkan Captain and Frankie Leonard Seniors Captain.



Artist Sheila Flanagan who spoke about her incredible sculpture pieces, the process, materials and what the work meant to her at Tosnu Arts and Craft Centre.



As part of the 1916 celebrations and Seachtain na Gaeilge, Ardscoil Mhuire girls attempted to break the world record for the synchronised performing of "The Cup Song", while seated in the 1916 formation.



Pictured at the opening of the Me, Myself and I Art Exhibition were: Mary Donoghue, Sarah Reynolds, Isabella Reynolds, Anthony Mullens, Sylvester Clarke, Johnathon Griffin, Tony Cannon and Fionnula Treacy, SUAS services, Churchill, Ballinasloe.



Pictured at the opening of the Me, Myself and I Art Exhibition were: Adam Clogher (Tope Services) Jade Kelly, John Loughnane (Tope) Denise and Jessica Galvin. Front: Mary Dillon (Fia Nua).

APRIL EVENTS GUIDE

April 1st Friday

Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
DJ Johnny F	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

April 2nd Saturday

Mens League 4ball	Golf Club	All Day
Private Party	Valeries of Aughrim	9.30pm
Tradstone	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Geagan Pagans	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm
Decades of Youth	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Lyn em up	Killeens	10.00pm
The Suspects	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

April 3rd Sunday

Mens League 4ball	Golf Club	All Day
Pillar House Trad Sess.	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.00pm
Ceili	Gullane's Hotel	8:00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
Shane Moore	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Black Shadow	Downeys Bar	10.00pm
Bojangle	Killeens	10.00pm
Michael English	Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
Anchormen	Maud Millers	10.00pm

April 4th Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

April 5th Tuesday

Ladies 18 Hole S.S'ford	Golf Club	All Day
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Bowel Support Group	Le Cheile Hse Brackemagh	7.30pm
Group Show	Woodford Library	7:30pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

April 6th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

April 7th Thursday

Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11:00am
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm
B.Kilkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	10.00pm

April 8th Friday

Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
Evan Blake	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Hoedown & Line Dancers	Valeries of Aughrim	10.00pm
Take 2	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Macey South	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

April 9th Saturday

Treblemakers	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Matt Keane	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Christy S. & The Breakaways	Valeries of Aughrim	10.00pm
David McGuire	Killeens	10.00pm
Last Man Standing	Haydens Hotel	10.00pm
Strung Out	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm
The Live Wires	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

April 10th Sunday

Mens League 4ball	Golf Club	All Day
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
Liam's Country Rd Show	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Night Owls	Downeys Bar	10.00pm
Gerry Guthrie	Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
Sweet Sensations	Killeens	10.00pm
Imposter	Maud Millers	10.00pm

April 11th Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

April 12th Tuesday

Ladies F5omes Aus Spoons	Golf Club	All Day
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Family Support Grp	Le Cheile Hse Brackemagh	7.30pm
Marie Smyth	Eyrecount Library	7:30pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

April 13th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
Bsloe Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	8:00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

April 14th Thursday

Presidents Prize	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm
Songs of 1916	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm

April 15th Friday

GAA Nostalgia Night	Shearwater Hotel	8:30pm
Mick Hanley	The Pillar House	9.00pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
DJ Johnny F	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

April 16th Saturday

Mens 2ball Scramble	Golf Club	All Day
Sunflowers Auct. DJ Paul H.	Valeries of Aughrim	8.30pm
No Bodder	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Pete Kennedy	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Music Men	Haydens	10.00pm
Red Tape	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm
Olivia Buckley	Killeens	10.00pm
Wonder Melon	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

April 17th Sunday

Mens 2ball Scramble	Golf Club	All Day
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
Billy Ward	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Sean Crehan	Killeens	10.00pm
Jim Devine	Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
The Nudie Suits	Maud Millers	10.00pm
The Stone Throwers	Downeys Bar	10.00pm

April 18th Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

April 19th Tuesday

Ladies 18 HSS'ford	Golf Club	All Day
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Art Trail Exhibition	Ballinasloe Library	6:00pm
Breast Support Grp	Le Cheile Hse Brackemagh	7.30pm
Margaret Dooley	Ballinasloe Library	7:30pm
Burnell		
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

April 20th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
Trad	An Tain	7.00pm

April 21st Thursday

Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11:00am
Presidents Prize	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm

April 22nd Friday

Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
Evan Blake	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Live Music	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

April 23rd Saturday

Music - Borderline	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
NightOwls	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
The Fanzines	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Shane Moore	Haydens Hotel	10.00pm
Paul Burns	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm
Jock & Davy	Killeens	10.00pm

April 24th Sunday

Pillar Hse Trad Sess.	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.00pm
Sess. in the Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
The Knots	Maud Millers	10.00pm
The Chillbillies	Killeens	10.00pm
Lee Mathews	Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
John Finnerty	Downeys Bar	10.00pm

April 25th Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

April 26th Tuesday

Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Prostate Support Grp	Le Cheile Hse Brackemagh	7.30pm
Frank Lucas	Killimor Library	7:30pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

April 27th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

April 28th Thursday

Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11:00am
Presentation Night	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.45pm
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm

April 29th Friday

Mainsafe Golf Classic	Golf Club	All Day
Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
DJ Johnny F	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Beggars Velvet	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Finnegans fury	Killeens	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm
Buzz The Agent	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

April 30th Saturday

Mainsafe Golf Classic	Golf Club	All Day
Pink-Charity Auction	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Private Party	Valeries of Aughrim	9.30pm
Finnegans Fury	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Enda Cassidy	Haydens Hotel	10.00pm
Macy South	Killeens	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm
Buckeye	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Geagan Pagans	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

MAY EVENTS GUIDE

May 1st Sunday

Mainsafe Golf Classic	Golf Club	All Day
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	7.00pm
Dancing - Lounge	Valeries of Aughrim	9.30pm
Anchormen	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Buckeye	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Joe Wynne	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Live Music TBC	Downeys Bar	10.00pm
Lyn em up	Killeens	10.00pm
Tradstone	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm

May 2nd Monday

Mainsafe Golf Classic	Golf Club	All Day
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May 3rd Tuesday

"Bealtaine" Gables Art Grp	Ballinasloe Library	5:00pm
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

May 4th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
A. Cormican & W. Lorien	Portumna Library	7:30pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

May 5th Thursday

Ciorchal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11:00am
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm
B. Kilkenny/F. Hession	An Tain	10.00pm

May 6th Friday

Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
Evan Blake	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

May 7th Saturday

The Crime	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Danny Hunt - Lounge	Valeries of Aughrim	10.00pm
Legacy	Killeens	10.00pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Macey South	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Wexford Lagigo	Haydens Hotel	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm

May 8th Sunday

Trad Session	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
Liam's Country Rd Show	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Live Music TBC	Downeys Bar	10.00pm
Small Deal	Killeens	10.00pm
The Nudie Suits	Maud Millers	10.00pm

May 9th Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

May 10th Tuesday

Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
The H.W. of Cape Verde	Ballinasloe Library	7:00pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

May 11th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
Bsloe Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	8:00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

May 12th Thursday

Ciorchal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11:00am
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm

May 13th Friday

Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
DJ Johnny F	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

May 14th Saturday

Music & Dancing	Valeries of Aughrim	8.30pm
NightOwls	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Chris Nash	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Beggars Velvet	Killeens	10.00pm
The Livewires	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm
Shane Moore	Haydens Hotel	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm

May 15th Sunday

Trad Session	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
Black Shadow	Downeys Bar	10.00pm
Take Time	Killeens	10.00pm
Imposter	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Billy Ward	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm

May 16th Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

May 17th Tuesday

Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

May 18th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

May 19th Thursday

Ciorchal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11:00am
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm

May 20th Friday

Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
Evan Blake	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Macey South	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm
Sean Keane	The Pillar House	10.00pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

May 21st Saturday

Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10.00pm
JJ Galway in Lounge	Valeries of Aughrim	10.00pm
Macy South	Killeens	10.00pm
Beggars Velvet	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm
TBA	Haydens Hotel	10.00pm
Too Tall Paul	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

May 22nd Sunday

Songfest	Town Hall Theatre	TBC
Pillar House Trad Session	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	7.30pm
Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Night Owls	Downeys Bar	10.00pm
Jock & Davy	Killeens	10.00pm
The Noshwash Band	Maud Millers	10.00pm

May 23rd Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

May 24th Tuesday

Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

May 25th Wednesday

Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3:00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm

May 26th Thursday

Ciorchal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11:00am
Open Music Session	Maud Millers	10.00pm

May 27th Friday

Country Market	Town Hall	9:00am
DJ Johnny F	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Toxic Twins	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Trad	An Tain	10.00pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm

May 28th Saturday

Rodneys Glory	Valeries of Aughrim	9.00pm
Finnegan's Fury	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
The Chillbillies	The Pillar House	10.00pm
David McGuire	Killeens	10.00pm
The Fanzines	Maud Millers	10.00pm
Live Music	An Tain	10.00pm
Sean Brennan	Haydens Hotel	10.00pm
Paul Burns	Dulo Tavern	10.00pm

May 29th Sunday

Trad Session	The Pillar House	6.00pm
Session in Front Bar	Valeries of Aughrim	7.30pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm
No Bodder	Auld Sod Bar	10:00pm
Live Music TBC	Downeys Bar	10.00pm
Lyn em up	Killeens	10.00pm
3 legged dog	Maud Millers	10.00pm
DJ	An Tain	10.30pm

May 30th Monday

Yoga	Gullane's Hotel	6:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8:30pm

May 31st Tuesday

Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
GAA Bingo	Haydens	8.00pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9:00pm

To advertise your events here,

Contact: ballinasloelife@hotmail.com or Call 090 964 3779 or 085 148 1911

CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS



Clara Moloney receiving her Scholarship from NUIG President James J. Browne after being nominated 2 years in a row, she is winning this due to academic excellence.



The Ladies Chorus Line from the Ballinasloe Musical Society's Production of "The Producers".



Principles in cast of "The Producers".



The Millionaires Widows Chorus from "The Producers".



ATTYRORY NS SHIFTS GEAR!

As the entire town and surrounding area has become a much more active place in recent months, Attyrory N.S. has followed this trend and gone above and beyond! They have been promoting their students to walk or cycle to school instead of taking a car and the response has been magnificent! In their plan of action alone, there was 240 journeys taken by pupils in the past

few months and with many more taking it up outside of school!

"Everyone has put in a huge effort to walk and cycle to or from school. The best thing about cycling or walking to school is definitely fresh air or all the biodiversity around us." - *Conor Harley*

"I love cycling to school because it keeps me fit and it is so fun. When you go to school in a car the ride is over in a few seconds and you don't get to enjoy it but when you walk or cycle you get to enjoy the journey!" - *Jack Ryan*

"I love walking in spring because there are new born lambs skipping along in the fields and bright yellow daffodils swaying in the breeze. I love walking in autumn because you get to pick up conkers off the leafy ground and pick juicy blackberries off the thorny bushes. I love walking in winter because you can slip and slide on the icy roads. I love walking in summer with the hot sun beaming down on my face!" - *Ava Mulry*

"Every morning at 8:30 my sister and I leave our house and set off to school walking. We meet up with our friends and we stroll up the road taking

in the nature and giggling as we walk. I love walking because I get to talk with my friends and I love the smell on a crisp frosty morning. I've been walking since I was 9 and now I'm nearly 12!" - *Rebecca Cruise*

"Even though Irish weather sometimes cannot be on our side we all still walk whatever the weather! I love walking up to school because when I get to Attyrory I feel energised, fit, fresh and happy and when I drive up to school in a car I don't get the same result. I love the sheep and lambs because they are so cute! Walking is made for all seasons and you should go for a little walk with your family every day!" - *Katie Mulry*

KILTORMER N.S. HAS A CREATIVE "MAD HAIR DAY" WINNER

Amy Rocke is a 5th class pupil in Kiltormer N.S. and was this year's All-Ireland winner in the annual "Mad Hair day", a fund raising event organised by World Mission Ireland. Kiltormer N.S. has been involved in this event for a number of years and were lucky enough to have an overall winner, this year. All pupils either wear a wig or create a new style on day of Christmas holidays and give money in order to help children in poorer countries. This year all monies raised go towards converting an old church into a school, for children in the Philippines. "Our school is very proud of Amy and her creative ability, which is promoted in our school, as we also won a creative status school in 2014. We are also proud to be associated with World Mission Ireland which also send us regular newsletters with ideas for Advent, Lent and National Day of Prayers". They also hold regular art competitions. See www.wmi.ie facebook page-missionary Children Ireland.



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Trath na Cheist



Chun Seachtain na Gaeilge a ceiliúrach i mí na Márta, bhí tráth na gceist bord ag scoileanna naisiúnta in óstán Gullanes. Bhí an comórtas urraithe ag Cahalan Jewellers agus eagraithe ag Conradh na Gaeilge, Béal Átha na Slua”

Seo iad torthaí an chomortais:

Sa chéad áit tháinig Gaelscoil Iarlatha ó Tuaim, sa dara áit tháinig Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, Críoch, Béal Átha na Slua, sa tríú áit tháinig Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh, Béal Átha na Slua.

Bhí tráth na gCeist bord do Meanscoilleanna urraithe ag Bórd oideachais & oiliúna na Gaillimhe & Roscomáin, agus eagraithe ag Conradh na Gaeilge Béal Átha na Slua.

Seo iad torthaí an chomortais:

Roinn Sóisear:

Sa chéad áit tháinig Árd Scoil Mhuire, sa dara áit tháinig Coláiste Sheosaimh Gearrbaile, Béal Átha na Slua agus sa tríú áit tháinig Coláiste naToirbhirte, Baile Átha an Rí

Roinn Sinsear:

Sa chéad áit tháinig Coláiste Sheosaimh, Gearrbaile, sa dara áit tháinig Coláiste na Sionna, Beannchar agus sa tríú áit tháinig Coláiste na Sionna, Beannchar.”

Ba mhaith le Conradh na Gaeilge míle buíochas a ghabhail leis na daltaí a thóg páirt, na tuismitheoirí, na múinteoirí, le óstán Gullanes agus leis na Gaeilgeoirí a chabhraídh ar an dá oíche leis an gcomortaisí.



JUNIORS

1st Place: Ard Scoil Mhuire, Ballinasloe

Front Row: Meabh Níheirgín, Maria Colahan, Aoife Sidaway.
Back Row: Aisling Ní Mhuirchú, Deirdre Egan, Sarah Donnellan, Mairín Uí Thuairisg (Máistir tábla tráth na gceist).



JUNIORS

2nd Place: Garbally College, Ballinasloe

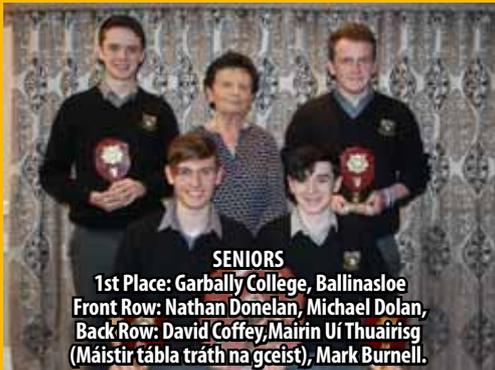
Front Row: Eoin Costello, Caolan Scully, Lorcan Darcy,
Back Row: Evan Dowd, Mairín Uí Thuairisg (Máistir tábla tráth na gceist), Fergus Finneran.



JUNIORS

3rd Place: Presentation College, Athery

Front Row: Michael Rice, Emma Urghhart, Cian Gorman,
Back Row: Niall Duddy (Muinteoir), Padraig Kelly,
Paddy Fitzpatrick, Mairín Uí Thuairisg (Máistir tábla tráth na gceist).



SENIORS

1st Place: Garbally College, Ballinasloe

Front Row: Nathan Donelan, Michael Dolan,
Back Row: David Coffey, Mairín Uí Thuairisg (Máistir tábla tráth na gceist), Mark Burnell.



SENIORS

2nd Place: Banagher College

Front Row: Rosita McNerney (Muinteoir) Deirdre Carroll,
Leagh Flannery, Karen Dolan (Muinteoir). Back Row:
Mark Finnegan, Sean Hanamy, Mairín Uí Thuairisg (Máistir tábla tráth na gceist), Dáire Kelly, Callum Dempsey.



SENIORS

3rd Place: Colaiste na Sionna, Banagher College

Front Row: Eimear O Meara, Ruth Fogarty, Aine Maloney,
Rona Butler. Back row: Mairín Uí Thuairisg (Máistir tábla tráth na gceist), Rahe Martin, Rosita McNerney (Muinteoir), Oisín Kelly, Karen Dolan (Muinteoir).

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TOWN SEEKS BEDS FOR 300 PLUS CYCLISTS AGAINST SUICIDE



BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

As part of a huge nationwide project to raise suicide awareness, our community is one of just 14 towns who will have the privilege to engage and host over 300 cyclists on the May bank holiday weekend on their Tour of Ireland.

On Sunday 1st of May some 350 cyclists will arrive. They are on their bikes travelling a 1050 km route around the island in an effort to raise awareness for the cause of 'Cycle Against Suicide' during a 14 day trek from the 24th of April to May the 7th.

This group will be finishing the 8th of their 14th stage as they enter the area. So after distancing the 86km distance between here and Carrick-on-Shannon these weary and famished bunch will spend one night to rest and recuperate before travelling to Portumna on the next leg of their journey.

Cycle Against Suicide is an initiative started by Irish entrepreneur, Jim Breen. The main objective of the Cycle is to raise awareness of the considerable help and supports that are available for anyone battling depression, self-harm, at risk of suicide or those bereaved by suicide. The organisation stresses 'It's Ok not to feel Ok and it's absolutely Ok to ask for help'.

And with these noble sentiments at the forefront, they have been working tirelessly to get this message to everyone in Ireland, to simply help those who need it! Being a community based action at heart, there are 14 towns enroute who will be hosting the cyclists.

Local Host Committee Member Aiden Lonergan suggests this is a unique way for us all to engage more with the issue " a lot of events can be that bit awkward for us all in dealing with suicide but this one is special as there

is no need to collect or to attend or to hear speakers – you just have to provide some good old fashioned Irish Hospitality to a cyclist, welcome them into your home for an overnight and host them in a way that this town has done for countless generations".

Originally The Cycle Against Suicide team approached the GELS, The Development Company, the Cycling Club and the Town Action Team so a few heads were knocked together to provide the programme.

"The Ballinasloe Cycling Club have been a huge help to us, with know how, logistics and practical issues around so many tired riders of varying degrees of fitness" states Aiden.

The progamme will see the cyclists arriving at different slots around tea time, to the EMERALD Ballroom where they will be welcomed

and then introduced to their host families. After a hot shower, the hosts will hopefully provide them with a hot meal and then a warm bed before breakfasting them and delivering them FRESH back to their saddles at the Emerald Ballroom for 9.30 a.m. the following morning. A few may be finishing up their stage of the

Cycle here as it marks the midway point and it might be possible that a few will sample the Bank holiday nightlife.

But in the meantime, these 350 will need a place to eat and sleep and now the call is going out for people in the community to step forward and help house these altruists!

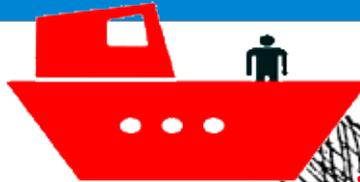
Jactina Divilly is the Host Accommodation Co ordinator and whilst ideally families or persons wishing to host should do so on line – she can be contacted at 087 2459138 or by email at feehilyj@gmail.com or contact the team through the local fbook page Cycle Against Suicide Homestays Ballinasloe.



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HOSPITAL WATCH BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



According to a recent Irish Times report there were more than 660 clinical incidents in Irish maternity wards in the month of December. As a result the HSE are insistent that the safety statements for each maternity unit will now be published monthly. Good to see though that Portiuncula Hospital had zero reported clinical incidents during this time.

Meanwhile the search continues to bolster up the medical faculty in the Hospital. They are now looking for 2 replacement consultants, 1 cardiologist and 1 obstetrician/gynaecologist, and 1 new general physician. While the posts have been sanctioned it remains to be seen how serious HSE & SAOLTA (The Tri Hospital Campus Group) will be about filling them.

The new Stroke machines have arrived in Portiuncula and they are currently awaiting the appropriate training to commission them into a 24 hour 7 day a week Emergency Stroke Service. Denis Naughten TD has stated that he expects them to be running in the near future.

According to an Irish Medical Times report published there has been a rise in the number of outpatient 'long waiters' in the past few months. Rising from 5635 to 5918 in recent reports, many hospitals now are struggling to deal with the sheer amount of patients in need. Our local hospital has 52 individuals who are waiting on outpatient surgery currently.

The online site RateMyHospital.ie, has Portiuncula currently rated as the 30th best hospital in the country out of 69 public and private hospitals. In comparison University Hospital Galway is the third worst rated hospital in the country at 67th. Our typical position is mid to top for General rating and usually in the top 5 for Maternity. At the time of going to print the Maternity Rating was not available.

With the large surge in attendances in the Emergency Departments around the country, The Emergency Department Taskforce Implementation Group has reported that compared to last year there was an average of 8.7 per cent increase in the overall number of people arriving into these facilities. Portiuncula, along with several others, were highly commended for managing to both deal with this surge in patients, but at the same time reduce the number on trolleys in their hospital.

According to a report from the INMO there has been a reduction in the Trolley and Ward Watch figures of 8% in comparison to last year. There has been a drop from 9,657 to 8,885 admitted patients on trolleys.

However for Portiuncula Hospital, there has been a dramatic fall in the amount of patients on trolleys in comparison to spring last year. From 210 to just 13! This is a decrease of 94%!

The numbers for the University Hospital Galway have also improved slightly in the recent report. Going from 620 to 583 people. This is a fall of 6%, but still remains as one of the higher rates among hospitals in the country.



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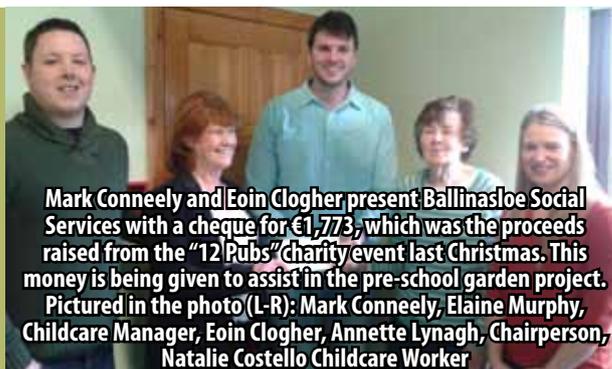
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SOCIAL SERVICES SUPPORTING US ALL WHEN WE NEED IT

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



Mark Conneely and Eoin Clogher present Ballinasloe Social Services with a cheque for €1,773, which was the proceeds raised from the "12 Pubs" charity event last Christmas. This money is being given to assist in the pre-school garden project. Pictured in the photo (L-R): Mark Conneely, Elaine Murphy, Childcare Manager, Eoin Clogher, Annette Lynagh, Chairperson, Natalie Costello Childcare Worker



L-R: Margaret Oliver, Tess Raftery, Annette Lynagh, Padraig O'Ceithearnaigh, Padraig Walsh, Ann Kenny, Michael Lally

During our life we have all needed support from another to help us through difficult times.

Since 1972 Ballinasloe Social Services (BSS) has existed as a voluntary organisation in Upper Brackernagh to help those who are struggling. The mission of the centre has been to provide services which support elderly and isolated people to help enable them to remain living comfortably in their own homes and communities. These services range from transportation to providing childcare services which aims to maximise the potential of those with special needs.

At the moment there are 71 people between the ages of 65 and 97 attending their Day Care Centre which operates 4 days per week. They provide wheelchair adapted transport in different areas each day, all within a 15 mile radius of Ballinasloe! This service collects many of these elderly people from their own homes and brings them to and from the day centre.

At the day centre Chiropody, Community Physiotherapy, Laundry Service, Community Music and Computer classes are all offered on site by the service! Various daily activities take place e.g. music, games, card playing etc. Volunteers attend the Day Centre to support and assist the service to help provide an excellent opportunity for all there to find entertainment and relief!

They also provide a healthy Meals on Wheels service! This programme supports independent living through the provision of nutritional food and social support to 75 people in the community. According to Teresa Coughlin Administrator "Over 14,000 nutritious meals were delivered in Ballinasloe and surrounding areas in 2015." This is a huge amount,

showing the importance and magnificent work ethic of the volunteers!

In addition to their work with the elderly, the centre provides early intervention services for young children, with additional needs, to have them reach their full potential! As well as parenting programmes which help empower parents to support their children reaching their developmental milestones. 40 children and their families currently avail of this indispensable service.

These wonderful supports are governed by a committee of volunteers who hail from all walks of life, creating a well balanced and through field of thought on all issues. "This ensures that the views and ideals of all stakeholders are represented at committee level and consequently influence decision making at all stages. We strongly believe that listening to, and learning from stakeholders helps address shared challenges and finds common solutions."

BSS aims to make life as comfortable and controlled as possible for both the young and the old and looks to ease the harsh edges of advancing age, poor health and disadvantage. But with their funding reduced from 60% of the HSE's budget to 50% they have been reliant on fundraising and donating now more than ever!

Their current fundraising activities include their Limited Draw whereby €60 per annum (€5 per month) is paid and monthly draws for €100 take place. Also, a fundraising dance is taking place on Friday 8th April in Gullane's Hotel from 9.30pm to 12 pm with music by Midnight Melodies, a great opportunity for some fun! Admission is €7.

For further details on any of the above or if you would like to help out and volunteer with the BSS, contact Teresa at 090 9643217 or admin@ballinasloesocialservices.ie

Sen. Michael Mullins

For advice or assistance
Contact me at:

CLEAGHMORE, BALLINASLOE
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Email: ollie@colohanhardware.ie



Michelle Cahill (McCullagh) originates from Mount Pleasant, Ballinasloe. Her parents, Michael and Anne McCullagh and four older brothers moved into their family home the year before she was born. She lived in the township for most of her youth until at the age of 15 she moved to England to attend the Dorothy Stevens School of Ballet & Modern Dance and at 18 went to train at Trinity LABAN Conservatoire, London. After 3 years of intensive training she embarked on a career in dance, choreography, performance and education. More recently she delved into the world of producing, for both dance and theatre. She is currently producing a one man performance piece called 'TURF', with the Rowan Tolley Company for the Galway Theatre Festival. Michelle took time out of her busy schedule to talk to us about her past and her experiences in the world of theatre and dance.

Talking to Michelle, she described her time as a child in Ballinasloe. "It was a great place to grow up; there were lots of children on the road, in and around the same age and I have very happy memories of growing up there." From her upbringing here stemmed her love of the arts. Her father played piano for the Musical Society and Garbally College productions and her mother was very artistic; making wonderful costumes and always helping make school projects look great.

She started ballet with Mrs. Donagh when she was five and knew from a young age that dance and performance was what she wanted to pursue. She starred in a Scoil Mhuire production of The King and I at the Town Hall Theatre in second class and performed with the Ballinasloe Musical Society as one of the children in Annie Get Your Gun. "I loved every minute of it, and I can still remember the costumes that I wore and even some of the choreography!"

She was further encouraged into singing and dancing by her singing teacher, the late Kay Purcell and her PE teacher at Scoil Mhuire. Together with some friends she set up a Contemporary Dance Society in secondary school which in the 1990s was very radical!

At 15, like many of her peers in dance, she left Ballinasloe to access full-time training that wasn't available in Ireland at that time. She went to England, to the Dorothy Stevens School of Ballet & Modern Dance, Halifax, West Yorkshire. There she continued ballet training, but also studied modern and contemporary dance, tap, and jazz. For three years she studied at Miss Steven's school, "I was so excited and happy to be immersed in dance and be able to do what I loved, 7 days a week".

Though like many who move abroad, and at such a young age

she was incredibly homesick in her first year away. She went on to say that West Yorkshire was very different from East Galway, but the people were very warm and friendly. The school was very strict, and she lived with the principal for the first year. "You had to have permission to go out, even to the shop."

Michelle did stress that Dorothy was a tough but excellent teacher who worked them really hard and got results. And she did have a softer side, a good sense of humour, and she strived to bring out the best in all of her students.

After her first year, she moved in with a family, who were very caring and supportive to her. At 18 she received a bursary from the Arts Council of Ireland to train at Trinity LABAN Conservatoire, London where she spent three, very intensive years.

College life in London was intense, "we started at 8.45am and had classes and lectures until 5 or 6pm in the evening. On top of that you have to rehearse and work on your performance pieces."

She studied choreography, classical and contemporary dance and she was introduced to Labanotation, a system for notating movement on paper! She recalls the high calibre of teachers she was taught by as a student there. One tutor, who really inspired her was the acclaimed choreographer Rosemary Butcher who taught choreography and encouraged her to look beyond dance for inspiration, even taking her and her classmates to art galleries across London! "I suppose she kind of turned the world of making dance, and what dance should be on its head for me."

Michelle graduated with a degree in Dance Theatre, and worked as a dancer in London and Spain for some time after college. She found the dance scene in London too hectic and highly competitive, so she made the decision to move to Dublin in 2001.

She quickly found success soon after she arrived. She was a founding member of Catapult Dance Company with an American choreographer Rebecca Walter. They presented WASH-O-RAMA for The Dublin Fringe, an all singing and dancing theatrical piece that took place in a city centre laundrette late at night. It won The Spirit of The Fringe Award that year. ,

She has carved out a career for herself in the arts rooted mainly in dance and movement. In her words " a portfolio career" that includes dance education, community development, producing and programming. "I'm interested in creative and physical expression, supporting the development of the individual and collaborating with others to realise artistic goals."





She teaches dance and choreography on performing arts courses in further and higher education. She also facilitates dance development projects in communities across the country in partnership with National and Local agencies. Her projects enable people of all ages to participate in dance!

More recently became interested in producing work for theatre and dance. Recent credits include the award winning Charolais for the Tiger Dublin Fringe 2014 and Enthroned for First Fortnight Festival. And now she is producing the one man show TURF for the Rowan Tolley Company

TURF is a performance piece written by Frank Farrell, an ex-student of Michelle. The director, Rowan Tolley is from Yorkshire, and was a teacher at the Dorothy Stevens School where she attended and they have both taught at Stagewise Summer School which is run by Eamon and Freda O'Donoghue from Ballinasloe. At a recent Gala performance in Yorkshire, to celebrate Miss Steven's 90th birthday, Michelle approached Rowan with the idea of taking TURF to the Galway Theatre Festival.

Michelle describes TURF as a work that "takes the audience on an emotional and visual journey punctuated with provocative, fiercely athletic and beautifully detailed movement. It is a truly unique piece, and audiences will easily identify with the experience and stories that are revealed within it. I'm very proud to bring this show to Galway".

TURF runs from Friday 29th – Sunday 1st May, 3pm and 6pm at The Connacht Print Works Galway! More details can be found on the Galway Theatre Festival Website! www.galwaytheatrefestival.com

Away from her work, Michelle loves to visit Ballinasloe during the holidays. Recently she attended her 20 year school reunion. She found it brilliant to catch up with everyone! She also said that she always tries her best to get in to see productions in the Town Hall Theatre. "There has always been a wealth of creative and artistic talent in Ballinasloe".

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PINK DRIVE BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

Friendships can be some of the strongest bonds one can make in their life. They can be there for the best times and for the worst. This was the case when one of a group of 4 friends learned that his sister was diagnosed with cancer.

Kevin Dolan, Ciaran Kelly, John Hayes and Thomas Freeman decided to act as best they could in response to a disease which has no boundaries. The plan, to help raise as much money as they possibly could for the Irish Cancer Society and the Oncology Unit in Portiuncula through a sponsored drive and auction fundraiser.

On Friday the 29th of April this band of 4 will depart on a 1450 kilometre journey in a hot pink car. This monumental trek will take them through all 32 counties of Ireland. And amazingly they plan to accomplish this task in 24 hours! As they enter each county they will update their location using Social Media. "We plan to take a photo on entry of every county so our progress can be followed with constant updates and photos on our Facebook page on the day."

As they enter each of the 32 territories they will be wishing to receive at least 1 sponsor per county! These good souls will be either giving donations or offering up potential raffle goods for the cause.

Having finished their marathon drive across the country, they are hoping to bring back their tired bodies to Gibbon's Pillar House at 8 o'clock in the evening heralding the kick off of an exciting and prize filled Charity auction and raffle night.

Kevin will be a novice who is trying his hand at auctioneering on the night. There will be many competition benefits up for grabs, but there are several which stand above the rest that are highly coveted. There will be a signed Irish rugby jersey, a signed Roscommon jersey, a signed Galway jersey, an Aberdeen Angus heifer and a load of Ballinasloe's finest timber in this auction!



Left to Right - Ciaran Kelly, John Hayes, Kevin Dolan, Thomas Freeman

These fantastic items have been provided by different people throughout the community, showing their support for this brilliant cause! Noel Maninon has given in the jerseys, while the 4 lads themselves will be getting them signed! Thomas stated "we know a few of the players on the teams and they agreed to get them signed for us." The heifer will be provided by Pat Hardiman and the timber will be provided by the 4 again!

Support on the night would be much appreciated as they try to raise a large amount of funds as is possible for a wonderful society and unit! Tickets being €5 and 3 costing €10, it certainly is worth a punt!

Anyone wishing to be a sponsor for the county the drivers enter, or any who wishes to contribute an auction or raffle prize or just to donate can get in contact with them through a message on their Facebook page Driving Me Pink! Or you can reach them at the number 0870915023!

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TOP ARTISTES FOR PILLAR HOUSE FOLK CLUB

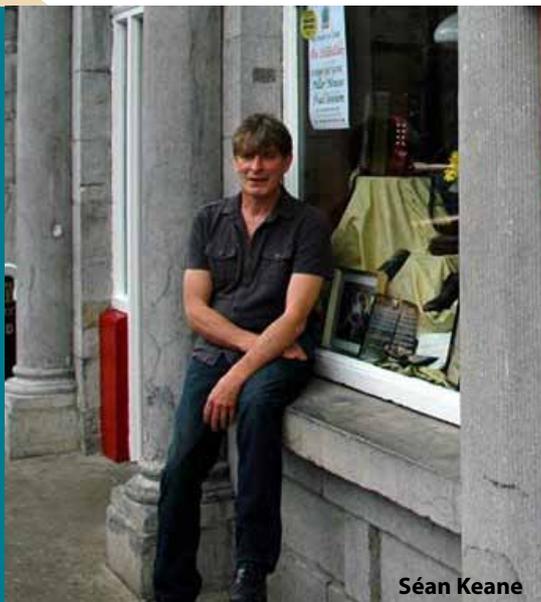
BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI 

The Pillar House has been welcoming a virtual who's who of Irish Folk Music to its cosy, intimate venue in the centre of town for nearly 2 years.

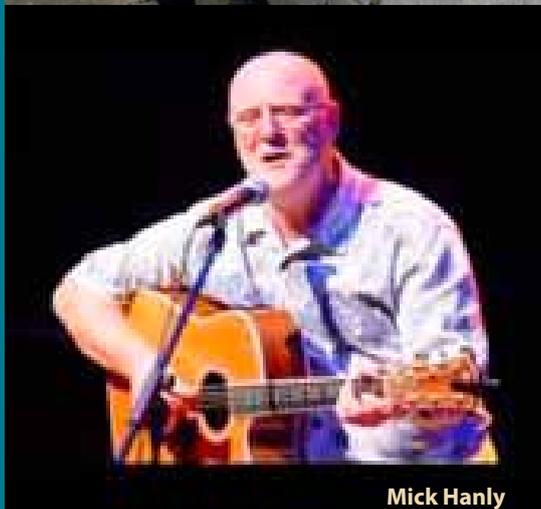
On the 15th of April, the fantastic Mick Hanly will return to their bar to deliver a rendition of his new album "Homeland" which was released a short time ago. He will not be the only star gracing the pub, as on Friday the 20th of May, Séán Keane, the first performer at the Folk Club two years ago, will return to what will sure to be a packed house.

Over the years many great musicians and singers have passed through the establishment, making the walls of the House come alive! "We've seen some super artistes at the Folk Club" said Kathryn Gibbons, "and over the last two years it's gone from strength to strength, with people travelling from as far away as Italy, London, Derry and Cork to see their favourite Folk Artists perform in The Pillar House."

There is a strong local following for the Club and some of the customers have missed only two or three of the plethora of gigs in the last two years. Extremely grateful for their amazing support and for their wonderful feedback. Many of the performers have given really positive reviews and kind words



Séán Keane



Mick Hanly

of both the business itself and the emphatic supporters who have turned out in their droves to take part in and experience the music and atmosphere! "They really enjoy playing a smaller venue and love the opportunity to engage with their audience during and after the gig" states Kathryn.

The town will see some more big names coming in throughout the Summer! Freddie White in June, Kieran Goss in July and Mary Coughlan in August are already booked in. Kathryn was happy to say "We are now becoming a well known Folk Venue and the facility to book tickets on-line on our www.Pillarhouse.ie site has proved a major benefit". It is hard to dispute these words with the phenomenally talented Folk singers marking our town down on their list of venues!

There is no doubt that this Folk Club will continue to grow and it would be a smart idea to watch out for new developments with the launch of a Comedy Club in the near future. Tickets for all their Folk Club Concerts are only €20. They are available by calling 090 96 43939 or one can go on-line at: www.thepillarhouse.ie. Check out their website or Facebook page for upcoming events and for any enquiries use this number 087 9046140.



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ACTIVE RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION PLAN HECTIC SEASON AHEAD

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



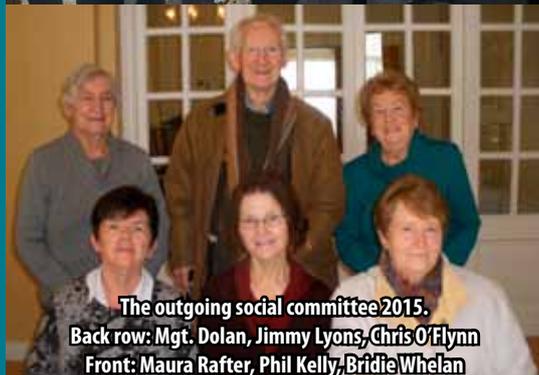
The Active Retirement Association has a very busy schedule planned for the year ahead. Following the successes of the previous years, their numbers have swelled to a large membership of 220 energetic people.

Chris O'Flynn, their P.R.O. states "we aim to cater for everyone's tastes and needs here!" and with such a vast array of outings it looks like they most certainly will!

To keep fit and healthy at home, there is an active walking club with approximately 35 walkers who step it out on the track in Brackernagh every Tues. morning followed by physical exercises and a "cuppa" which is fully enjoyed. Many of these proudly finished the 5k walk on celebration day of the recently passed Fit Town Project! They also take part in Aqua aerobics, Bowling, Bridge, Knitting and have a Book Club!

The association also loves to attend concerts and plays both at home and away. Immersing themselves in the arts present in the town and the surrounding hinterland, they find both enjoyment and pride as they watch their community develop. Going on adventures is a major part of being a part of this fantastic group.

Their first trip of the year will be in early May where 56 of the branch head north to Donegal for a 5 day and 4 nights Spring break. Using Letterkenny as their base of operations, there will be daily trips by coach to Derry, Dooagh Island, Omagh Folk Park and a boat trip on Donegal Bay. Here they will find a lot to do and see as they keep themselves entertained.



The outgoing social committee 2015.
Back row: Mgt. Dolan, Jimmy Lyons, Chris O'Flynn
Front: Maura Rafter, Phil Kelly, Bridie Whelan

In June a large group of members will travel by ferry to Devon and Cornwall. This trip was organised due to "popular demand". There in the Southwest of England they will be able to fully embrace and experience the sights, sounds and culture of some of England's most famous coastlines.

During the past 'warmer' summer months, the organisation has been taking day trips to various places of interest throughout the country. This season upcoming, they have several projects already on the cards. In June they will be travelling to Rosmuc and Pearse's cottage and in July they are aiming to visit Aras an Uachtaran and a trip to the Zoo is on the agenda as well. For August the hopes are to head south to the Ailwee caves and finish with an evening of music and song in Kilfenora.

Though they do many activities on their own, they do not remain so for the entirety of the 365 days. During September all the West of Ireland Active Retirement groups get together for a 3 day celebration called the "Ara-go-On" festival. It will be held this year in Westport and is always a most enjoyable occasion for the retired.

The Ballinasloe chapter usually has the largest group of partygoers ready to take part in the various activities. This is a great benefit for them and the others as they all get to meet new people and form new friendships.

The highlight journey to be undertaken though is an exciting 10 day Cruise, sailing from Southampton to the Canary Islands in late Autumn. and if anyone wishes to join them, contact Society Travel to enquire.

The main aim and goal is to help alleviate the loneliness and depression which can be very prevalent in the older age bracket - especially now in this age of technology. So the need for this club cannot be stressed enough.

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PRODUCERS ACCLAIMED AS A WOW SHOW!

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

Town Hall Theatre Audiences were treated to a much needed laugh when Musical Society presented their Annual production the hilarious Mel Brooks farce "The Producers" recently.

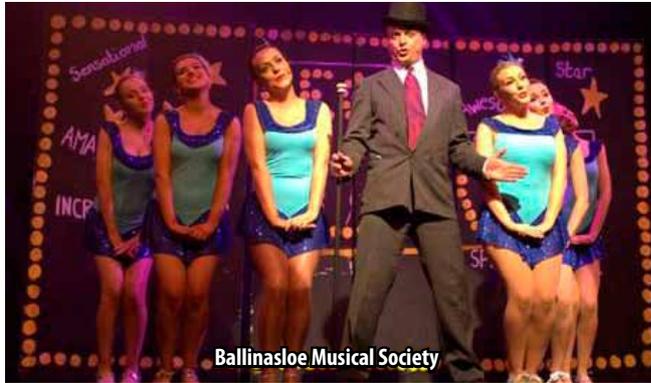
A magnificent Cast expertly tutored by Director Paul Norton, Choreographer Aoife Mc Clafferty and Musical Director Shane Farrell gave it their all from Curtain Up to Finale for each and every performance.

Cast: Max- Paul Norton, Leo-Patrick Byrne, Ulla- Sarah Corcoran, Roger De Bris- Brian Derrane, Carmen Ghia- Nicky Lawless, Franz Liebkind- Seamus Feerick, Hold Me Touch Me- Bernadette Dudgeon.

Female Chorus: Aileen Barrett, Georgia Codyre, Jane Corbett, Allison Egan, Claire Egan,

Mairead Duffy, Magdalena Garcarek, Emma Greally, Emer Grehan, Patricia Hodgins, Nessa McLoughlin, Paula McGrath, Margaret Mulligan, Lise Ann Roche, Avril Smyth, Rachel Walker, Lisa Whyte, Amy Kenny, Clare Madden, Joanne Murray, Clare O'Brien and Sally Parsons.

Male Chorus: Gregory Blackwell, Carl Devlin, Declan Finn, Johnny Farrell, Kevin Griffin, Diarmuid Leyden, Mark Mulligan, Robin Newton, Mike O'Reilly, Eoin Quinn and Bryan Mulry.



Ballinasloe Musical Society

A special mention has to be given to two chorus members Mark Mulligan although short in stature his influence on the production grew throughout the week, and Clare Madden who was simply Magnificent.

All of these were ably assisted by a large dedicated Stage Crew, Hair & Make Up team, Costume Team, Scenic Artists, Lighting, Sound, Front of House all drawn together by the Committee.

The Show ran for five nights to packed houses and was sponsored by the Credit Union.



'Rising Star' show 14th May: Niamh and Laoise

RISING STARS SHOW 14th OF MAY

The Majella Flanagan Theatre Company will be proudly presenting their new work 'Rising Stars' to us! This show is something a bit different as it aims to both provide wonderful entertainment as well as promoting the rising and extremely talented younger generations from both our town as well as the surrounding areas in Athlone and Roscommon.

So if you are looking for a fantastic evening of song, dance, drama and recitation showcasing our locality this show is the one for you.

Tickets cost €10 and to book your tickets call 086 382 4545.

Also the Majella Flanagan Theatre Company Summer School now Enrolling! Open to Students aged 7-16, this is a two week intensive and fun filled ten day course encompassing a wide variety of all things theatrical and will be set in the Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre from the 11th to 22nd of July.

INSTEP MIX & MATCH SHOW 3rd - 5th MAY

The Instep Stage School will be running a Mix and Match show from the 3rd to the 5th of May in the Town Hall Theatre.

Choreographed by Elaine O'Hanlon, the show will contain a variety of tap and jazz as well as scenes from many different Broadway plays and more! Featuring acts from Bewitched, the Nightmare before Christmas and Hocus Pocus all the performers, from the age of 4 to 18 will get their time in the spotlight!

Tickets can be purchased at the door on the night as this promises to be an entertaining experience for all involved.



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FIT TOWN PROGRAMME CONCLUDES WITH...



At the recent 'Fit for Ballinasloe' seminar on the significance of Self Worth in our lives were:
L to R: Back Row: Kathleen Hession, Marion Ruane Fit for Town, Avril Cogaving, Betty Noone,
Maureen Cahalan, Carmel Stack, Paul Mullins, Liam Roche,
Front Row L to R: Maureen Watters, Evelyn Parsons, Judith Roche & Dermot Salmon.

The Fit Town programme ended with a bang as celebrations were held in the GAA clubhouse and grounds. The action packed itinerary was filled with many exciting events, to name a few there was couch to 40k cycle, Tag Rugby and Cross Bar Challenges. There was something for everyone.

Inside the clubhouse was a Fit Town Sports Expo. Here clubs and groups in the town showcased their current and planned activities/ events and looked to encourage new membership. An outdoor marquee was a dedicated 'Fit Town Kidz Zone' which had face painting with the Ballinasloe Musical Society, Action Art with Lily Kellys Art Studio, Grow it Yourself pot-up table sponsored by Barry Ward, Ballinasloe Garden Centre and Sugru play therapy for children. Local organic growers Una and Padraig from Beechlawn Organic were onsite to provide healthy juices and foods.

Events of this scale take a huge amount of planning and organising and Marion Ruane paid special tribute to all officials, team managers and members of the GAA for not only making their facilities available but with their amazing work assisting in every aspect of the day. The Team also acknowledged the huge efforts on the part of Aidan Lonergan of the Garda Siochana, Padraig Glynn and the Civil Defence and all the volunteers who made themselves available on the day to ensure the event was run safely and smoothly.

The Fit Town project itself is the brainchild of Galway Sports Partnership, which challenges communities to compete for the title of Galway's Fittest Town. Its main focus is to increase the number of people participating in physical activity throughout the community by encouraging them to get up, get out and get active. With particular emphasis on persons with disabilities, mental health, disadvantaged, older adults, teenagers, families.

Plans for Ballinasloe to take up the challenge commenced last November when Marion Ruane together with Noel Mannion, Lyn Donnelly and student representatives from the post primary schools, namely Laura Finn, Ciara Smyth and Eoin Hurley, formed a Fit Town Team. They began an awareness campaign in Gullanes Hotel where all members of the community including members of clubs, organisations and schools were invited to a briefing and information session. Sporting and non-sporting groups identified programmes/activities which could be developed together to meet the needs of specific target groups and others.

The events and programmes were carefully and thoughtfully planned to ensure everyone was supported in reaching their personal goals. Groups like the Ballinasloe & District Road Runners had huge success with numbers reaching 100+ for most trainings. Other success stories include the Ballinasloe Cycling Clubs Couch to 40k and our Walking Programme, Men on the Move, Tennis for Beginners, Golf for Kids, Yoga, Swimming, Aqua Aerobics, Dancing, Art Action, Circuits, Stage Performance to name but a few as the community has responded to the Fit Town challenge magnificently.

... RUNNING AND WALKING OVATION!

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

One of the main highlights of the Fit Town Project has been establishing links and building relationships between various groups and organisations. In particular the Ballinasloe Rugby Club was paired with the Brothers of Charity to introduce the group to a new team sport and skillset. Also work is being done with the Ballinasloe Eagles group training for the Special Olympics, Creagh Equestrian Centre and the East Galway Hunt and Pony Clubs to provide the much needed support to allow these group of special athletes to reach their full potential. East Galway Cancer Support centre together with Eilis Ryan of Solid Fitness are the first in Ireland to implement the Marie Murphys METs programme for cancer patients which includes a physical activity programme entirely focused on strength and recovery.

The schools also got involved and took the project and ran with it – literally! With danceathons, skipathons, circuits, yoga, active homework, cycle workshops, bootcamp with Tommie Costello and Cuckoo Hill just a few of the activities that were on offer for the local juniors. The 3 town schools together with Mike Kelly of Bike Fun ran a very successful Sprocket Rocket taster programme teaching children some basic bicycle safety and maintenance skills. Many of the schools have been actively encouraging children to walk and cycle to and from the school through their active travel programmes.

The Fit Town Team also collaborated with both Ballinasloe Credit Union and the new Europe Direct Ballinasloe Library to launch their 'Healthy Little Me' competition which was pitched at both primary and post primary schools. In addition to this the new library also kindly sponsored specially designed Fit Town refillable bottles which will be distributed to participating clubs and groups over the coming weeks.

As well as all this the Ballinasloe's Fair and Festival ran a dance competition targeted at specific classes and proving that exercise can indeed be fun. Video performances and prize giving took place in the

Kids Zone for the celebration day creating great excitement among these Fit Town Kids.

Another element of the Project was the Healthy Food Town initiative. The purpose of providing healthier options to consumers and linking the project with the business community. With over 30 businesses already signed up, and all taking part in some form, they are well underway to developing Ballinasloe as one of Ireland's first 'Healthy Food Towns'. In response to this great support the Team paid a special tribute to the Food Businesses for kindly donating all the food to the Fit Town Celebration Day. Namely, Gibbons Pillar House, Downeys Bar, Karibas, The Deli, Crumbs and Cream and The Breadbasket. This being just a snapshot of the generosity and commitment shown.

Chairperson Marion Ruane on behalf of the organisers thanked and acknowledged the huge level of engagement and support there was from each and every group, club, organisation, school, business and individual within the community. With Fit Town aiming to create awareness of the facilities that are available in the town, building relationships between groups and supporting individuals, they have made that first big step. "Many are now established and signed up members and ready to take the second step which should include encouraging, inspiring and supporting others to get involved in as well! we will continue to work closely with clubs, groups and schools to promote activities and continue to create awareness" stated Marion.

The next phase of the project will be concentrated on evaluating each individual activity/programme together with each participating club and group and this will inform how the project will develop. Competition results will be announced over the coming weeks and the Fit Town Team are very hopeful of a successful outcome – Ballinasloe Abu!

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Fusion Restaurant, Society Street, Ballinasloe.
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Brodericks Pharmacy, Society Street, Ballinasloe.
Enjoy 10% off all First Aid items.

Kathleens Fashions, Dunlo Street, Ballinasloe.
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Chris Daly Shoes, Dunlo Street, Ballinasloe.
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Enjoy 10% off full priced items. Excludes all health products. Unless otherwise stated, offer valid on full priced items and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, promotion or sale item.

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Utah, Society Street, Ballinasloe.
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Murphy's Total Health Medical Hall, Main Street, Ballinasloe.
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Under 10; Brian Madden 0860837238
Under 12; John Killeen 0872270344
Under 14; Cathal Coleman 0868261655
Under 16; Aidan Dooley 0863499719
Minor Team; Pat Potter 0879606141

HURLING MANAGERS:

Under 8; Ruairi O'Thuairisc 0872369665
Under 10; Kevin Caulfield 087 2122493
Under 12; Ian Power - 087 6288004
Under 14; Brendan Hayes- 0879073306
Under 16; Mike Fogarty- 0874669050
Minor Team; Eoin Hardiman- 0860509885

LADIES MANAGERS:

Under 8; Mark Ward 086 3015746
Under 10; Damien Clarke 086 1704241
Under 12; Stephen Kerr 087 2312273
Under 14; Paul Madden - 087 9182559
Under 16; Seamus Duffy - 087- 2506431
Minor Team; Sean Mockler 089 4136277

5 DECADES ON GAA ROLLING BACK THE YEARS!

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

Ballinasloe GAA are rolling back the years with a Nostalgia Night on Friday 15th April in the Shearwater Hotel.

It is now 50-years on since Galway completed the 3-in-a-row and the club and community are very fortunate to have Sean Meade and Cyril Dunne from that team who played with Ballinasloe.

Ollie Turner from Galway Bay FM will be the MC on the night and following on from a showing of the 1966 final the club are have a panel discussion afterwards looking at how football has changed over the years.

Sean Keeley from Ballinasloe of the 1956 team will also join Sean & Cyril on stage as will Bosco McDermott with a few more from the 3-in-a-row team. The show commences at 8.30 p.m sharp and will be about 2 hours long in total.

Adult tickets for this local club fundraiser are priced at €20 and are available from club members or at the door. Full time students can pay €5 at the door. It promises to be a most enjoyable night and a large crowd is expected so come early.



NEW INDOOR TENNIS COURTS ...

After considerable time in discussions with Galway Council and considering a number of possible sites, Ballinasloe Tennis Club are establishing their new home at the site above the running track at Brackernagh.

The club have ambitious plans that include four courts, at least one of which will be covered, a small clubhouse, and a practice wall, and they are confident that the central location and easy access will greatly increase the number of people playing tennis. Having what will be only the second covered courts in Connacht will allow tennis to be played year round regardless of the weather, which will not only attract more local players, but players from further afield, which will definitely raise the profile of the Ballinasloe and benefit the town as a whole.

Other sports could also be played on the covered courts, such as badminton, table tennis and lawn bowls and the club are keen to work with other clubs or groups and their immediate neighbours, to make this a facility with a broad appeal. They have already spoken to some groups and welcome any other approaches. The Ballinasloe Sports Hub project is working on promoting Ballinasloe as a sporting destination, and the club see their new facility as making a major contribution to this initiative.

Club spokesman Garry Zancanaro commented 'We are very excited about being able to finally start working on what will be a major project and a great boost for the town. Covered courts will be a huge draw, bringing many new visitors to the town to play tennis and they will see the impressive range of sports facilities on offer, which will certainly help put Ballinasloe on the map as a sporting centre. We want to work with the Sports Hub project and other sports clubs and groups on promotional activities to help make this happen. The knock-on effects for local businesses and the image of the town will definitely help to rejuvenate Ballinasloe for the benefit of all. This facility will also be a huge boon to player development for our many junior members. We already have one junior members representing Connacht, and to be able to run year round coaching programmes without being at the mercy of the Irish weather will give us the opportunity to take more of our juniors to this level and beyond. And we'll be able to expand the Special Needs initiatives we are currently developing in conjunction with other clubs nationwide and local groups into significant ongoing programmes.'

Given the shortage of covered courts in the West and the country overall, clubs that have covered courts are in great demand and always heavily booked. The club has already had talks with Tennis Ireland and other tennis clubs and there is no doubt that the courts would be in constant demand not only from local players, but from players from other nearby clubs. The club plans to run competitions and events throughout the year for members and with other clubs, bringing a steady supply of new visitors to the town.

The development will be built in stages, and being specific about time frames is difficult as this is dependent on funding. The club will be applying for sports capital funding and other grants, but will also be counting on maximum support from the council and the support of the local businesses and the community for planned fundraising activities in the coming months.

The club has been engaging with local Councillors, TD's and Senators and seeking advice on funding the project in recent months. Garry continued "We have a committed group working on this project but raising funds is our greatest challenge. We've had great support from the council and politicians to date, but now that we have the site secured, we need all the financial and other support that we can get. Given the benefits and prestige that this project will bring not only to Ballinasloe, but to the West of Ireland as a whole, we are counting on maximum support from all parties to help us bring this project to fruition."

The club is also putting together a number of sponsorship packages

and appealing to local businesses for support, and seeking one or more major sponsors to get behind the project. The club would welcome any persons or organisations that would like to be involved, or that may be able to help in any way.

In the meantime, all tennis will continue to operate at the Rugby Club. Recent activities include a Fit Towns programme and competing in Tennis Ireland Junior Challenge at Loughrea, and the club hosted a Tennis Ireland Connacht Junior Challenge last month as well as Easter Camps.

A FULL PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE 2016 SEASON:

30th April Open Day and Official Opening of Season to include:

- Mens, ladies and junior exhibition matches
- Kids activities including tennis, bouncy castles, face painting and much more

MONDAYS 5-6pm Junior Coaching

MONDAYS 6-7pm Adult Coaching

MONDAYS 7-8pm Introductory Session for Potential Members

WEDNESDAYS 7-9pm Ladies Open Night

THURSDAYS 7-9pm Mixed Doubles

FRIDAYS 7-9pm Mens Singles/Doubles

SUNDAYS 12 noon -1pm Supervised Junior Sessions

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Declan: 087 915 9771 or Kevin: 087 621 9905
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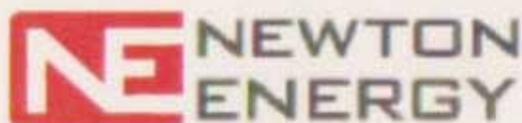
Ballinasloe Tennis Club represented at St. Patrick's Day Parade

...FOR BALLINASLOE BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

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SOCCKER SEASON STEAMING TOWARDS SUCCESS

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



The months gone by and coming ahead have proved to be very exciting and promising for our local soccer club!

There have been successes on and off the pitch for both the team and their associates. Also in the near future a club from Liverpool will be bringing their schoolboy girls and boys teams to take part in an array of exciting and fun Cup matches.

Some of the successes on the pitch has come from former players in Oisín Duffy, Jordan Carr & Cian Treacy who all ply their trade in the Athlone Town U15 Squad. Through to the Semi Finals of the U15 National Cup they will play Mervue Utd.

The A Squad are topping the Roscommon & District Premier Division and are through to the Quarter Finals of the Connacht Cup and will be looking to take the prestigious title for a fourth time! They are also contesting the Premier Division Cup and the Roscommon Cup. The B Team are second in the Division 1 and will be competing in Cups till the end of the season.

For the Schoolboy/girl teams, their season is in its final stages and it is looking fantastic here as well! - with many of the squads challenging for Titles and Cups come May. Catering from U8's through to U14's, all are playing in the Athlone & District League.

Halewood Juniors from Liverpool will be coming for their biannual

visit to us (Ballinasloe send teams over there every other year). Their schoolboy/girl teams will be playing in a series of Cups in the Curragh, the main one being the Bob Paisley Friendship Cup and will get to meet new people and make friends! This is the 20th Year Anniversary of this sporting programme and for more information and updates look to their Facebook Page for the games.

Ballinasloe AFC holds Friday Night Open Training Sessions from 6pm to 7pm for the ages of 5 to 8 year old Children run by qualified coaches. Here children are introduced to the very basics in Football in a fun and safe environment. So make sure to bring your kids for an entertaining afternoon.

Lastly a special mention must be given yet again to Ladies Soccer Legend - Heather Payne. She has gone on to new heights with her quality and has won the prestigious U16 International Player of the Year Award.

Heather was to pick up her award at the glitzy FAI Award ceremony on Sunday 19th of March but was occupied with playing for Ireland U17's in France in the Elite Phase of the UEFA European Championships Qualifying Series.

The club has put out a call for more volunteers as well. With the organisation ever growing they will need more people to help out coaching, training and organising.

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BRIDGE CLUB CHARITY WEEK

Ballinasloe Bridge Club hosted a very successful annual charity week last March. The total proceeds from all their activities were donated to the Ballinasloe East Galway Cancer Services Center in Brackernagh. Pictured at the handing over of the €400+ proceeds were: Comittee Member Deirdre Flynn, Cancer Centre Le Cheile Coordinator Jacqueline Daly and Bridge Club President Eileen Morrisroe.

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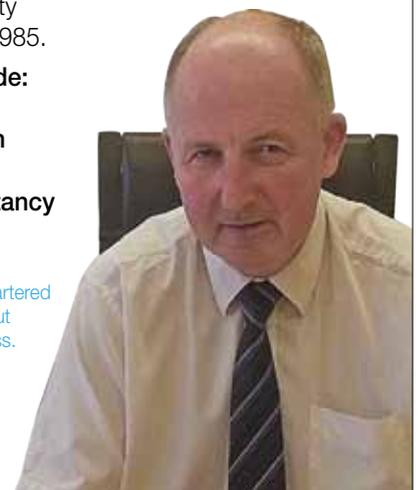
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MICHAEL FITZPATRICK MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC MOVES TO NEW MAY DATES

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI



The Rugby club has announced the date of their annual Michael Fitzpatrick Memorial Golf Classic.

Club President, Liam Courtney, said "that following an appraisal of the timing of the event in recent seasons, when it had been held in September, it was felt that it would be more productive to bring it forward to May 28th. There are too many distractions in September," he added, " with all grades back in training, player registration and early season matches taking place, an early summer event allows for more concerted focus."

The classic is a long running and successful competition which



is one of their main fundraisers for the season, and enjoys strong support locally! A special sub-committee will organise and oversee all aspects of the event with competition format, prizes on offer and other details being made available soon!

The club will also be holding its prize winning evening in late April in its clubhouse. This occasion is always well attended and takes place when all competitions are concluded. With

the under-age and ladies teams still engaged in various cups, there are high hopes that some silverware will be on display on the evening!

Further details on their Facebook page.

SWIMMING CLUB NATIONAL MINOR SCHOOLS SUCCESS

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

The Swimming club here have been performing well in recent months.

Many of the members and coaches have performed fantastically in their competitions this year and have been improving wonderfully!

Their great work can be seen with the results of 12 swimmers from the club, who while representing their National Schools, competed in The Irish National Minor School Championship at the National Aquatic Centre, Dublin.

In this event the local swimmers showed their class with all achieving amazing results! The stand outs though were, the U12 Girls Relay Team (representing Creagh NS) who won National Gold in the Medley Relay and won Silver in the Freestyle, the girls were Relay Tara McKeon, Ailbhe Hanrahan, Ava McKeon, and Ruth Dolan!



James Mooney (representing Creagh School) won a National Bronze medal in the U12 Boys Breaststroke!



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LOCAL COMMUNITY GAMES SEASON GEARS UP

BY BRIAN CIEPIERSKI

The next few months will be very busy for the Community Games and all those involved! With events for both the individual and teams there is something for everyone.

With plans well underway for the upcoming competitions a call is going out to remind everyone of the 2 closing dates for the different teams and individual events. The first closing date is the 12th of April and the second is on the 10th of May. With the large amount of success the locality has experienced already, they are looking forward to building and adding to their trophy cabinet.

For the first of the deadlines on April the 12th, there are many exciting genres of competition available. To name just some, there is Swimming from U-6 to 16, Chess, Quiz team, Talent enquire, Handwriting, Art and Model Making and Outdoor Soccer for U-12 Girls and Boys teams. The intercounty competitions for many from this set will take place in early May. They are very excited for this group of events, due to the successes had in the past. The Chess has won 7 All-Irelands, and the local swimming has experienced great results in recent months as well. And with the talent available here in town there is sure to be more in all categories.

The second deadline on May the 10th will be for the majority of the team based activities. Athletics, Track and Field, Rugby, Mini Rugby for U-11

boys, Tag Rugby for U-11 and 14, Camogie, Gaelic Football U-10 mixed and U12 to 14 girls, Hardcourt tennis and Hurling for U-11s. A large number of these will be taking place in June and the Provincial Finals will be in July.

"This looks to be another promising time for us here, as not only is there a great chance of fantastic performances by all, it will also be a fun time for all involved and a wonderful chance to meet new people!" says Carmel Greally local games Organiser.

If you are looking to register either yourself or a team for either of the deadlines, or are curious about any sports/events that have not been mentioned, call Carmel Greally at 087 620 7477 for more information.



Ballinasloe U13 Chess team who won who came away with a gold in the Galway County final of Community Games.

BALLINASLOE BOYS U-13 ALL-IRELAND INDOOR CHAMPIONS 2016



Adam Coyne, Charlie Naughten, Conor Harley and Shane Fitzpatrick winning Gold at the 100m indoor relay race

TOWN TEAM ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Team have just received the external consultants report on Town Centre Parking – signage and accessibility and will be reviewing it.

They are engaged in the Fit Town, and the Cycle Against Suicide Bid. They are working on their campaign of events and an application for further REDZ resources. The summer and autumn marking and event campaigns are being planned.

Plans are also underway to host a National Seminar on Town Benchmarking and REDZ Town Development issues in mid May.

BACD and the Town Team are busy with the pre-launch pilot marketing phase of the Sports Hub Town project which aims to market our rich facilities to a wider audience.

All the local hoteliers are signed up and already Gullanes Hotel have hosted twice this season Squads of players from UCC – Gaelic teams competing in Intervarsities.

As part of the marketing preparations the team hosted a free Social Media Tutorial April in Gullanes Hotel for the PRO's and the Social Media Officers. It was facilitated by Mr. William Nolan of Nolan Media Consulting who is Social Media & Communications Consultant.

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PATRICK HOGAN: FIRST FREE STATE MINISTER...

It was a Tuesday evening, 14th July 1936. A motorist approaching the village of Aughrim sustained serious head injuries when the car he was driving collided with the parapet of a bridge. One of the first at the scene of the accident, Ballinasloe-based Dr. Gerry Coyne used his own car to convey the crash victim to Galway Central Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. The deceased was identified as 45-year-old Patrick Hogan, a T.D. for the Galway constituency and a former Minister for Agriculture.



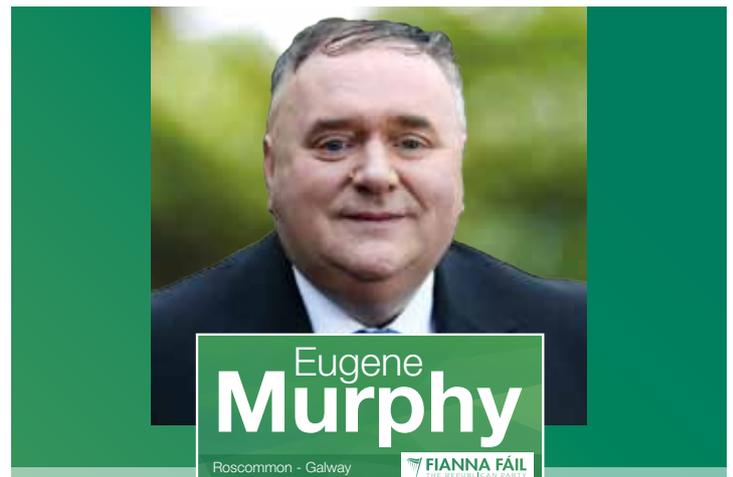
Hogan had been born near Kilreekill on 30th May 1891, one of nine children of Michael J. Hogan, an extensive farmer and chief inspector with the Land Commission. After secondary education at St. Joseph's College, then located at The Pines in Creagh, he attended U.C.D. where he studied law as well as economics and history. While there he formed a life-long friendship with Kevin O'Higgins, a fellow-student and future Minister for Justice. Following an apprenticeship with a solicitor's firm in Ennis, he qualified in 1915 and set up a legal practice in Dunlo Street, Ballinasloe, with sub-offices in Ballygar, Gort and Athenry. Fascinated by politics since his early teens, he joined Sinn Féin in 1917 but never became involved in militant Republicanism, unlike two of his brothers who rose to prominence in the I.R.A during the War of Independence.

In 1920 he helped organise a Dáil Arbitration Court in Loughrea. Consequently he was arrested by the British authorities and interned in Ballykinlar, Co.Down, where he made the acquaintance of Joe McGrath, a Sinn Féin T.D., who later recommended him to Michael Collins for a ministerial appointment.

Elected to the Dáil in 1921, he was a staunch supporter of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, arguing that Dominion status conferred virtual independence on the Free State, the goal of Irish nationalists since the 18th century. In the Civil War that followed the adoption of the Treaty he was solidly behind the National Army's policy of executing Republicans found in possession of arms, and called for the introduction of even more rigorous measures to defeat the anti-Treaty I.R.A.

When the Provisional Government of the Free State took

office in January 1922 Hogan was given the Agriculture portfolio. It was a particularly difficult time for the farming sector which was undergoing a depression after the boom years of the First World War. Irish food exports to Britain were threatened by competition from Denmark and the Commonwealth countries. Hogan's response was to initiate legislation to control the quality of agricultural produce and to lead a campaign to keep down production costs on farms. In this way he ensured that Ireland's share of the



Deputy Eugene Murphy says Thank you to the people of the Ballinasloe region for their support in the recent General Election.

Constituency Office open soon in Ballinasloe. I will be making regular visits to the Ballinasloe region.

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export trade in food to the U.K was maintained.

The second challenge confronting the 30-year-old Minister was that of land redistribution. Although most tenant farmers had become proprietors of their holdings because of legislation enacted by the Westminster Parliament since the 1880s, the large untenanted estates had remained unaffected. This was a constant source of agitation in a country that had an estimated one and a half million landless men with limited opportunities for off-farm employment. Hogan addressed the issue in the 1923 Land Act, the measure he is probably best remembered for. The result was that between 1922 and 1932 the Land Commission distributed 450,000 acres to 24,000 families, and more than 110,000 holdings changed hands.

The Minister for Agriculture was small, lightly built and notoriously careless in matters of dress. A story is told that on one occasion he was required to attend the Spring Show in an official capacity and found that he had nothing presentable to wear. At the time he had the free run of O'Higgins's Dublin home where he usually stayed when the Dáil was in session. In the Minister for Justice's absence he decided to take French leave and borrow one of his most expensive suits, although his friend was taller and stouter than himself. O'Higgins was reported to be speechless with rage when he learnt what had happened, knowing full well in what condition his good suit would be when Hogan returned it.

A man of moral and physical courage who never courted

public favour, Hogan voted against his own government's 1929 Censorship of Publications Bill, correctly foreseeing that its provisions would be abused by puritanical fanatics. Furthermore, he was openly critical of the government's attempts to re-Gaelicise the country, judging them as ill- advised and doomed to failure because they lacked active popular support. On hearing the gunshots during the 1927 attempt to assassinate O'Higgins, he grabbed his revolver and rushed into the street to confront the killers, who fled the scene before he reached the spot where his friend lay mortally wounded on the pavement.

Regarded as one of the most influential figures in the Cumann na nGaedheal government, particularly in the area of economic policy, Hogan's political philosophy would nowadays be classed a neo-liberal. Fearful that "Ireland would turn into a paradise for wasters", he opposed increases in welfare payments, believing that the individual should work hard and look after himself.

Following the 1932 Fianna Fáil electoral victory, Hogan was said to be "sick at heart and thoroughly disillusioned". Thereafter he took little active interest in politics, concentrating instead on his legal practice. He had married Mona Davitt in 1931, a widow with a young son, and daughter-in-law of Land Leaguer Michael Davitt. The couple had four daughters, one of whom, Brigid, continued the family tradition by being elected as the first ever female Fine Gael deputy, for East Galway, in the Dáil from 1957 to 1977.

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ISUZU

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The Power to Surprise





Picture courtesy of Gerry Devlin

Even though Dr. Ada English was a member of Cumman na mBan and there was a strong Conradh Organisation in the town through the staff of St. Bridgids the towns peoples involvement in the turbulent events of 100 Easters ago appears somewhat muted.

The East Galway Democrat of May 6th 1916 reported that all the local motorcars were commandeered 'for the conveyance of the police to the Moyode farm (Athenry). It was feared that there might be a famine in bread but three local bakers motored to Mullingar on yesterday (Sunday) and secured yeast there which relieved the situation 'as there is an abundance of flour in the town'. On account of the dislocation of traffic - eggs were sold on Saturday at 10s per score'

The paper mentions: 'It was reported in Castlerea on Friday that Ballinasloe was in the hands of the Sinn Feiners and that the streets were wrecked and many people killed. Anxious mothers there sent motor cars for their daughters who were attending the Junior Mistresses Examination, to convey them home'.

A bridal couple on their way to Dublin to spend their honeymoon there could only travel as far as Ballinasloe where they were 'held up' since Tuesday but they 'left the town by car today for Athlone'.

On May 13th the paper reported the arrest of Mr. J. O'Reilly, Manual Instructor in the Ballinasloe Technical School and Mr. Gaffney, Professor in St. Joseph's College. Both men were handcuffed and handed over to the military authorities in Athenry as 'suspected Sinn Feiners'.

100 years on Ireland marks the centenary of the infamous Rising which occurred April 23rd 1916. St Brigid's Hospital Heritage Group is spearheading a community based commemoration of this historic event alongside multiple groups and societies from the area.

Taking place on the afternoon of the 23rd of April, there will be several fun and educational activities happening. There will be a parade, a concert and a wreath laying ceremony! Also it is anticipated that camogie matches will be played in honour of Ada English Cumann.

The library will host many interesting activities as well! There will be literature, pictures from the period, stories about the Rising, speakers and more.

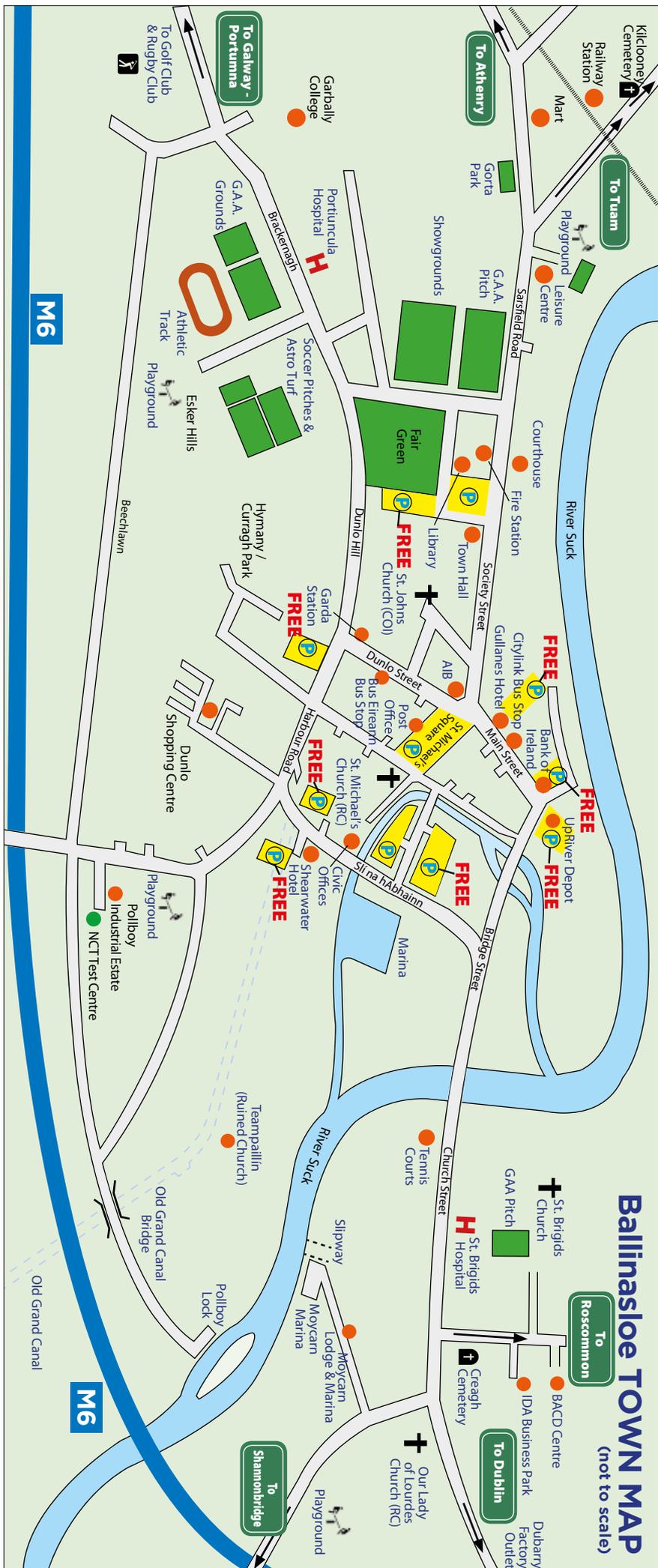
Jon Johnston from the group has stated "we want this to be an inclusive that commemorates the events of 100 years ago in our area and the country, which helped shape where we are today".



Picture courtesy of Evelyn Donnellan

From Left: Threse Foy, Marian Finn, Noreen Craughwell, Deirdre Kelly, Mary Payne, Lily Finn, Evelyn Forde, Joan Hynes, Paddy Berrigan, Declan Campbell, Tomas Egan, ??, ??, Joe Finn, ?? Kevin Dolan, ??, ??, ??, Michael Gavin, Andrew Donnellan, ? Payne, Brian Kelly, Tomas Costello, John Broderick, Michael Carroll, ??, Eamonn Johnston, ??,??, Michael Hannon, Paddy Feehily,

Taken in 1966, Creagh NS children walking to Mass in St Michael's for the 50th Anniversary celebration of 1916. The photo was taken by the late PJ McGuane.



Ballinasloe History Walk

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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