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AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 7 Issue 1: April '17 - May '17

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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 7 Issue 1: April '17 - May '17

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REAMHRÁ

One wonders when ought the fatigue set in? This is yours truly 37th edition to have the honour of putting together; as we set sail for Volume 7. I have not lost the desire or ambition to keep this publication – on and offline to the fore in reminding us all of the positives that are under our feet!

At our launch night at the end of January – it was very encouraging to hear of our subscribers – the local business advertisers who divert a little (or indeed a lot) of their marketing budget, all reflect on the good reaction they keep getting from the Magazine from their customers and visitors alike.

As we compiled and harassed the usual players for their copy and especially for their photographs; it was unique as the backdrop to our endeavours at the Town Hall; were the sights and sounds of a later in the year Musical "Oliver" and the joyous sounds of our Town Band growing stronger in number and louder in the music rehearsal rooms overhead.

What is striking though - is how much more measurably improved the sentiment of our articles is in this edition from the voluntary organisations to especially the business profiles – some families, people celebrating milestones and whilst acknowledging the catastrophic job losses of the past – see tangible changes in consumer confidence.

This modest magazine continues to inform, enthuse, entertain, engage and hopefully inspire us all to see the landscape and the community we are fortunate to inhabit as a place where even in a troublesome world – we see the glass as half full not continually half empty.

My thanks to the project team, the production crew, the subscribers who raise the €55,000 + to produce 6 Magazines a year and of course all the contributors and PRO's who would prefer if we have 112 pages to fill than just 56!

Le Gach De Ghui,
COLM CROFFY, Editor.



Unemployment rates have fallen 44.5% in County Galway since the height of the economic collapse in August 2010.

Ballinasloe has had the largest drop in the past year at 11.3% which confirms many small local indigenous businesses are expanding and creating employment.

Most of these Businesses are dependent on local support to survive and we ask you our readers to bear this in mind when deciding on your next purchase.

The key ingredient for Foreign Direct Investment into an area is potential employees and Ballinasloe is ideally located to provide same given its location. Most people in the cities are travelling for over an hour morning and evening daily commuting to and from work.

If we were to draw a circle with Ballinasloe at the centre within an hour's commute, any potential employers have access to several hundred thousand of a potential work force.

Add to that our proximity to third level colleges namely NUIG, Maynooth University, AIT, GMIT & IT Sligo as well as all Limerick Colleges.

On top of that Ballinalsoe has a huge advantage given transport access via Rail, Bus & Motorway.

If all of these selling points are made by everyone in the Community to decision makers at every opportunity there is every chance we will get a decent size new employer in the area which would give immeasurable benefits to the local economy.

Our Company AGM is scheduled for 8pm on Wednesday 19th April with guest speaker Minister Denis Naughten and we look forward to a large turnout on the night.

SEAMUS DUFFY, Chairman,
Chairman Ballinasloe Area Community Development Limited.

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

For submission of articles, please email ballinasloelife@hotmail.com. Deadline May 17th.

BEC

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An initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd.

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ILLEGAL DUMPING CONTINUES TO FRUSTRATE PROGRESS

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

The old town Poolboy landfill is being earmarked for a 26 acre Wetland wildlife and special area of conservation habitat but in progressing this adventurous plan Galway County Council have requested additional resources for the cleaning and prevention of illegal dumping along our cutaway bog lands.



What the deputation sought, according to Cllr. Dermot Connolly is that a more aggressive co-ordinated approach from the authorities; to prevent, rather than clean up the littering is needed. "What the deputation wants is more out of hours patrols of both Gardai, Litter Wardens, Council Outdoor Staff, more under cover surveillance, more investigations and really more inspections of rental and private accommodations as to how they are disposing of their refuse" stated Dermot.

A huge clean-up was undertaken recently from the M6 bridge out to Whytes in Poolboy and some of the other areas, involving some 8 days of man power was under taken in early March but Councillors have been told that the clean-up budget at the end of first quarter of 2017, is all used up!

Most citizens and councillors acknowledge that flytipping or illegal dumping is happening in all the bogs zones on the Ahascragh and Glantaun areas and the New Line in Creagh but it is the Poolboy location that appears to be the worst zone – possibly because for some 50 years it was the town dump!

Director of Environment Services at Environment Jim Cullen addressed the full March Meeting of the Council and outlined what he could do to meet some of the issues on illegal dumping in Ballinasloe but was at pains to point out the resource constraints he was under.


A deputation of landowners, farmers, residents, sports organisations and leisure users of Poolboy recently met with the Municipal District Council and officials to report in detail on the huge deterioration in the landscape in the past few seasons.

According to Cllr. Connolly the Galway County Council budget some 10 years ago was in the order of €160 million to deal with day to day expenses - the budget just passed last year at estimates was about €105 million – nearly a 34% decrease; "The harsh reality is that we need the Government to come up with something more than Minister Denis Naughton's Environmental Pilot Scheme – welcome and all as it is but it is a drop in the ocean to what is really needed here", argues Dermot.

Beds, sofas, household white goods, nappies, domestic refuse, glass even car parts are being dumped in Poolboy even though there is a recycling facility at the old Landfill.

At the next monthly meeting the Municipal District is to hear from the Community Policing Forum and from the Environmental section on what else they can do to top people despoiling their own townscape.


The point that this unique southern approach to the town, embracing natural bog habitat, river and canal banks is a huge leisure amenity for casual strollers, joggers, bikers, anglers and has within it's environs –The Hymany Way, The Organic Farm, The Rugby Club, The Golf Club, The Gun Club; has been repeatedly made.



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TOWN TEAM UPDATE

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



EASTER WINDOW DISPLAY COMPETITION

Following from the success of the Christmas Window Display Competition, the Town Team are running an Easter Window Display Competition, the winner will be announced on Easter Saturday the 15th April.

There are two prizes up for grabs, one for the best window display and a draw for everyone that votes.

The prizes are a 3 night Stay in Lough Derg Thatched Cottages in Puckane, Co. Tipperary, in a self catering traditional cottage that can sleep up to six people (www.loughdergthatchedcottages.com). The prize also includes a 20% discount for Aqua Splash Activity Park in nearby Dromineer. Voting will be split 50/50 between a judging panel & a public vote through www.ballinasloe.ie from the Friday 31st March to Good Friday 14th April.

INDUSTRY AND INVESTMENT GROUP

This sub groups continue meet on a regular basis , meeting potential clients and the state agencies quietly to attract some new jobs and investment. It was agreed to approach the HSE property department formally to see if they would release land adjacent to the IDA Park and the Enterprise Centre to the community for sale as sites for light industrial buildings.

A close partnership with IDA and Enterprise Ireland is being established to position the town to maximise any Brexit investment to the Midlands or West. The Group also are making a submission to the National Planning Framework 2020 – 2040.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Activities are ongoing with the Town Benchmarking, Xmas. Lights, Summer Events, Halloween Walk, Community Awards, the Sports Hub Initiative, the Website etc. They will all be reviewed in some detail at the **AGM of BACD which is being held on Wed April 19th at 8.00 p.m in the Enterprise Centre.**

The Development Company and the Town Team would welcome more volunteers and members, whilst of course members of the community and public will be welcome on this night. Guest Speaker will be the Minister For Communications and Natural Resources – Denis Naughton T.D.

For more information contact Lyn at 090 9646516.

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HOGARTYS 4 DECADES SERVING LOYAL CUSTOMERS

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Sean Hogarty was a rep for Irish Paints when he started a Paints, Wallpaper and Floor coverings outlet in Main St (Where the Opticians are now) in 1977.

In four decades of continual trading Sean celebrates 40 years, employing some 8 of a staff and two outlets – the local one in Birchgrove on the old N6 and a City outlet in Terryland Retail Park, Galway which only opened in 2015; managed by his son Edward.

Sean and wife Maureen's family have been reared through the business and while eldest son John lives in Australia and both of his daughters - Fiona and Miriam – live locally; it is Fiona who assist with the Birchgrove facility.

The local Birchgrove store – stocks a vast array of keenly priced and modern lines of wall coverings, floor coverings, paints and interior fittings to compliment, in 40 years the main premises went from 400 to 4,800 square feet!

Sean and his firm have seemingly bucked the trend in managing to expand a family independent stockists into a city suburb retail park after the worst retail recession in 30 years but he is adamant that it was his philosophy that saw them through “we never dealt with huge schemes or developers in the Celtic Tiger years, our core business was and is – the local renovation, refurbishment market. We have cultivated a hugely loyal customer base, we provide an excellent installation service and we are very, very keen on price” states Sean.

In remaining focused on the home builder, the housewife, the young married couple, the retired couple who wish to renovate or the young family who now want to convert garages or attics for teenagers – Hogarty's has managed to stay very current with trends and styles.

“We have down through the years built up significant relationships with some of the best suppliers in Ireland and Europe and we often are the sole stockists for certain types of carpets, paints or vinyl, which again means we can get for a customer anything they see on a website of a supplier or in show room elsewhere, with a few days,” stated Sean.

The firm also has the added advantage of having a team of trained and experienced fitters who can manage some of the newest of floor vinyl's, laminates or indeed carpets.

“Lino was out some 10 – 15 years ago with tiles winning but laminates and vinyl are making a huge impact again and of course people wrote off Wallpaper some years ago but the amount of new houses and apartments’ that it is making a welcome re- appearance again is huge” states Sean; when looking back at interior design fashions.

The family firm is still very committed to supporting local causes and activities, when Sean was in the town centre he was very active in the Chamber and in the 80s was one of the key organisers behind the Trade Shows in the Emerald Ballroom as well as a member of the Fair and Festival.

Today Hogarty's are continual proud supporters of the PEARSES GAA Club and from time to time get behind the many team and club drives that help maintain the Club as a vibrant sports and cultural centre in the locality.

Ballinasloe N6 Store is open Mon to Sat 9.30 to 6pm further information contact facebook or phone 090996443267



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UNIQUE MILLINER BUSINESS UNDERWAY

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

Ana Victoria Mulcahy is a Ballinasloe based Couture Milliner. Ana was born in Argentina, with an Italian/Spanish heritage and practiced as a barrister before moving to Ireland in 2001.

Ana has been making hats since she was a teenager and has since developed her passion into a business. The hats can be custom made in any shape, size or colour. "I am proud to offer a truly bespoke service and compliment any outfit".

Ana stated "All my life I've been fascinated with fashion, elegant clothes, beautiful dresses, classic vintage style and obviously with hats." Ana designed hats as a pastime during school and university years. "I have completed several tailoring and traditional millinery courses. I have made hats for family and friends. It wasn't until I attended a friend's wedding that I started my own business." Over the following months, word of mouth spread which gave Ana a spur. "Local people have been very supportive and I have been privileged to have my designs worn at a number of local weddings and events. I was overwhelmed by such wonderful feedback and a number of people enquired if I would be willing to design and make hats for them".

Ana works from her own home and completing an order typically takes from two days to two weeks depending on the design and size. Hats have been sold all over Ireland and are currently breaking into the American market with new orders. Prices start from €50 and there are a number of hats which are available to hire. Ana stated "Following traditional millinery techniques, I handcraft the headpieces from scratch from my home. I block the hat bases using my own custom made wooden hat blocks. For the embellishment of the pieces I use the best materials which I source in Ireland as I believe in supporting locally".

As the business grows, Ana stated "my biggest struggle is space and eventually I would hope to find a place to open a workshop or shop where I could showcase the hats, the accessories and handcraft them."

Following the launch, a few months down the road Ana reflects "I would like to thank my valued customers for their continued support and for the confidence that they have placed in me. Also to my family, my friends and everyone who support and encourage me."



For those looking for a bolder piece, Ana is encouraging people to come forward "If you have something unique and special in mind, any idea or a 'Dream Hat', please just contact me through my enquiry form or give me a call to arrange an appointment. I love creative challenges."

Ana's hats can be found on her online shop www.anavictoriamilinery.com where a number of "Ready to Wear" pieces can be purchased. For more information contact Ana on 085 789 6238

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JACK PARSONS – OUR UNDERGRAD ENTREPRENEUR

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

Jack Parsons (21), a final year Business and Law student from Beechlawn, Ballinasloe is providing a healthier option to snack-lovers with the launch of his organic O'Kale Krisps brand.

O'Kale Krisps, which are made using local organic kale from Beechlawn Organic Farm beside Parsons', and other fresh natural ingredients, have quickly become a hit, with much interest from National and specialist media.

For the moment, Parsons divides his time between Dublin and Galway, spending his weekends at home engaged in production and his free time during the week working on the administration side of the business.

O'Kale Krisps are currently stocked in a number of stores around Galway, including the Honest Kitchen in Knocknacarra, Morton's of Galway in Salthill, Francis Spar in Spiddal and McCambridge's of Galway on Shop Street.

In terms of employees, Parsons is a "Jack of all trades" operating the business by himself. Jack relies on the incredible support of his family and friends in which Jack expressed "They have been incredibly supportive and they are patiently awaiting their pay cheques."

The idea of the healthy snack stemmed from Parsons' sister, Sally whose Recipe and pitch won first prize at the Ballinasloe Entrepreneurial Student Tournament run by B.A.C.D. when she was just 13. After the tournament, interest in the product grew as people got a taste for the healthy snack. Parsons revealed that "We were inundated with people asking for O'Kale Krisps and the feedback was incredible". With the demand already high for the product, Parsons decided to develop recipe in to a full blown business.

The Young Entrepreneur launched the product while studying in UCD.

Juggling his studies and business has proved demanding "Starting a business in college is great in many ways. My course has the double effect

of making the content more relevant while allowing access to useful knowledge in running the business. There is a massive network of eager, knowledgeable people who are willing to help and offer their expertise"; Parsons stated.

Despite the benefits of his studies, Jack noted that the course is taking time away that he would prefer to spend on growing the business "I'm looking forward to finishing up and putting all my effort into building O'Kale."

Commenting on the flavours of the healthy snacks "There was a lot of trial and error at the beginning and we got a lot of feedback on the recipe, but the one we have nailed down now, our number one flavour is doing really well and we have two more flavours in development at the minute, which are pretty close to going to retail," Parsons added "We try and keep all of the ingredients wholesome and limit the amount of powders and processed stuff we put into it, to keep everything as healthy as possible."

He revealed the biggest struggle was "Overcoming the overwhelming negativity that surrounded anyone raised in the past decade or so was an initial challenge. I was a teenager during this recession and the constant sound track to those years



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from media and print reflected the real struggles of starting and staying in business." Parsons commented on all the well-established businesses closing down in Galway and that most of his peers emigrated to Australia, USA, Canada and UK due to unemployment. He claims that the bleak conditions of the economic fall was a spur "It's clear to me that no one owes me a living. I guess that is one reason I resolved to become as self-reliant as I could and not wait for anyone else to provide my solution. Thankfully I was raised with belief in hard work, persistence and tackling challenges."

Jack plans to incorporate new aspects to his product "We are currently looking at 2 new flavours in the range - a cheesy and a spicy flavour using more natural healthy ingredients. Other plans include extending our O'Kale products beyond crisps to other snack foods. It is safe to say that we will adapt to serve our customers to the best of our ability."

When asked where he sees the business in 10 years, he responded "Obviously I would like to think that O'Kale's would be a leading brand in the Irish health snack market, with its products widely penetrating the mainstream food market in Ireland. Profitability will be extremely important in the medium term and while these early set up years gobble up resources, it would be essential to be firmly in the black by then! Job creation and further product development is part of the vision. In 10 years' time it would be nice to think we'll be a real force in the European food market, we might use our acquired skills to venture into other industry and try to deliver a superior product and service."

He is encouraging aspiring entrepreneurs to follow in his footsteps "Just do it, if you want to start a business, jump in and if you want it bad enough you'll find a way to make it work. It's exactly what towns like Ballinasloe need more people taking the risk and giving it a go." Believing that marketing is key to becoming successful and that all businesses should utilise the free advertising of social media platforms he states "use the huge potential at your fingertips- Social media is obviously a brilliant and free tool. Talk to as many people in your chosen field as possible. The kind help and support generously shown to me has been overwhelming so far. Don't forget to pass it on where you can."

Despite the drain of maintaining studies and O'Kale Krisps, Jack Parsons still has a strong presence in the community, playing for the local Rugby and GAA teams and has praised the town on its support "I love where I'm from and everyone in my hometown has been very supportive."



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WILLIE BURKE'S CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF

Willie Burke and his shoe repair business is celebrating 25 years of business this year.

Willie, who was born and bred in Ballinasloe lives in the town with his wife, Kathryn. Willie has 3 children and 5 grandchildren. Being the eldest of 9, Willie began work at the age of 15.

"In my days, there was no college, as soon as we were able we went out and worked," said Willie.

He began his career working in Dubarry's shoe factory spending 32 years where he learned the shoe-making trade. In 1992, Willie took the opportunity to take over a shop on Main Street from previous owner Ruairí Kilduff, a harness-maker.

"I thought there was an opening for a shoe repair business and, thankfully, I have not been wrong yet." Willie added "I was delighted to settle in this location. This shop has been a house for leather for hundreds of years. The Kilduff Harness Makers have been here for generations. It feels very satisfying to continue the leather tradition".

Reflecting on 25 years Willie noted "Business is

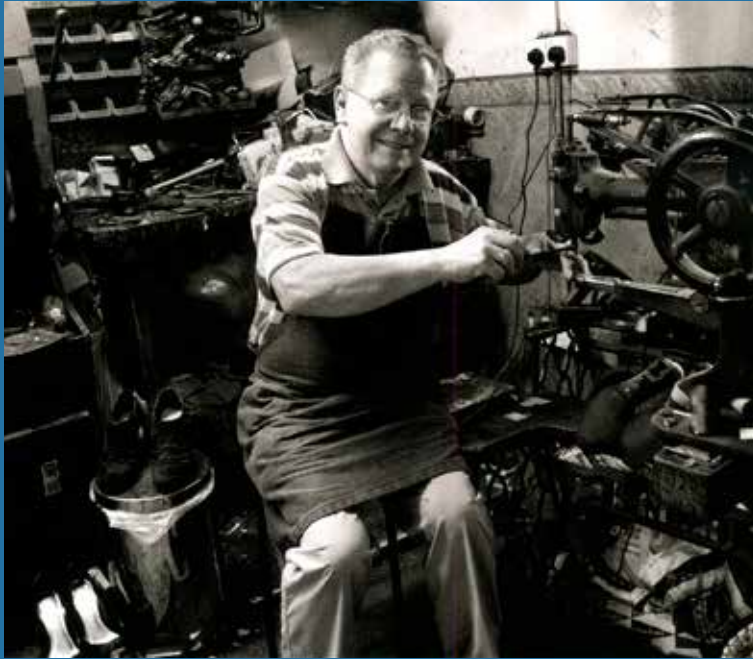
always fluctuating for me. When I first started things were moving slowly. With cheap footwear available from Dubarry's, people weren't as concerned about looking after their shoes and turned down quality products. The same occurred during recession. The resources just weren't there for the shoe repair industry to strive" "In spite of the downs, I'm still here and will be for a sometime yet."

"My customers are still as loyal as they were when I first started which is great to see. The same people are always coming back and it has even passed on to the next generation. They appreciate that I'm here 6 days a week and all the way through lunch. I have a home to go to also but

I give the customers my time," stated Willie.

"In return, I always maintain a trust with my customers. If someone comes into me with shoes, I will always inform them whether it is worth their while leaving them to me or if they would be better off buying a new pair. People appreciate my honest service" opines Willie.

Willie believes that the town has every opportunity to see economic growth "With our geographically location, we're in the centre of Ireland. You can get to anywhere on the Island very easily. Our sports



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facilities are second to none and we have plenty of houses available so we're way ahead of major towns. I feel that there's no reason that people wouldn't want to settle here." Willie added "I think the main problematic issue is that we're half in Galway and half in Roscommon, I feel that the politicians don't know what to do with us which is a huge shame because I feel our town has a lot to offer."

"In addition, I feel the town needs a night time dedicated restaurant. My wife Kathryn and I, usually travel to Athlone at the weekend for food and we often bump into people from town. It's something that could certainly strive."

After 25 years Willie has not lost the passion for his trade "I'm one of the few lads that enjoys coming into work in the morning. Most do it for the wage and that's it. I get great satisfaction with people being happy with the work I do for them. I love what I do."

Willie noted that there is a strong sense of community within the town "A positive of being settled here is that all the business owners' work together and people do support local when

they can. Without the continual support of my colleagues such as Tony Murphy, Gerry Stronge and Michael Breathnach here on the street. My sons Glen and wife Caroline, Conrad and his wife Anne and my daughter Leona and her husband Stephen and his grandchildren Kaelan, Adison, Eve, Michael, Jane. I may not of made it this far. That is something that you won't find in many other towns. For that I am grateful."



Willie added "There have been a lot of weeks that I didn't know if the business would make it into the next. Without the support of Kathryn, I would have been lost."

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ACCESSIBILITY & DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING INITIATIVE



BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

The Accessibility Ballinasloe Team have been working with the sporting organisations and local hospitality business over the past few months in an effort to increase awareness in the area of accessibility.

Training was offered to all the catering businesses in the town to assist them in providing a positive experience for diners, regardless of their age or disability.

The newly developed CAP Training (Communications Awareness Programme) was facilitated by the CAP Speech and Language Team (Student, Staff and Community Collaboration at NUI Galway).

The programme is targeted at catering staff and aims to enhance their ability to interact with individuals with communication and speech difficulties. The businesses who have benefited from the training to date include; the Golf Club, Downeys Bar and Oops a Daisy Café.

This training directly helps management and staff to learn and apply strategies and tools to engage effectively with people with communication and speech impairments. Building on this initiative, the Team hope to work with the food businesses to develop accessible picture menus which will greatly enhance communication for people with disabilities, with literacy problems, older adults, children and people where English is not their first language.

This programme will also benefit businesses in retaining existing customers by providing a better customer service overall and indeed promoting Ballinasloe as an accessible town.

The team have been working with the sporting organisations and local hospitality business over the past few months in an effort to increase awareness in the area of accessibility.

The Disability Awareness in Sport workshop was facilitated by Galway Sports Partnership and was attended by representatives from the Cycling Club, Running Club, GAA, Town AFC, Karate Clubs (Leo Mulvany, Claire Dolphin and Marie & John Dolphin), Golf Club, Cumann Camógaíochta and Tommie Costello Cuckoohill Bootcamp.

The overall aim of the training was to build awareness around the challenges faced by people with disabilities and give clubs the opportunity to reflect and evaluate practices around inclusion.

The Ballinasloe Advocates and Ballinasloe Area Community Development very generously funded both training events, eliminating any cost to participating organisations.

Accessibility Ballinasloe is a whole community approach to creating a more inclusive society and the Team encourages anyone who has an interest in the area or an idea they feel would benefit the community (or a particular group) to contact them directly by emailing accessibilitybsloe@gmail.com or visit the facebook page @ <https://www.facebook.com/accessibilitybsloe>



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MAIN ST. TRAVEL AGENT FOUNDER RECEIVES NATIONAL ACCOLADE

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Liam Keller has become one of the leading businessmen in his adopted town of Ballinasloe with 6 decades of running Keller Travel and Hardware on Main Street.

In light of Liam's accomplishments, it is no surprise that he was recently announced the winner of this year's Contribution to the Travel Industry Award.

The Annual Awards are designed to showcase excellence in the delivery of international travel services. A key feature of the Awards programme is the series of Member Awards to be judged by a panel of judges.

Liam was presented with the award at a Gala Banquet in the Round Room at The Mansion House, Dublin. "The president's nomination was to honour a guy who has been in the business for so long," stated Liam. "Over 550 people were there all in black ties and it was very glamorous. I was taken aback by the atmosphere," Liam added.

"I originally thought I was going to present an award at the event.



Liam Keller is presented with his Award by Daragh Hanratty (Head of Aviation Marketing at Cork Airport) and Cormac Meehan (ITAA President)

I had my sons Bill and Pearse with me who knew the whole time. It was a tremendous surprise when the president announced that I had been selected as the winner for my contribution. I was really touched."

Born in Enniscrone, Co. Sligo, the family moved to town when his father, Bill, was employed in the local solicitors firm of Patrick Hogan & Co. In 1958, Liam and his late brother Michael decided to purchase the Travel Agency on Main St.

It was the 6th agency in Ireland at the time issued with its own Travel Licence. Over the years, the business flourished and expanded, successfully setting up Campotel which caters for camping holidays in French seaside resorts. Today 37 seasons on - Keller Campotel are amongst the top family holiday specialists in Europe, accommodating up to 2,000 tourists on any one night during high season.

The sprightly octogarian, Liam now lives in retirement with his wife Olive. His children Bill, Pearse and Sheena have taken charge of the business and continue to strive and carry the good name of Keller in the travel industry.

ENTERPRISE TOWN EVENT FOR EMERALD BALLROOM



Ballinasloe will host a Bank of Ireland Enterprise Town in the Emerald Ballroom, Ballinasloe on Friday and Saturday 19th and 20th May. Through this initiative, Bank of Ireland and the business community of Ballinasloe will work together to support local enterprise. In addition, they will involve the wider community and local schools through a range of different activities.

To learn more about the exciting plans for Ballinasloe Enterprise Town, please contact Margaret Barrett at (087) 4001292.



Some of the staff of Bank of Ireland Ballinasloe, who are looking forward to Ballinasloe Enterprise Town L-R: Margaret Barret Manager with Gary Burke, Paddy Neary, Celine O Connor, Hilda Grehan, Mary Egan, PJ Fleming and Eilish Plower

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OPTOMETRIC RESEARCH PROJECT BY LOCAL INVENTOR

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Locally based Dr. Fairclough, after wearing spectacles for 75 years himself (and testing eyes of over 50,000 people in the USA, Ireland and the UK) became well aware of how it's to wear them.

Despite the experience he had in fitting spectacles, quite often the patients would only come in a few days after being fitted by him with the nose marks in a different place. To keep the front heavy optical appliance from slipping down the nose it was then necessary to tighten them behind the ears.

The compromise was often not a happy one with both sore noses and ears. The patient felt locked in trapped and clamped in and the decision would be a choice between wearing them and seeing better or not wearing them and being happier and more comfortable.

The frame styling or fashion aspect would have nothing to do with the decision which the patient will have to make in order to achieve comfort. Spectacles are still a necessary and important service of upgrading our most valued sense of eyesight and vision.

Dr. Fairclough developed and patented in 1970 the first non nose contact spectacle structure since an Italian optician, invented the first nose supported ophthalmic lenses with frames around the lenses.

Now Dr. Fairclough has developed and patented a small metal attachment secured at the temple ends by a neoprene rubber tube which reduces both the weight on the nose and ear pressure by 50%



or more. There is no slippage. There are several different models available any of which are free to the research participants.

The normal selling price depending on the model used is €29.50 upwards, but will be FREE to the research participants .

This first ever scientific study will involve weighing the front of the spectacles and then measuring the size of the contact area on the nose. The project results may be published to the public and optical professions after evaluation and conclusions by Emma Lynch and Dr. Max Fairclough, but the names of all participants will remain private.

Children who have little bridge structure often have a slipping problem and may not like having a band at the back of the head. Children would be welcome in the study to try balancers.

Free follow up visits a few weeks later will enable any needed adjustments and for advice and comments from wearers will be received and noted. Enough persons are scheduled for the study to proceed but the team are still looking for a limited number more.

Application forms to take part in the study may be picked up and filled in either:

- Gullanes Hotel – reception
- Celtic Healing, Croffys Yard
- Emma Lynch's office, Main Street

Free measurement appointments will take about 20 minutes with Dr. Max at Gullanes Hotel or Celtic Healing (Croffys Yard) Contact: Dr. Max Fairclough on 087 1129240 for further advice and information.

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Fianna Fáil TD for Roscommon/Galway Eugene Murphy says Minister Simon Harris must address missed ambulance targets. New figures released to reveal that the overwhelming majority of hospitals are continuing to miss the 20 minute turnaround time for ambulance callouts at emergency departments with Portiuncula and University Hospital Galway with some of the worst turnaround rates in the country with only 21% meeting the 20 minute ambulance turnaround target.

According to Management at Portiuncula Hospital, their emergency department "remains extremely busy". There are high numbers of patients awaiting admission, and full capacity protocol has been implemented. According to the INMO, there are up to 26 patients awaiting a proper bed at the Ballinasloe hospital during last month.

Portiuncula Hospital, which is part of the Saolta University Health Care Group, has recently issued a statement, advising people attending the Emergency Department that they should be expecting long delays.

Apologising for any distress caused by the delays, Saolta said a Full Capacity Protocol has been implemented and all efforts would continue to be made to identify patients who are appropriate for discharge.

The statement encouraged people to attend Emergency Department only in the case of real emergencies and they should contact their GP or GP Out-of-Hours service in the first instance.

In light of this, according to RateMyHospital.ie Portiuncula is now the 30th ranked hospital, in the field of the 69 public and private, in the country. They have moved down 4 places in recent months.



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The parents of the late Donal Walsh from Kerry were guest of honour in a public meeting in Ballinasloe when they spoke about suicide, self-harm and youth. They are pictured here with GELS co-founders Arthur Carr and Gerry Roche.

G.E.L.S. provides information on services available to those in a crisis as well as attending events across the area with an information stand, holding suicide and self-harm education training whilst interacting and learning from other organisations in the same field and assisting other communities in the setting up of similar groups.

Co-founder Gerry Roche recalled "I have worked as career Garda for over thirty-two years. I was involved in many different types of traumatic incidents in that time but one of the most difficult I encountered was

that of suicide. When I started working in East Galway in 2012 I saw a serious upsurge in the figures for those attempting suicide or taking their own lives. In light of this a number of like-minded individuals came together at the request of Co- Founder Arthur Carr to discuss the issue and what we could do. After much research and discussion we decided to form G.E.L.S."

Roche notes "Our mission is based around the four principles of our purpose which are; 'Saving lives through Education, Prevention, Awareness and Support.' An Garda Siochána established close links with the group as part of its commitment to community policing and sharing of responsibility for the safety in the community through positive mental health."

Co-founder and Secretary Arthur Carr recalls how a referral system was set up with the close links with the H.S.E. and Pieta House which has worked well. G.E.L.S. were lucky enough to secure a premises through the goodwill of some local landlords and were able to develop a base there for meetings where the Ballinasloe Men's shed and Gamblers Anonymous meet regularly.

"The group has added to their services by providing SafeTALK and Assist courses. We have established links with organisations actively involved in suicide such as the H.S.E., West Suicide Prevention office, G.P.S., Coroners, Pieta House, Jigsaw, Anam Cara to name but a few" states Arthur.

Through their work an important link was established with Mary O'Sullivan the Suicide Prevention Manager for H.S.E. West. Mary introduced the idea of the Suicide Family Liaison Officer as a concept for County Galway which was then developed with the other first responders including An Garda Siochána, Ambulance personnel, undertakers, H.S.E. staff, Clergy and the Coroners. This service though funded by the H.S.E. and is now run by Pieta house which provides a great support for families and communities in the aftermath of suicide. An Garda Siochána is committed to this service through

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its interaction with the Divisional Victims Office and has found it highly beneficial.

"There is no doubt but that local interest and activities reduce the incidents of suicide in communities due to heightened awareness of the issue and services available, education through public events and training courses, prevention through positive interventions by trained people and support in the aftermath," states Arthur on the impact and reach of the relatively young organisation.

Although Carr has moved on from Ballinasloe, he has affirmed his involvement - "I continue to advocate the need for awareness and action in the communities I work with and I am still actively involved in G.E.L.S. The need for local groups to become involved has become very evident in the fight against suicide and supporting mental health and I appeal for more people to support their local organisations."

Chairperson, Aiden Lonergan noted from his professional life that he had seen first-hand the effects suicide can have on individuals, families and communities and he has seen the valuable contribution G.E.L.S. is making to provide information to those seeking such help in a crisis. "Suicide is not something that can be reduced or removed with one solution. There is no quick fix. Under my Chairmanship, we have continued to engage with as many communities as possible to ensure families and individuals know of the services available to them should the need arise."

Lonergan added "I am delighted to be part of the Team that brought the first Darkness Into Light Walk to Ballinasloe and the super effort put into participating in the Cycle Against Suicide Cycle which saw Ballinasloe host a stop-over. The amount of Volunteer spirit and generosity that exists in Ballinasloe and the surrounding areas that G.E.L.S. have been able to benefit from and the many organisations who we have worked with."

G.E.L.S. received the Ballinasloe Mayor's Award in 2013 for Outstanding Commitment to the Community. Secretary Arthur Carr



Last year's "Darkness Into Light walk" - raised over €26k and this year's event is scheduled for 6th of May. Picture shows handing over of the cheque to Pieta House.

received the Community and Voluntary award at the Ballinasloe People of the Year Awards in 2015 and at the Cathaoirleach's Community Awards he was honoured with the Volunteer of the Year award.

In terms of upcoming events G.E.L.S. has a busy year ahead with Ballinasloe's third Darkness Into Light walk for Pieta House taking place on May 6, their fifth Annual Charity Cycle on July 9 and a three Ball Golf Scramble on September 9 with a car as the prize for a hole in one sponsored by Michael Whelan Car Sales, Mountbellew.

On the future for G.E.L.S., Lonergan states "I look forward to seeing the delivery on plans to provide additional services and training."

Arthur Carr is encouraging people to get involved "We would be delighted to hear from people wanting to volunteer. G.E.L.S. can be contacted on 085 123 7878, on Facebook - Galway East Life Support or in the office in Cullen's Yard which is open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings".



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TINY TOTS PRESCHOOL WELCOMES NEW AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE SCHEME

BY JENNIFER SHERIDAN

Jennifer Sheridan, owner & manager of Tiny Tots Creche & Educational Preschool in the Enterprise Centre, Creagh welcomes the recent Budget announcement of the new "Single Affordable Childcare Scheme" introduced to help parents with the costs of childcare.

"A solid investment in sustainable childcare is welcome and this package for parents is the first step in the right direction. A Childcare Service such as our facility, Tiny Tots in the Enterprise Centre, which provides care for children 6 months to 8 years including access to the 2 year free Preschool scheme and afterschool pickups enables parents to avail of the education or training they need to access good jobs and take advantage of opportunities for advancement in the workplace thus providing important benefits to working parents.

In addition there have been many reports on the positive long term impact that a high quality childcare service such as Tiny Tots have on children & the future economy"

The scheme will provide a system of both universal (for everyone) and targeted (means tested) subsidies of up to €80 a month or €900 a year for all children aged between six months and three years towards the cost of childcare for children attending a Tusla-registered childcare provider such as Tiny Tots Creche.



Children at Tiny Tots Crèche enjoying the sun

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Paschal Donohoe told the Dáil that the €35m Single Affordable Childcare Scheme would be introduced in September of this year.

Adv. 1

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CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE - A BEACON OF HOPE

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Fianna Fáil TD for Roscommon/Galway Eugene Murphy has described the East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support Centre as a beacon of hope for people with a cancer diagnosis and their families. Deputy Murphy was speaking following a recent visit to the centre in Brackernagh, Ballinasloe when he was struck by the extensive range of services and therapies which are provided in the centre on a daily basis in an entirely voluntary capacity without any State funding.

The Fianna Fáil TD has called on the Minister for Health Simon Harris to source funding for the remuneration for a centre manager and full-time office administrator for this vital community resource which caters for over 140 people per week from all over Galway and Roscommon and even further afield.

"I regularly meet various individuals and community groups throughout the constituency of Roscommon/Galway but this centre is really something special...The East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support Centre is truly an oasis of healing for people with a cancer diagnosis and their families. The range of services which the centre provides is staggering, the team of volunteers are heart-warming and dedicated and their passion, drive and commitment is infectious but this vital community service is entirely run on a voluntary basis and is totally dependent on the goodwill of corporate sponsors, local businesses and donations from the public with not one penny of State funding!"

Eugene plans to bring this issue to the attention of the Minister for Health Simon Harris and has tabled a number of parliamentary questions on the matter as it is vital that the centre now receive some sort of State funding towards remuneration for a centre manager and full-time office administrator.

Opened in 2008 the centre in Brackernagh, has grown steadily over the years and they now own the building. Some 140 people go through the doors of the centre each week as they are open five days per week with a 24 hour phone service. Services include counselling, chiropody, art therapy, Indian head massage, Reiki, music therapy, children's and adult's meditation as well as a programme designed to teach children how to deal with a cancer diagnosis. Therapies are provided by 18 fully qualified therapists and three counsellors- they also run a pilot programme for fitness for cancer patients and they are the first cancer support centre in Ireland to build their own gym.

"When I visited the centre I was so impressed- they also have a beautiful landscaped garden, an outdoor polytunnel and a gym area which doubles up as a space for various classes including singing and art therapy and I met a wonderful group of women last Friday who were taking part in the art classes. One of the driving forces behind the centre is affable and hugely dedicated centre manager Jacqueline Daly who goes above and beyond the call of duty on a regular basis.

"I also met a number of other board members who are all cancer survivors themselves and they are now giving of their time and energy to help continue the great work underway in the centre. But it's not just about classes or therapies- the centre is truly a refuge and a haven for people with a cancer diagnosis or their family- it might just be a cup of tea and a chat, an hour of respite from caring for a loved one or simply just to feel that you are not alone- and you can't put a price on that," said Deputy Murphy.

"They receive referrals from Portiuncula and UHG oncology units but it's somewhat ironic that yet on one hand the HSE are referring patients to this wonderful centre but the centre is still not receiving any State funding- it simply beggars belief that this Trojan work and range of services can be entirely run on a voluntary basis. The East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support centre are also ambitious and have far reaching plans- they want to purchase a vehicle this year which will help transport people from the area who are undergoing cancer treatment in Galway city- they are innovative, dedicated and passionate group of people" stated Deputy Murphy.

"I will continue to lobby the Minister for Health on this issue and I also understand the centre is in the process of organising a petition to lobby Minister Harris so I would urge everyone to get on board and sign the petition once it is launched," concluded Deputy Murphy.



Deputy Eugene Murphy pictured with Tom Haynes, Edith Ward, Kevin Flynn and Jacqueline Daly of the East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support Centre in Ballinasloe on a recent visit to the centre.

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BRIAN UNIACKE: TOWN'S NEWEST OCEAN SAILOR

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Brian Uniacke, Adrian Pearson, Dave Immelmann, Kathleen, Josh and Shane on the "Black Cat" Boat.

Brian Uniacke, from Kilgarave, is a qualified Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Yacht Master and recently completed the Cape to Rio race, finishing 7th in a 3,700 arduous miles voyage across the South Atlantic Ocean.

Brian's (an IT Consultant based in Dublin) interest in sailing began 3 years ago when his father, Kevin, took up the sport. Brian stated "Dad had started sailing with his friends and I suppose one thing led to another and he found himself signing up for a voyage from Portugal to the Caribbean and back." Brian added "They needed a fourth crew member and I put myself forward"

Prior to Brian being thrown in the deep end of sailing, he decided to complete a Start Sailing course and a Marine Diesel Mechanic course. After completing his training, Brian took sail on the "Wife of Pi" boat. The four man crew consisted of Brian, his father, Brian, Enda Connellan (Captain) and a Frank Shortall, a musician from Dungarvan.

Brian firmly believes Frank's rendition of the Lonesome Boatman on the tin whistle will "forever put me in mind of the Atlantic," Brian added "I feel very lucky to have shared the experience of crossing an ocean with my father. It was a voyage filled with stories, music, gales of laughter and a healthy dose of adversity."

After his maiden voyage Brian wanted to spend as much time he could on the water "I joined the Dublin Bay racing scene and sailed 4 times a week on various different boats," said Brian.

After 2 years of training, he decided to purchase his first boat "I bought a 23' sail boat, a Ruffian, I've had a lot of fun with her and it's given me the chance to bring a lot of people out sailing, which is something that I really enjoy doing."

After receiving his RYA Yacht master Ocean certificate of competence, Brian's instructor, Dave Immelmann gave him the opportunity to join his crew for the Cape Town to Rio Race.

"He is an enormously experienced sailor so I was honoured when I received the call. I had done a few off-shore races but this was a whole different story and an opportunity I couldn't let pass," stated Brian.

There was a crew of 6 including Brian on the "Black Cat" boat and it took the team over 20 days to complete the race, "After a tough start we settled down into a routine. When you set off it seems as though the voyage will last forever and then, before you know it you're a couple of days from the end." noted Brian.

Currently Brian is living in Dublin working as an I.T. contractor which provides him flexibility for sailing. Brian hopes to steer his career towards sailing instructing "If you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life," he reckons.

For anyone that is interesting in sailing, Brian suggests "Just do it. Enrol in a short training course just to get the basics. You can then get a chance to see if it's for you. You won't regret it."



Brian Uniacke and Adrian Pearson, owner of "Black Cat" boat.



Frank Shortall, Enda Connellan, Kevin Uniacke and Brian Uniacke on "Wife of Pi" boat.

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VINTAGE CLUB IS "ON TRACK" FOR ANOTHER BUSY YEAR

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

Recently, the members and volunteers of Ballinasloe and District Vintage Club set off on their second outing of the year. They travelled to the Arigna Mining Experience and then onto the Leitrim Vintage Club run and Auto Jumble in Rooskey, Co. Roscommon. Chairperson Shane Burns stated "A great day was had by all. Following events like these, interest in our club is definitely growing."

The club recently held their 12th Classic and Vintage Car Track Day at Pallas Karting, Tynagh. Shane noted: "With a healthy entry of 45 cars vintage and track cars, the event was a huge success. It was a fantastic spectacle to watch. Credit to all our marshals and participants for braving the baltic conditions on the day."

The club's AGM was held last month in Gullane's hotel. A calendar of events for 2017 was agreed along with the club appointing new officers Chairperson: Shane Burns, Vice Chairperson: Ronnie Cobban, Joint Presidents: Michael

Hyland and Peter Mooney, Secretary: Michael Hehir, Treasurer: Michael Glynn, Membership Officer: Pat Glynn and Safety Officer: John McDevitt.

The club took part in the Ahascragh and Ballinasloe St. Patrick's Day Parades with club



members showcasing their vintage vehicles and machinery. With an impressive display, the Club won first place in their category in Ahascragh.

"Thanks to everyone who supported the club for the Parades, We are very grateful to the Parade committee for awarding us as trophy and medals."

Shane added "We as a club are truly thankful to our members who always deliver in spite of the miserable weather," stated Chair Shane.

The club will be holding a Vintage tractor run in aid of St. Theresa's Children's Ward, Portiuncula Hospital. The club will meet at Gullane's carpark at 9 a.m. on Easter Sunday. Admission is €15 and only pre 1987 tractors are accepted. Shane is encouraging everyone to get involved "All members and non-members should attend to support a local and good cause."

Membership for the club is €25 and there is a discounted rate of €15 for minors "Our club holds regular meetings in Gullane's Hotel and people who have an interest in all things vintage should come along" said Shane.

Regular updates are posted on the Ballinasloe Vintage and District club Facebook page and potential members can contact Michael Glynn on 087 628 3954.



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TOMAS' BARBERS CONTINUES TO STRIVE

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

With almost 15% of our local population non Irish – (as defined by the CSO) – LIFE will bring some personal stories from people of different nationalities now living among us.

One of the most popular members of our sizeable Polish community is Tomasz Jedrzejewski decided to grasp the opportunity to set up his own barber shop in 2014 and his business continues to grow.

Tomasz originates from small town in South Poland called Jagodnik which is located near the city of Rzeszow. He moved to Ireland in 2005 to experience a different lifestyle "I chose to move to Ireland as I didn't see as many career opportunities in my home country. Also, I was always fascinated about the Irish culture and wished to learn more by experiencing it for myself".

Tomasz stated "I decided to locate myself here because there was already a largely established Polish community and I had many friends already living here who couldn't recommend the town enough". Examining the difference of living in Ireland, he finds the similarities striking - "I have never lived abroad before so I didn't know what to expect, life here, however, feels much like home. The town is quiet and has a strong sense of community which makes me feel like I belong here. I am always surrounded by lots of friendly people who are always happy to lend a handfull. He also praised the town's facilities I find that I am always active here. I love to spend time availing of the swimming pools, gyms, parks and pubs that the town has to offer".



After eight years of working in a local barber's shop, Tomasz was motivated to set up his own business. "I felt if I focus all my efforts in to setting up my own barber shop, I could be successful". In 2014, he rented a vacant shop on Dunlo Street "I renovated it with the help of my friends and family and also the local people of the town have been more than helpful" adding "I am pleased to say that I have not looked back since. Business is doing really well and on top of that I love what I do. I hope to continue working here for many years to come".

Tomasz prides himself on providing customer satisfaction. "In my shop we look after our customers, offering a professional service for reasonable price. I feel if people are happy leaving my shop, they are more than likely going to visit again. It is something my employees and I pride ourselves on." Tomasz employs two people Kamil and his sister Iwona who are also Polish.

He stated "The biggest struggle of moving here is the language barrier. When I learnt English in school it was completely different than using it in practice. I was also worried about starting up the business as it was my first but thankfully through time, everything has worked out".

Tomasz added "I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to all the people who have welcomed me to the town and for all their help and also to all my loyal customers who continue to support me."

For more information, Tomasz can be contacted through his email address tomaszbarber100@wp.pl for any queries.

Paddy Keane I.P.A.V.

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JOE SAMMON-A GREAT CHARITABLE WORKER



BY KEN KELLY



With the passing of Joe Sammon, Kilclooney, Ballinasloe, the community has lost a person whose real forte was his concern for the less well off and willingness to communicate with all those in need. Since coming to work in the local Post Office in February 1969, Joe's jovial personality endeared him to all sections of the community, through his work and voluntary engagements.

A native of Tubberclair, Athlone, Joe Sammon first joined the PO staff in 1968 with his initial training in Tralee, later moving onto Charleville in Cork and Muinebeag in Carlow before coming to Ballinasloe in 1969. He was appointed Overseer in 1994 and two years later was promoted to Head Postmaster, a post he held up his retirement in November 2010.

Joe's concern for his fellow man saw him get involved with many groups in his adopted town but he will be mostly remembered for his herculean work in the St. Michael's Conference of the Saint Vincent de Paul. Joining the Society in 1990, he served as Hon. Treasurer from 1995 to 2009, was Conference President from 2009 to 2014 and the following year was awarded a special long service medal by the National body.

The great work done by Sr. Bridie McNerney in looking after the needy of the town was greatly acknowledged in the 1990's when Joe and the then President, Martin Healy, were responsible for purchasing a premises in Jubilee St., which was named "Ozanam House". Initially this just functioned as an office and meeting place but in 2004 the first St. VdeP shop in Ballinasloe was opened. Ten years later, Joe who was then President and the late Kevin Whyte purchased a building at the lower end of Jubilee St. to meet the increasing demands on the Society. Despite his failing health, Joe Sammon was the proudest man in town when he saw the newly completed building opened only months before his passing.

When many parts of Ballinasloe were devastated by floods in 2009, Joe as the new Conference President, highlighted the plight of many unfortunates on National TV, resulting in the town receiving massive donations of both money and goods. He liaised with other groups and secured willing helpers to organise and distribute provisions to those affected. Despite his busy job as Postmaster, the willing Joe found enough hours to look after those in need and even was invited to give a 45 minute talk to the National body of his experience.

He was also involved in a project to use funds from the Maureen O'Connell Fund in Galway to spearhead the building of sheltered housing for the elderly in Hymany, which is now under the control of Cluid where work is expected to get under way later this year. He travelled widely and undertook many fund-raising trips for charity including Route 66 in the USA. The late Joe Sammon will be sadly missed in the community. A great listener, a concerned Christian, a tireless worker

for the less well-off, were some of his qualities and as one woman remarked as his funeral "You always came away from a talk with Joe, with a smile on your face, as he would always produce a quip."

There were huge numbers of mourners at the reposal and funeral following Joe's untimely death which came after a long illness while his former colleagues from An Post and the St. Vincent de Paul Society formed guards of honour. He is survived by his wife Patricia, sons Colm and Jarlath, daughter Sile, their partners Louise and Darragh, grandson Cillian, sister Mary, brothers Bernie and Paraic as well as many other relatives and friends.



Eugene
Murphy

Roscommon - Galway



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Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre
Creagh Road, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
Tel: 087-4353834

Elphin Street
Strokestown,
Co. Roscommon
Tel: 071-9633000

Dáil Éireann, Leinster House,
Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 01-6183056
Email: eugene.murphy@oireachtas.ie

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ATHLONE ARMY BAND VISIT TAUGHMACONNELL

BY DARRAGH COSTELLO AND SÉAN BRADLEY



The muscular men and women of the Athlone Army Band walked into Taughmaconnell Community Centre wearing their khaki uniforms and big black boots, they gave a recital concert in our school last month. Everyone watched as they set up on stage and the lights gleamed onto their brass instruments.

The conductor, Tom Kelly, introduced each family of instruments, the brass section, woodwind section and percussion section. Each instrument played a solo of their own preferred tune. Firstly, the flute played a sweet melody. Grandparents, parents and children from the school really enjoyed it.

Afterwards they played 'Can't Stop the Feeling'. Everyone clapped and sang along. They also played Uptown Funk. 5th and 6th class sang along in Irish as everyone

had to learn it for Seachtaine na Gaeilge. Everyone listened carefully as Tom introduced the smallest instrument of the orchestra which was the Piccolo. Everyone in the hall were mesmerized by the sweet melody as the musician played Frozen's 'Let It Go'.

After they played their final song 4th, 5th and 6th class performed some lovely songs

on the tin whistle. The hot air was covered with the smell of delicious baked goods. The army had a well-deserved feast from all of the sandwiches and cakes that parents had prepared.

It was great seeing the army band. Everyone had a great day and the Principal thanked the conductor and band for a great performance.



NIGHT SKY PLANETARIUM VISITS SCOIL UI CHEARNAIGH

Recently Oliver Haughey and the SKYDOME visited our school. The SkyDome is a huge air filled dome into which the children go and view all the wonders of space. A special projector recreates the night sky inside the dome. The children learned about the planets, the stars and our universe. All children from Naionáin Bheaga to Rang 6 really enjoyed the experience – we look forward to repeating our journey through space in the future.



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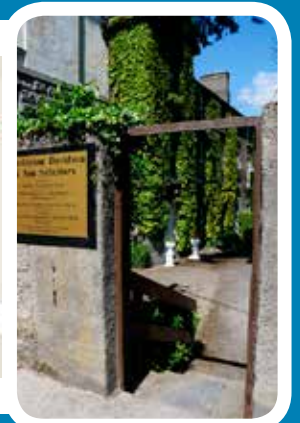
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CREAGH NS PUPILS RAISE OVER €5000 FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

The pupils of Creagh N.S. along with their principal Ms Stephanie Keating, were very proud to present a cheque for €5303.79 to Ballinasloe Social Services at their recent school assembly. The money was raised by selling Saint Brigid's Crosses made by the children from rushes for €2 each.

Making a St. Brigid's cross is one of the traditional rituals in Ireland to celebrate the beginning of early spring, 1st February. They are hung by the door or in the rafters to protect the house from fire. The ancient craft is very much alive in the school and the children have Anthony Blade (father of teacher Antoinette Blade) to thank for this. This year was the 6th year of St Brigid's Crosses for Ballinasloe Social Services and again Anthony spent a week in the school going from class to class teaching the children the craft.

Many children then gave up their lunch break and even volunteered to stay back an extra hour in school to make the traditional rush crosses on the run up to St Brigid's Day.

The children then brainstormed ways of selling the crosses and as a result they were sold in local

shops, businesses, hotels, at Bingo, Card Games, banks and after masses. The farmers were even targeted with a stall set up at the local Mart. The support from the families of the pupils was exceptional as many parents brought boxes of crosses to their places of work to broaden the marketplace.

The project led by teachers Antoinette Blade and Regina Power would not have been so successful without the fantastic support from the people of Ballinasloe and neighbouring parishes who bought the crosses.

Ballinasloe Social Services were represented at the assembly by Pádraig Ó Ceithearnaigh (Chairman), Teresa Coughlan (Manager) and Annette Lynagh. On accepting the cheque Pádraig, thanked all involved and said the much needed funds would be put towards the replacement of a leaking roof in the Day Centre.

At the end of their assembly, the 200 children directly involved in the venture were rewarded with a disco, treats and of course an evening off homework!

They richly their reward and a good rest is needed until St. Brigid's Day 2018.



Scoil an Chroi Naofa Historic Qualification for All-Ireland Final

Well done to the Under 13 Quiz team who have qualified for the All-Ireland final of the Credit Union Quiz taking place in the RDS Dublin on April 2nd. This is the first time ever in the history of the school or the competition that a team have qualified at this level. Pictured are Caolán Nott, Matthew Clinton, Chloe Gaffey, Séan Ronaldson.



Ardscoil Mhuire students Sally Anne Parsons and Jessica Burke with Senator Maura Hopkins at this year's BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition. Their project compared the nutritional value of Kale crisps versus traditional potato crisps.



Eoin Chamberlain and Ilya Manning who were mascots at the Under 16 Match Ballinasloe – V- Hungary



Ilya Manning and his family with the Blue Skies Team at the Under 16 Match in Ballinasloe

OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE

CONRADH NA GAEILGE BEST WINDOW COMPETITION FOR SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE, WHICH WAS JOINTLY WON BY KARIBA'S RESTAURANT AND HUBERT DOLAN'S BALLINASLOE.



The Tomás Uí Bhaoill award was presented to Kariba's Restaurant, Society Street, Ballinasloe by Ruairí Ó hAnluain, and Máirín Uí Thuairisg in recognition of their Shop Window display in the Conradh na Gaeilge Best shop window competition for Seachtain Na Gaeilge and was accepted Muireann Ní Cheannaghain and Aine Ní Cheannabhain. Pictured here left to right are Ruairí Ó hAnluain, Aine Ní Cheannabhain, Muireann Ní Cheannaghain and Máirín Uí Thuairisg.



The Tadhg Mac Lochlainn award was presented to Hubert Dolan's, Dunlo Street, Ballinasloe in recognition of their Shop Window display in Conradh Na Gaeilge Best shop window competition for Seachtain na Gaeilge by Ruairí Ó hAnluain, and Máirín Uí Thuairisg and was accepted Nollaig Ó Sleibhín, Aodh Ó Dólaín and Yvonne de Cúitiún. Pictured here left to right are Ruairí Ó hAnluain, Nollaig Ó Sleibhín, Máirín Uí Thuairisg, Aodh Ó Dólaín and Yvonne de Cúitiún.



Garbally Collage Seniors win a Table Quiz held at Gullanes Hotel, Ballinasloe as part of the Seachtain na Gaeilge activities. Pictured here are: Front Row Míchéal Ó Dúláin, Mark Burnell; Back Row: Máirín Uí Thuairisg, Daithí Ó Cofaigh, Nathan Donelan, Seosamh Ó Beirgin.



AIB staff Ballinasloe team tog out in support of their AIB Home Insurance offer where you can get €50 for your GAA club with AIB Home insurance.



Ballinasloe Conradh na Gaeilge who won 2nd Place in Connacht for Gradam Chnoradh Na Gaeilge 2017 Craobh Ghreallán Conradh Na Slua, Co. Na Gaillimhe received 2nd place in Connacht for Gradam Chnoradh na Gaeilge 2017. Pictured left to right are: Ruairí Ó hAnluain, Pádraigín Uí Mhuineachán, Máirín Uí Thuairisg, Seosamh Ó Beirgin, with their award.



PANCAKE PARTY IN AID OF WESTERN ALZHEIMERS
L-R: Noeleen Rudden (Services Manager Western Alzheimers), Fionnuala Tracey, Bernard McDermott, Margaret Collins, Shane McDermott, Brendan Murray, Phillip O'Connor, Liz Madden (Creagh Training Centre) & Suzanne Coleman (Western Alzheimers).

OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE

Creagh N.S. Boys Spikeball team has qualified for the All Ireland Finals which will be held in Limerick. To date the boys have played twelve matches, winning the Regional Final which was held in Loughrea recently.



Back row: Joe Tierney, Aaron Cunningham, Charlie Naughton, Alain Brooks
Front row: Dylan Campi, Shane Fitzpatrick, Jason Cunningham, Sean McDermott

AIB Ballinasloe branch held an open afternoon at their branch in support of the Ahascragh-Fohenagh Team as part of the AIB GAA Club Championships where customers and staff got an opportunity to meet some of the team.



Back row: Joe Kenny, Sean Keane, Shane Connelly, Seamus Moclair, Jonathon Leonard
Front row: Cathal Mannion, Oisín Devine and Padraig Mannion



Pat Joe Guinness with Family and Friends at his Birthday Party.



Pat Joe Guinness, Derryullen celebrating his 70th Birthday on St. Patrick's Day in the Moycarr Inn.

CONRAD NA GAEILGE NATIONAL SCHOOL TABLE QUIZ WINNERS (taken at Gullane's Hotel, Ballinasloe)



Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh- Béal Átha na Slua



Front row: (L to R) Ellen Ní Churraoin, Clíodhna Ní Annluain, Conchúir Ó Grádaigh, Rónán Ó Sioráin,
Back (L to R) Ruairí Ó hAnnluain (PO), Lorna Ní Chinnéide, Aimee Nic Aogáin, Máirín Uí Thuairisg
(Cathaoirleach Craoibhe)

APRIL EVENTS GUIDE

| Saturday 1st | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Michael Regan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Chris Nash | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Rooster | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Martin Cunningham | An Tain | 10pm |
| DJ JOHNNY F | Downeys | 10pm |
| Ramblin Young Blades | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Nightowls | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Split | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Take Time | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Sunday 2nd | | |
| The Reel Deal | Lukers of Sbridge | 5pm |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| The 2 Q's | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| Michael Regan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Sharon Turley | Downeys | 10pm |
| Liam Country Road Show | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Coyle Family | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Monday 3rd | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| Tuesday 4th | | |
| Loughrea Photo Club | Bsloe Library | 7pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Social Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| April 5th Wednesday | | |
| Trad Seisiun Gerry Harrington | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Thursday 6th | | |
| Live Acoustic Session | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Friday 7th | | |
| Ballinasloe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Quiz Night St. Vincent de Paul | An Tain | 8.30pm |
| Happy Bar Starts | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| The Barnyard Quartet | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| DJ JOHNNY F | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Saturday 8th | | |
| Amy Brennan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Joe Wynne | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Red Tape | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Jock & Davy | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| DJ JOHNNY F | Downeys | 10pm |
| Beggars Velvet | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| The Crime | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| James Mckelvey/DJ upstairs | An Tain | 10/10.30pm |
| Too Tall Paul | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| Sunday 9th | | |
| The Reel Deal | Lukers of Sbridge | 5pm |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| Hoppy Bar Stars | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| John Molloy | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Night Owls | Downeys | 10pm |
| Emerald Dave | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Sweet Sensations | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Tuesday 11th | | |
| Visual Arts Exh/Anita Nugent | Woodford Library | 7pm |

| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Wednesday 12th | | |
| Trad Seisiun Gerry Harrington | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Thursday 13th | | |
| Children Mass | St. Michael's | 6.30pm |
| Holy Thursday | Creagh | 8pm |
| Singers Circle | Dunlo Tavern | 9.30pm |
| Live Acoustic Session | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| April 14th Friday | | |
| Ballinasloe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Good Friday | Station the Cross | 12pm |
| Celabration of the Lords Passion | Creagh | 3pm |
| Prayers & Refelction | St. Michael | 7pm |
| Ken & Steve | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Toxic Twins | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Good Friday | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Saturday 15th | | |
| Live Declan O'Rourke | Lukers of Sbridge | 7pm |
| Holy Saturday Vigil Mass | Creagh | 8pm |
| Holy Saturday Vigil Mass | St.Michael's | 8pm |
| The High Reel | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Take Time | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Live Music | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| TBC | Downeys | 10pm |
| The Hush | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Pacifica | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Small Deal | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Eoin Maher/DJ upstairs | An Tain | 10/10.30pm |
| Sunday 16th | | |
| Easter Sunday Mass | St.Michael's | 9am |
| Easter Sunday Mass | Creagh | 10.30am |
| Easter Sunday Mass | St.Michael's | 11am |
| Easter Sunday Mass | St.Michael's | 12.15pm |
| The Reel Deal | Lukers of Sbridge | 5pm |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Anchormen | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| Dermot McConnell | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| DJ JOHNNY F | Downeys | 10pm |
| Live Band | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| The Kings of Connaucht | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Buzz the Agent | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Barracuda | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Martin Cunningham/DJ upstairs | An Tain | 10/10.30pm |
| Tuesday 18th | | |
| Galway 2020 Briefing | Bsloe Library | 7pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Wednesday 19th | | |
| GTI (Grow It Yourself) | Gullane's Hotel | 8pm |
| Trad Seisiun Gerry Harrington | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Live Acoustic Session | Mauds Millars | 10pm |
| Friday 21st | | |
| Ballinasloe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Pillar Hse Folk Club, M Doyle Kennedy | The Pillar House | 9pm |
| Ger Long | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| The NoShow Band | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Reel Deal | An Tain | 10pm |

| Health & Wellbeing Seminar | Gullane's Hotel | 7.30pm |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Evan Blake | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Saturday 22nd | | |
| Red O'Neill | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Ultan Conlon | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| The Fanzines | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| TBC | Downeys | 10pm |
| Live Band | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Tradstone | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| The Livewiresw | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Sum Craic | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Simon Brody/DJ Upstairs | An Tain | 10/10.30pm |
| Sunday 23rd | | |
| The Reel Deal | Lukers of Sbridge | 5pm |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| The Nudies Suits | Mauds Millars | 8pm |
| Stuart Moyles | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Desi Egan | Downeys | 10pm |
| Shane Moore | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Bojangle | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Mnoday 24th | | |
| Oops Upon a Time/In Step Stage School | Town Hall Theatre | 7.30pm |
| Tuesday 25th | | |
| Visual Arts Exh/Josephine Hanley | Killimor Library | 7pm |
| Oops Upon a Time/In Step Stage School | Town Hall Theatre | 7.30pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Wednesday 26th | | |
| Oops Upon a Time/In Step Stage School | Town Hall Theatre | 7.30pm |
| Trad Seisiun Gerry Harrington | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Thursday 27th | | |
| Oops Upon a Time/In Step Stage School | Town Hall Theatre | 7.30pm |
| King St Bluegrass, direct from USA | The Pillar House | 9pm |
| Live Acoustic Session | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Friday 28th | | |
| Ballinasloe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Brendan Shine | Gullane's Hotel | 10pm |
| CrossFire | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Reel Deal | An Tain | 10pm |
| DJ JOHNNY F | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| PWatchom from the Dublin Legends | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Saturday 29th | | |
| G2 | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Live Music | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Small Deal | Downeys | 10pm |
| Alan Lawlor | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Pacifica | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Take 2 | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Sunday 30th | | |
| The Reel Deal | Lukers of Sbridge | 5pm |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| Live Music | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| Matt Keane & Colm Naughton | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Black Shadow | Downeys | 10pm |
| Live Band | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Raven Edge | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |

MAY EVENTS GUIDE

| Tuesday 2nd | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Wednesday 3rd | | |
| Active Retirement | Gullanes Hotel | 3pm |
| Visual Arts Exh/Bernard Dooley | Portumna Library | 7pm |
| Mid Week Summer Trad | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Thursday 4th | | |
| Ciorcal Comhra | Gullane's Hotel | 11.am |
| Joe Casey | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| Live Acoustic Session | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Friday 5th | | |
| Ballinasloe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Michael Regan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Live Music | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Reel Deal | An Tain | 10pm |
| DJ Johnny F | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Saturday 6th | | |
| TBC | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Too Tall Paul | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Live Music | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Martin Cunningham | An Tain | 10pm |
| TBC | Downeys | 10pm |
| Toxic Twins | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Nightowls | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Gaegan Pagans | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| The Blaggards | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Sunday 7th | | |
| The Reel Deal/Open Trad | Lukers of Sbridge | 5pm |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| The Barnyard Quartet | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| Music | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| DJ JOHNNY | Downeys | 10pm |
| Emerald Dave | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Abbey Folk | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Monday 8th | | |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Tuesday 9th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Visual Arts Exb/C Patrickson | Eyrecourt Library | 7pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullanes Hotel | 9pm |
| Wednesday 10th | | |
| Active Retirement | Gullane's Hotel | 3pm |
| Mid Week Summer Trad | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Thursday 11th | | |
| Ciorcal Comhra | Gullane's Hotel | 11am |
| Joe Casey | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| Live Acoustic Session | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Singers Circle | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |

| Friday 12th | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Ballinasloe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Amy Brennan | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Toxic Twin | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Reel Deal | An Tain | 10pm |
| Evan Blake | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Saturday 13th | | |
| TBC | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Skillet Pot | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Anchormen | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Eoin Maher | An Tain | 10pm |
| Desi Egan | Downeys | 10pm |
| Ramblin Young Blades | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| The Crime | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| SPLIT | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Sum Craic | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Sunday 14th | | |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| Brego | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| Music | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Colm Bourke | Downeys | 10pm |
| Liam's Country Road Show | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Split | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Monday 15th | | |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Tuesday 16th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Tea Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Wednesday 17th | | |
| Active Retirement | Gullane's Hotel | 3pm |
| GTI (Grow it Yourself) | Gullane's Hotel | 8pm |
| Mid Week Summer Trad | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Thursday 18th | | |
| Ciorcal Comhra | Gullane's Hotel | 11am |
| Joe Casey | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| Live Acoustic Session | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Friday 19th | | |
| BallinasJoe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Pillar House Folk Club - H Girls | The Pillar House | 9pm |
| John Molloy | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| The Rivulets | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| DJ Johnny | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Saturday 20th | | |
| Joe Wynne | The Pillar House | 9pm |
| Happy Bar Stars | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Loose Rooster | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| James McKelvey | An Tain | 10pm |
| DJ JOHNNY | Downeys | 10pm |
| The Hush | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Pacifica | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Jokers Wild | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Jock & Davy | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |

| Sunday 21st | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| The Nudie Suits | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| Music | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Sharon Turley | Downeys | 10pm |
| Liam Country Road Show | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Small Deal | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Monday 22nd | | |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Tuesday 23rd | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Wednesday 24th | | |
| Active Retirement | Gullane's Hotel | 3pm |
| Mid Week Summer Trad | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| Joe Casey | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |
| Thursday 25th | | |
| Ciorcal Comhra | Gullane's Hotel | 11am |
| Live Acoustic Session | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Friday 26th | | |
| Ballinasloe Country Market | Town Hall Theatre | 9am-1.30pm |
| Ger Long | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Comhaltas Trad Session | Burke's Bar | 9.30pm |
| Beggars Velvet | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Reel Deal | An Tain | 10pm |
| Evan Blake | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Comedy Club with Karl Spain | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Saturday 27th | | |
| Eamon O'Neill | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Live Music | The Pillar House | 10pm |
| Red Tape | Maud Millars | 10pm |
| Simon Brody | An Tain | 10pm |
| Desi Egan | Downeys | 10pm |
| Live Band | Lukers of Sbridge | 10pm |
| The Kings of Connaught | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| The Livewires | Dunlo Tavern | 10pm |
| Chilbillies | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Sunday 28th | | |
| Pillar House Trad Session | The Pillar House | 6pm |
| Live Music | An Tain | 7pm |
| Live Music | Maud Millars | 8pm |
| Music | Canal Bar | 9pm |
| Lal Lee | Downeys | 10pm |
| The Treblemakers | Auld Sod Bar | 10pm |
| Nudie Suits | Killeen's of Sbridge | 10pm |
| Monday 29th | | |
| Yoga | Gullane's Hotel | 6.30pm |
| Line Dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Tuesday 30th | | |
| Unislim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| GAA Bingo | Emerald B'room | 8pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Wednesday 31st | | |
| Mid Week Summer Trad | Lukers of Sbridge | 9pm |
| B Kilkenny/F Hession & Friends | An Tain | 10pm |

To advertise your events here contact: ballinasloelife@hotmail.com or Call 090 964 3779 by May 17th.

CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS



Newly recruited Garda Shane Gavin with his parents Kathleen and Paraic Gavin, Creagh, Ballinasloe, on the Occasion of his passing out from Templemore Garda Training Centre.



Pat Vaughan who celebrated his 60th Birthday recently with a big night for Friends and Family in Joe's Bar.



KAY PURCELL AWARD

Pictured at the Opening Night of "Oliver" & Presentation of the Annual Kay Purcell Award (to a Society Member who has gone over and above the call of duty) were Ballinasloe Musical Society Chair Lisa Whyte, Mike O'Reilly Recipient 2017 and Maureen O'Donoghue Honorary President.



L-R: Andrew Mannion, Collette Hayes, Jacinta Divilly, Noel and Fiona Mannion



L-R: Pat Finn, Peter Tierney, Leo Tierney, Michael O'Hehir, Rory Daly and Liam Keane

School Quiz 2017 Results



Scoil Mhuire gan Smal U11 1st

Adrian Ahern Chairman BCU, Aine Bleahen, Jim Kent Quizmaster, Shane McNeill, Martin Lyons & Fergus Curran.
Dean Kelly, Fionnán Seale, Niall Jennings, Cameron Keighrey



Scoil Bhride New Inn U11 2nd

Adrian Ahern Chairman BCU, Oliver Hynes, Jim Kent Quizmaster, Shane McNeill, Martin Lyons & Fergus Curran.
Bronagh Deeley, James Spellman, Ciara McGrath, Clodagh Ward



Scoil Ui Cheithearnigh U11 Joint 3rd

Adrian Ahern Chairman BCU, Jim Kent Quizmaster, Shane McNeill, Martin Lyons & Fergus Curran.
Jenny Ní Mhuirí, Tomás Ó Maoláin, Cormac Ó Mórdha, Alana Mc Thaidhg



St Catherine's Aughrim U11 joint 3rd

Adrian Ahern Chairman BCU, Denise Hession, Jim Kent Quizmaster, Shane McNeill, Martin Lyons & Fergus Curran.
Cormac Harrington, Caoimhe Dunne, Joseph Smyth, Laura Trappe



Scoil Bhride New Inn U13 2nd

Adrian Ahern Chairman BCU, Oliver Hynes, Jim Kent Quizmaster, Shane McNeill, Martin Lyons & Fergus Curran.
Tyler Earls, Darragh Donohue, Cathal Ward, Olivia McGuinness



Scoil an Chroi Noafa U13 Local & Regional Winners

Adrian Ahern, Phyllis Donnelly Edel Moriarty
Caolán Nott, Matthew Clinton, Séan Ronaldson, Chloe Gaffey



The frustration at the lack of information about local events has seen a Ballinasloe woman set up a website which will give a platform for event organisers to advertise their events and subsequently help locals to enjoy events on their doorstep. And with the help of her family Aoife O'Driscoll, the daughter of Eamon and Phil Lally, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe, believes her new information website www.inspireme.ie will

provide a great opportunity for organisers and punters alike to enjoy many recreational events.

Aoife who now lives in Clonmel with her husband Barry O'Driscoll and children Ciara and Jack, attended St. Augustine's NS in Clontuskert, where her father Eamon was principal, received her secondary education at Scoil Mhuire in Ballinasloe before studying for Optometry at DIT, Kevin St., Dublin and after qualifying she worked for a year in London before moving to Clonmel.

Aoife says she has had great support from her husband, parents and sister Maeve in launching the new website and explained how the idea came about.

"At the weekends invariably we would end up going for an aimless spin in the car, only to find that a few miles down the road there was a family field day or festival.

"The best day of last summer was as a result of a chance conversation with a friend about a three day eventing competition. We are not involved in the sport ourselves, and so it wouldn't have been on our radar at all. We could just have easily missed it.

"Another problem we often faced was, on days out with my sister-in-law, who has special needs and uses a wheelchair, we found it very difficult to research where we could go that would have accessible parking and facilities. I strongly believe that accessibility should be standard and those with special needs should be confident that if they are attending an event, the venue will cater for their requirements.

"Finally, from seeing charity events being organised over the years, I know how much work people can put into fundraisers and charity events, often giving up their own time voluntarily. My father has been involved with the Social Services in Ballinasloe for many years and they are constantly trying to raise funds for their services. No matter how much work goes into setting up fundraising events, they are only successful if people know when they are on.

"So InspireMe.ie will allow people to find out what's happening in any area of the country. It doesn't respect county lines, so if you're in Ahascragh you won't have to check another website to see what's happening in Athlone. Anyone with a special interest, can sign up for alerts. If I am into Heritage and an event of this nature is listed I will be informed.

"Our big point of difference is that we are asking all organisers to provide information on the accessibility of their venues. We want to make sure that if you need a sensory friendly event you can find it with the click of a button. We have provided lots of information for event organiser about how to make their events accessible, and hope we can help in a small way to make Ireland a more inclusive place to live" stated Aoife.

Concluding she said "Our motto is 'all events are local'. We need to support what's happening on our doorsteps and make the most of our leisure time. Hopefully www.inspireme.ie will help people to do both."



JOHN JORDAN SCOOPS EIR EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Ballinasloe's own John Jordan has won the Employee of the Year, with EIR his employers, for his service to the firm. Married to Ann who works with the local authority locally, the couple have two children and three grandchildren.

John who works as a Field Technician has been a coach and mentor to a raft of current and next generation technicians. According to EIR, John is deployed anywhere around the country where the problem has stumped local technicians and his 38 years of telecommunications experience can be drawn upon.

Described as EIR's own "Mc Gyver", John won the quarterly Employee Award and then scooped the overall prize for 2016, including a commemorative cert, trophy and cheque for €1000.

When not scooting around the country fixing customer connectivity problems – he can be found assisting his local swim club where he has a huge passion for and still on weekends delivers Life Guard Training.

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BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



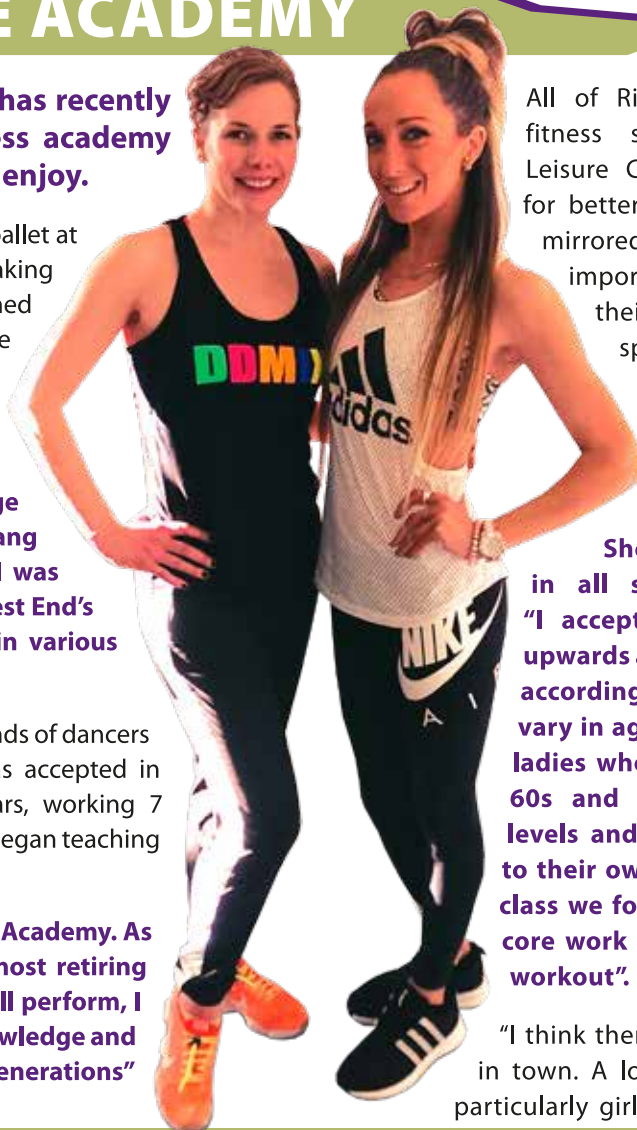
Ria Purcell from Kilgarve, Creagh has recently set up her own Dance and Fitness academy based in Ballinasloe for all ages to enjoy.

Ria has been dancing all her life. "I started ballet at the age of 3 in Ballinasloe and continued taking classes in both ballet and jazz. I performed with the Musical Society thanks to my late mother Kay, who was the Musical Director of the society".

After completing her Leaving Certificate, Ria started studying dance at the College of Dance in Dublin followed by Urdang Academy in London. "While studying, I was privileged to perform on many of the West End's stages and I also worked as a dancer in various video clips and corporate shows".

On graduating, Ria joined the other thousands of dancers in the search for jobs worldwide and was accepted in Thessaloniki, Greece "I stayed for 10 years, working 7 nights a week as a dancer and singer. I also began teaching in choreography".

"I always wanted to return and set up an Academy. As a dancer, careers are short lived with most retiring by the age of 30-35. Although I could still perform, I decided to get going and pass on my knowledge and technique to the younger and older generations" states Ria.



All of Ria's classes are held in the fitness studio of The Shearwater Leisure Centre. "I really couldn't ask for better conditions. It is a beautiful mirrored studio, which to me is highly important for dancers to improve their technique. It also has a spring floor to avoid injuries. Anthony and the team there are really great people to do business with".

With classes for all ages, She provides techniques in all styles along with fitness. "I accept kids from the age of 4 upwards and they are placed in a class according to age. My adult classes vary in age from 17 to some fabulous ladies who could possibly be in their 60s and older. There are different levels and every individual can work to their own level." Ria added "In each class we focus on strength, stretching, core work and cardio. It is a full body workout".

"I think there is a huge interest in dance in town. A lot of it comes from children, particularly girls but I am really happy with

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the fact that I have quite a few boys in my school too. With regard to adults, everyone loves dancing and I'm trying to facilitate them all". Ria stated.

"There is no age barrier on my adult classes. There are different levels and every individual can work to their own pace". Her clients, originate from the locality and there are typically 15-25 people per class. "I think the biggest benefit for me setting up here is that lot of people know of my experience. It is extremely important for a parent to know who they are sending their child to. With something like dance, it is essential to know that your child is not in danger of injury. This also applies to adults too as we are even more prone to injury and it is necessary that the teacher knows how to warm up the class thoroughly", stated Ria.

"The struggle of setting up this business was the question of 'will it work?'. Thankfully, business is great. I didn't expect things to take off so quickly. I am very passionate about my job" said the tutor.

She has big plans to grow the Academy further "I would like to bring in extra classes in different styles, hire other professionals in the industry and expand to other areas, for example, musical theatre. I also started taking bookings for kids' birthdays and 'First Dances' for weddings which is great for the community".

She is encouraging people to get involved "Most people don't enjoy going to the gym and this gives them an option to workout but have fun at the same time. The results have been fantastic and so I believe if someone does want to get in shape they should come give it a try".



Class prices are on a pay as you go basis. For adult classes, there is a discounted price for Shearwater Hotel members. Anyone interested in enrolling should contact Ria through her Facebook page **Milkshake Dance and Performance Academy**, where daily updates on classes, times and new features. For bookings, contact Ria on 087 464 9670 or riapurcell82@gmail.com

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LADIES AND LEGENDS FOR LAWRENCETOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

BY LAURA SHEEHAN

A unique event is taking place in The Beautiful Bird, Lawrencetown - hosted by the Lawrencetown Community Development Group to raise funds for the community playground.

Friday, 7th April @ 8.00pm with a "Ladies and Legends" night.

For the lads they will be showing the 1988 All-Ireland hurling final with plenty of hurling legends in attendance including Conor Hayes and Brendan Lynskey and maybe even a rival from the Tipp team of the day! John Parry will be MC on the night asking the lads plenty of questions with loads of banter to and fro and bit of craic guaranteed.

The ladies will be treated to a night of beauty, fashion, nail art, styling and 'Stella and Dot' jewellery with gurus in place to answer your every questions and provide free demonstrations. There will be goody bags for the first fifty ladies through the door and a free glass of prosecco on entrance. Lots of fun and games on night. The cost of entry for both the lads and ladies is €15 per head. Other Upcoming events organised by the development group include:

Easter Egg Hunt for children on Easter Sunday April 16th, at 4pm beginning at the Lawrencetown Community Hall. €5 cover charge per child. The hunt will involve many areas in the village ending back at the community hall. All children participating will receive an egg. Refreshments and face painting

afterwards. Lots of fun to be had.

A Heritage seminar on Easter Saturday, 15th April in the hall from 10am to 4pm. 'The families & architecture of Lawrencetown' is the title. Free event. It will finish with a site visit of nearby Ballymore Castle. Refreshments during the seminar provided.

The Lawrencetown Community Development Group CLG is striving to improve the social, educational and economic environment of the village and its surroundings.

For further information about upcoming events contact group secretary Jacqueline Nevin on 087-6724842, check out the facebook page (Lawrencetown Community Development Group) or contact any of the ladies and legends organising committee members Brian Kenny, Jacqueline Nevin, Celine Parry, AnnMarie McEvoy, Eamon Craughwell, Loraine Treacy, Conor Treacy, Sharon Kenny, Maeve Ryder, Edel Quinn, John Parry and Dara Parry.



L-R Brian Kenny, AnnMarie McEvoy, Jacqueline Nevin and Eamon Craughwell from the Lawrencetown Community Development Group CLG at the launch of the Ladies & Legends night.

SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC - EASTER MONDAY

Ballinasloe Social Services is a local voluntary organisation which provides services to older people, children and their families in Ballinasloe and its hinterland. It aims to provide services to support older people to remain living in their own homes and communities and to provide early intervention services to allow children reach their full potential.

All these services are provided from a rich tapestry of staff commitment, voluntary service, community energy and generosity and statutory support. To celebrate the fantastic contribution of the organisation's volunteers, a "thank you" volunteer morning was held in the Day Centre recently. Volunteers were served a lovely brunch, made by the staff, and their input to the services was acknowledged and appreciated.

They are holding its annual Golf Classic, with the kind co-operation of Ballinasloe Golf Club, on Easter Monday, 17th April. This is an important event in the fundraising calendar of the Social Services. Anyone

interested in taking part, please visit www.ballinasloegolfclub.ie/ teetimes or phone Ballinasloe Golf Club at 090 9642126.



Some of our twelve committee members: L-R: Margaret Oliver, Tess Raftery, Annette Lynagh, Padraig O'Ceithearnaigh, Padraig Walsh, Ann Kenny, Michael Lally. Missing from photo: Sr. Alacoque, Regina Power, Jenny O'Sullivan, Jacinta Divilly, Stephen Kerr.

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Winner: Ballinasloe G.A.A.
Runner Up: Ballinasloe Soccer Club (A.F.C)

COMMERCIAL:

Winner: Clarkes & Sons
Runner Up: Hogan Trailers

CULTURE:

Winner: By Gone Days
Runner Up: Colohans Culture

OVERALL

Winner: Tony Colohan “Memorial Trophy”
Winner: Creagh N.S. “One World One People”

VOLUNTARY:

Winner: East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support
Runner Up: Moore Scouts

SPECIAL MERIT AWARD:

Vintage

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the Town Band Recycle under the Baton Noel Madden who entertained the public so beautifully, on the Sound Stage”.

A poignant first for the Parade was the dedication of the Overall Winner Trophy to the late Tony Colohan who passed last year, to commemorate his wonderful generosity of spirit in helping with the Parade for over three decades and indeed all the other parades, homecomings and community events that Tony put his heart and soul into.

Parade Committee Chair Carmel Greally thanked the Main Sponsor's Ballinasloe Vintners, Ballinasloe Credit Union, and also acknowledged the support of Supermacs and A.I.B.

“Our thanks to the Volunteers who made it happen. The guys, who set up “gig rig”. The assemblers, Judges, Stewards, the M-C, and the great support given by the Gardai. Finally, a huge thanks to the Clubs, Organizations, Schools, Businesses who made to the effort to take part, without you, we wouldn't have a parade”, stated Carmel.



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EXHAUSTING TIMES

BY MAUREEN CAHALAN



We are living in an unsettled and uneasy world. We can be sad, or at times angry, and this has led to a deep-rooted fear in many of us. Here at home we seem to have an ongoing unease in reaction to the uncertainty looming over us. And of course this has caused FEAR in us. All too often we forget that humans can be, and frequently are, very fragile.

Too often, it seems, nobody can make a decision in case it will not work-out or will 'come back to haunt them'.

If we look east, 'next door' we have Brexit which creates huge fear and uncertainty every time it is mentioned. Further east there is even more uncertainty, sadness, displacement, and disruption of people and places.

Then we look west and the endless unrest since the new President was elected in the United States is beyond belief. There is confusion, riots, and marches and it seems that everybody is caught-up in some dilemma or other which is not healthy. Recently, in relation to fatalities, I was sent the following statistics on the number of American's killed each year:

| | | | |
|---|----|--------------------------------|--------|
| Islamic jihadist immigrants | 2 | Lawnmowers | 69 |
| Far right-wing terrorists | 5 | Being hit by a bus | 264 |
| All Islamic jihadist terrorists (including U.S. citizens) | 9 | Falling out of bed | 737 |
| Armed Toddlers | 21 | Being shot by another American | 11,738 |
| Lightening | 31 | | |

This statistic may alleviate some of your fear, and reading it – sad as it may be – might even bring a knowing smile to your face.

Perhaps it is time to forget all the huffing and puffing, take a look at ourselves, and celebrate who we are! Too often we get caught up in world affairs that we cannot change, or even sometime understand. Instead, we need to look after each other, and our community. Turn-off that TV, radio, or iphone for a day, or a week-end, and reflect.

Take up something different, maybe read a good book, go for a walk, or stand at your backdoor and listen to the sweet singing of the birds. Or even better, call in on a neighbour.

Let us wake up tomorrow, and the day after, and as the quotation says: "together we can make the impossible possible" and leave the rest to sort itself out!

Adv. 



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NEWLY FORMED FORÓIGE CLUB SEEKS NEW VOLUNTEERS

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Foróige Ballinasloe emerged from an information meeting, held by Foróige last summer in Gullane's Hotel. Club Leaders, Karen Campbell and Joe Johnston, along with four others, decided to form a club in.

The newly appointed leaders undertook a day's training and began to promote their club. Foróige is the leading youth organisation in Ireland and has been working with young people since 1952. The purpose is to enable young people to involve themselves within the community. The club enrol people aged 10-18 each year through the volunteer-led clubs.

Ballinasloe's Foróige club is currently in need of new volunteers to help with running the club. Leader Joe Johnston stated "It hopes to have enough volunteers to create a rota of leaders over a monthly period, and to facilitate new members wishing to join. There are currently 30 members, which is in line with the recommended Foróige ratio of members to leaders. There is a waiting list of young people willing to join, but unfortunately, we are in need of more volunteers to facilitate this".

Joe added "For parents and concerned citizens, Foróige offers a great opportunity to engage with the young people of the town in a safe and positive environment. This facilitates the young people to engage in fun and confidence building programmes. There are so many ways to get involved as a volunteer. The experience is fun, satisfying and you'll make a real difference".



L-R Local Club Members Seamus Egan, Zach Maloney, Dagmara Gatzka and Zara Campbell at the Longford/Roscommon Foróige Regional Conference last year

The climax event of the Foróige year will be the Hype Youth Festival which is hosted by the Foróige Attic Youth Café in Longford. Hype is a one day festival for clubs and projects nationwide. It is an Alcohol-free event for young people aged 12-18 years to socialize. "It's great for our young members to lap up the festival atmosphere," says Joe.

The Festival contains Disco tents, Retail area, Movie tent, inflatable theme park, zorbing and climbing wall. Hype has been held for the last 3 years and has an audience of 3,000-4,000 young people from Foróige all over Ireland.

Joe added "It's great to have Hype to look forward to. Due to the infancy nature of the club, our funds were low in facilitating trips this year, however, we did attend a Foróige disco in Moore and the

Foróige Young Peoples awards in Strokestown, Co Roscommon so far".

Meetings are held every Friday during the school year for members from 7pm to 8.30pm in the new GAA complex in Brackernagh.

To join the club, members initially pay an affiliation fee of €20 to Foróige, which covers insurance and support fees. There is €3 fee each night to cover rent, electricity plus raise funds for the club.

If you wish to volunteer, become a member or more information please contact club leader, Karen at kazcamp@gmail.com or phone 087 764 8587.

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PADDY MONAHAN - A LOVER OF OUR TRADITIONAL CULTURE

BY KEN KELLY

Paddy Monahan's greatest passions in life were ceili music, Irish dancing and Gaelic games. It was then only fitting that his friends in Comhaltas should give him a musical send off following his funeral mass in St. Michael's Church, Ballinasloe.

Born in Aghrim in 1933, Paddy cycled each day to his first job, from the age of 14, to Dubarry Shoemakers in Ballinasloe. A few years later he moved to live in Ballinasloe and became a regular member of the Brackernagh football team before making the number 3 jersey on the Ballinasloe senior football team his own for many years. He was a staunch supporter of our county hurling and football teams, making regular trips to Croke Park, armed with like-mind supporters, the flask and sandwiches.



Paddy's love of ceili dancing and Irish music saw him and his wife Ena winning many trophies before Paddy himself embarked on a teaching career of the art at many village halls in the area. He took his traditional dancing seriously, featuring on RTE television as well as touring America with a troupe. He was also a member of Relays Drama Group, featuring in their production of "The Plough and the Stars."

A lifelong pioneer and a strict timekeeper, Paddy's love of the outdoor life endeared him to many hours in his flower garden and the bog. He loved to reminisce of his sporting days and the wonderful friends he made while working in both Dubarry and later AT Cross factories.

Only recently deceased by his sister Katty, Paddy Monahan is survived by his wife Ena, sisters Sr. Rosie, Joan and Claire as well as many nephews, nieces and other relatives.

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BALLINASLOE BRASS & REED BAND, 1950'S



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Middle L-R: Marty Costello, Frank McGrath, Michael Hynes, Michael Greal, Paddy Ganley, John Kelly, Timmy Kelleher, Peter Farrick
Bottom L-R: Jack Larkin (Band Master), Semus Doran, Eddie Riddell, Willie Smith, Martin Greal, Pat Corbett, Sean Tully

If you can help us identify the unknown player - please contact ballinasloelife@hotmail.com



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ACORN'S MOLL SELL OUT FOR FRIENDS OF PORTCIUNCULA

The Town Hall was packed to the rafters for three nights in Feb, while a stellar cast and crew of ACON delivered a splendid rendition of John B Kean's masterful MOLL.

Eamonn O'Donoghue presents a cheque for €5,000 from the profits of his production of John B Keane's "Moll" to Mr John Flynn, Chairman of the Friends of Portiuncula and Declan Kelly, Administrator.

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MODERN MEDIA SECURES SPANISH DATES FOR WORLD TOUR

Adv.

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

Sean Fletcher through his Society Street Company-Modern Media has also been appointed for the UK Vapors band's Spanish tour taking in Valencia, Madrid and Murcia in 2018.

Sean stated "It's a real honor to be the promoter for the Vapors. I am especially looking forward to the Spanish tour as it will be the Vapors first event in Spain and there is huge interest already", Sean added "Also, we'll be heading to London's iconic 100 Club on Oxford Street in April which is an event we're really excited for." Due to the previous sell out venues in London, a third date for November 10th at the 229 The Venue, Great Portland Street.

Later in the year Sean and Modern Media will have some Coronation Street actors on tour in Ireland such as Chris Gascoyne (Peter Barlow) and Alison King (Carla Connor). The tour will take place in Dublin and the Midlands and it's hoped there will be a slot for Ballinasloe if the schedule fits. "All the actors I represent from Coronation Street are a pleasure to work with". With most bookings for 2017 in Dublin, Sean expressed that the "economy is still growing at a fast pace.

He also noted that this year celebrates 20 years since the band "Ocean Colour Scene" appeared in Fletchers in Ballinasloe for their iconic performance in the Market Square.

Sean and Modern Media continue to book the RTE 2fm Roadcaster.

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www.ticketmaster.co.uk



Picture courtesy of Gerry Stronge



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Director – Paul Norton
Musical Director – Shane Farrell
Choreographer – Aoife Mc Clafferty
Stage Manager – Pat MacGovern
Stage Director – Kevin Murray
Lighting – Dereck Recks
Sound – Pascal Gough
Costume Team – Eighne Blackwell, Magdalena

Garcarek, Lisa Whyte, Margaret Mulligan
Costume Providers – Utopia Costumes
Hair Design – Jacinta Keane (Talking Heads)
Scenic Artisan – Peter Keane
Front of House – Maureen Donohue, Frances Leahy, Greg Blackwell, Ellen Egan
Props – Fiona O'Leary, Ingrid Clarkson

SET CONSTRUCTION & STAGE CREW:

Pat McGovern, Kevin Murray, David Hardiman, Ingrid Clarkson, Mike O'Brien, Miriam Hurley, Karen Hurley, Annette Hurley, Fiona O'Leary, Noel Gavin, Geoffrey Casey, Enda McGrath, Eoin Croffy, Darragh Hurley, Emmett McGowan, Paul Drysdale, Phil Coffey, Conor Ryan, John Scully, Donal Croffy, Niall Hurley

CAST & ENSEMBLE:

FEMALE PRINCIPALS:

Niamh Kelly as Nancy
Bernie Dudgeon as Widow Corney

Heather Colohan as Mrs. Sowerberry

MALE PRINCIPALS:

Jack Flaherty as Oliver
David Kennedy as Dodger
Dave Hardiman as Fagin
Christopher Feeney as Bill Sykes

Paul Norton as Mr. Bumble
Mike O'Reilly as Mr. Brownlow
Patrick Byrne as Mr. Sowerberry/Dr. Grimwig

Females Chorus:

Emma Greally as Bet
Rachel Walker as Charlotte
Lisa Whyte as Mrs. Bedwin
Anne Hoey as The Rose Seller
Lucy Dolan as The Milkmaid
Margaret Mulligan as The Strawberry Seller

Avril Smyth as Agnes Brownlow
Heather Burn, Sinéad Flanagan, Magdalena Garcarek, Cora Hanrahan, Amy Kenny, Paula McGrath, Nessa McLoughlin, Aisling Murphy, Saoirse Ni Thuairisc, Brianna Rice, AOIFE Sidaway

MALE CHORUS:

Ciaran Smyth as Noah
Robin Newton as Knife Grinder
Trevor Moran as Policeman

Diarmuid Leyden as Policeman
Gery swenney, Sean Whyte, Colm Croffy, Wille Dolan, Dixie Carraig, Johanny Farrell, John Scully

Girls:

Abbie Goode, Abaigh Hardiman, Aisling Conlon, Alannah, Mc Keigue, Amy Egan, Beibhim Kiernan, Éalbh Hardiman, Emma Harvey, Hannah Maton, Hanna Salomon, Isabel Brooks, Jessica Mannion, Katie Blackwell, Katie Lyons, Katie Silke, Kaylie Mulvihill, Kayleigh Holohan, Lily Moran, Louise Finn, Paulina Michalska, Saidhbhe Concannon

Boys:

Daniel O'Leary as Bokseller Boy
Adam Doran, Ben Feechily, Brendan Rice, Darragh Costello, Darragh O'sullivan, Euan Mckeigue, Fionn

Ryan, Fionnan Seale, Lee Moran, Joseph Lennon, Mikolaj Zieba, Patrick Hanrahan



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PAUL KEIGHERY GALWAY'S NUMBER ONE RANKED SNOOKER PLAYER

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Local man Paul Keighery recently won his second trophy at the Player's Championship after previously winning in 2015. Paul, representing Ballinasloe Snooker Club, is now the current number one ranked player in Galway.

Son of Martina and Christy, Paul is born and bred Ballinasloe. Paul is self-employed as a qualified painter and decorator. He began playing snooker at the age of 11 and has been playing for 21 years "My main influences to play were my Dad, Mickey Murray and Johnnie Riddell. Watching these guys play has really taught me everything I know about snooker" Paul added "Now I try to give back to the younger players in the club that look up to me for guidance".

"After winning in 2015, the second time around was a lot sweeter especially because the level of competition was very high. I had to dig deep it took a lot of mental strength and patience. A small bit of luck along the way and I was able to come out on top." He added "Practicing every day at the club has really payed off."

He dedicated his win to the late Johnnie Riddell, a lifelong member of the Ballinasloe Social Club, who sadly passed away at the end of 2016. "Throughout my career, Johnnie has always believed in me and given me positive feedback on my game. I would also like to thank his wife, Betty, who gave me the county cup that Johnnie won in 1975 as it was his wishes that it was left to me after his passing."

He has 2 ranking events left within the season, The Martin Divilly at the Eglinton Snooker Club which selects the top 4 players in the competition. The Finals of this event will then be held in the Ballinasloe Snooker Club on April 2nd.

Next Up are the County Championships which will also be held in the Eglinton Club, followed by the Finals in the Mechanics Snooker Club at the end of April.

"My aim is to conclude the season remaining as the number 1 ranked player in Galway, however I do respect that the level of competition

has gone up." He noted "Along with winning, I also want to showcase my skills and to put in an impressive performance for each game."

Paul is encouraging anyone with an interest to join the Town's Snooker Club "The club has fantastic facilities and I, as a player, would encourage anyone to join"

Club Chairman, Barry O'Connor stated "The club is of such a high standards that we even have members coming from far and wide to play." Barry added "The club would like to thank all it main sponsors Joes bar, David Keighley Painter, Cormac Lyons Electrician, the Bread Shed Cafe and Divilly's Carryout for their continued support."

The club is active from September to May and the opens Monday to Friday from 5pm to 9pm and Saturday to Sunday 5pm to 7pm. The club has two full size snooker tables. Pool table membership for the year is €10 for juniors and €20 for seniors. The club also runs snooker and billiards competitions during the year with an entry fee of €10 for seniors and €5 for juniors.

There will be a number of junior competitions held throughout the year. If you wish to join or have any queries, Barry O'Connor can be contacted on 086 842 7576.



Paul Keighley winning the Galway Player's Championship.

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65 YEARS OF SOCCER IN THE CURRAGH GROUNDS

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Ballinasloe Town AFC has a rich history & tradition, the hosting of the International Friendly at under age level – combined with the opening of the new club facilities, caused a great number of supports and former committee volunteers to gather, celebrate and reflect.

With more than 240 years of collective service between them, the six pioneering members of Pat Campbell, Tony Coyne, Francis Egan, Brendan Fahy, Brendan McNally & Johnny Walsh have seen significant progress made at the club over the years and they are all as active now as they have ever been in the running of the club. With three of the members responsible for the pitch management, one member still coaching, one the current Treasurer and the other being our liaison with the FAI, they are as busy as ever.

Pat Campbell has been a member of the club committee for the past 43 years as well as being a former chairperson and manager of many club teams. He is also a former referee and is a long serving member of the Roscommon & District Football League Committee, he feels that it was an excellent achievement by the club to secure an international soccer match for the town. "In light of the organisational skills displayed by the club for the event, this will be just the first of many international games for the club and the town" states Pat.

Tony Coyne can trace his engagement with the club for the past 40 years and his undoubted passion is in coaching, this role also sees him run a weekly coaching clinic for the club's youth players. "The club's facilities have improved significantly over the last few years and the recent youth international is a testament and recognition for the fantastic work that the club has done at the Curragh grounds which will surely aid the further development of our thriving youth structure", believes Tony.

Another 4 decade veteran is Francis Egan who has been a great servant

of the club acting as manager of youth teams and Club Secretary, as well as being a member of the Roscommon and District Football League Youth's committee. "The inclusion of players such as Jordan Carr, Heather Payne and Conor Layng in International teams is a welcome dividend from our focused youth structure", reflects Francis. Along with Brendan McNally and Pat Campbell he is one of the clubs 3 groundsmen.

Brendan Fahy has been involved with the Club and soccer in general in the locality for the past

43 years. He too has served the club as Chairperson, Secretary and is the current Club Treasurer. Brendan held the position of Roscommon & District League Secretary with distinction for 24 years, he has also served on the Connacht FA and the FAI Junior Council. Brendan reflects "with all his experience, I was personally delighted to see local player Jordan Carr from Hymany Park play for Ireland at the Curragh and hopes it will be an inspiration to future youth players".

Another of the pioneers has been involved in with the Club committee since 1974, - Brenda McNally who has also been a former Chairperson and Senior team manager. He was one of the main architects in organising the annual under 10 Street League when it started over 30 years ago. Brendan also served as Chairperson of the Connacht Senior League for several years and is currently a very active member of the club acting as pitch manager, groundsman and Committee member.

Johnny Walsh was instrumental in bringing Paul Osam's Irish team to the Curragh and has served on the Club committee for the past 30 years as Club Secretary and a period of 9 years as Club Chairperson. Johnny's uncle Bobby Walsh was a founder member of the club in 1951.

Currently he is the Assistant Treasurer and he is involved in compiling and submitting Grant applications for development purposes which the club has been successful in over the years and this is reflected in the state of the art facilities on view at the club's grounds.

Looking back at the International and official opening of the new Clubhouse he reflected "It is a positive acknowledgement of the progress of the club that has made been made at local, provincial and national level and reflects very well on the Club Committee which has an effective and rich blend of both youth and experience."

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CURRAGH GROUNDS HOSTS HISTORIC INTERNATIONAL MATCH

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Ballinasloe Town Association Football Club hosted an historic game of football when they played host to a soccer international between the U16 Republic of Ireland and Hungarian youth teams.

The club had in fact played host to a school's international between Ireland and Wales some twenty years ago in 1997, which had been organised by Ballinasloe man Noel Gannon, who at that time was also a full-time organiser with the Football Association of Ireland.

Despite the atrocious weather and the new Club Shop almost blowing away the Ballinasloe public really stepped up to the mark, where a crowd of some 800 people were treated to a festive and gala atmosphere at the grounds with excellent hospitality being served in the new clubhouse and refreshments and hot food outlets around the ground.

With the Ballinasloe Town band also out in force and braving the wind and rain, the scene was set for kick off when the games mascots Ilya Manning (aged 12) and Eoin Chamberlain (aged 11) where accompanied onto the pitch with ball carrier Harry Lloyd (aged 11). As they were introduced to the crowd, the flag bearers carried out the relevant flags and our Town Band played the Irish and Hungarian national anthems as the teams entered the field of play.

The highlight of the match came in the second half as local lad and former Ballinasloe Town player, Jordan Carr, came on for his international debut and made his entrance onto the pitch to rapturous local applause. Jordan played extremely well and fittingly forced the corner in the games closing stages which led to Ireland's winner from the set piece as the Republic of Ireland beat Hungary 2-1.

The club is of course no stranger to having club representation in International squads as former Town player Heather Payne is

currently involved with the Republic of Ireland Women's Under 17s in the UEFA European Championship Elite Round qualifiers and Conor Layng, another former Ballinasloe Town player, who has just won the second of his International Schoolboys caps in the U18 Boys' Centenary Shield against Northern Ireland. These players show that the club is progressing in the right direction at underage level and with the newly introduced U16 team for this season at Ballinasloe Town AFC hopes to have further representation at elite level in the very near future.

Club Chairperson Joby Kelly thanked the Blue Skies Trust's Leo Kiernan for providing our mascots on the night. "We would like to thank all of our mascots for coming with their families and to the staff of St. Teresa's Special School who also provided support on the night. The club is also appreciative of the local public for their support and our Ballinasloe Town ball kids who kept the game flowing and we look forward with confidence to attracting future International's to our town."

The Club are not resting on their laurels however and plans are already underway for future development at the Curragh grounds as an application has been submitted to the 2017 sports account capital programme for significant funding for more improvement works for the grounds.

The Chief Executive of The Football Association of Ireland, John Delaney will be coming to officially open the new state-of-the-art Clubhouse at the Curragh grounds on Saturday 20th of May and earlier the club youth teams will be embarking on their biennial trip to Halewood in Liverpool on the 10th of April where they will compete in competitive games against Halewood FC in the Bob Paisley Cup.



Brendan McNally, Pat Campbell, Francis Egan, Tony Coyne, Johnny Walsh, Brendan Fahy



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Willie Tully, John Molloy and Martin Ryan.

BACK ROW: J. Whelan, J. Manton, Michael Cunningham, Barry Brennan, Liam Hannon, Pat Cunningham, John Creaven, K. Mitchell.

FRONT ROW: Sean Riddell, Sean Kelly, Joe Boswell, Liam Whyte (Captain), Noel Jennings, Sean Brennan, Jack Coughlan.



For those interested in the Final Squad reunion they are asked to make contact with either John Molloy (087 6867133) & Martin Ryan (090 9642754)



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CONNAUGHT INDOOR JUVENILE ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Veronica Burke at Women's 3,000m Walk event, Senior Indoor Championships, Athlone



Aoibheann Fitzpatrick and Caoimhe Kilkenny.

Veronica was attempted to get a qualification time for the European U23 Championship. In spite the Baltic conditions Veronica finished with a time of 1.48, finishing in third position. The result was an improvement of 5

The Connaught Indoor Track and Field Athletic Championships recently took place at the AIT Indoor Arena. Ballinasloe and District Athletic Club had a strong contingent of athletics representing the club and many medals were won as a result.

The stand out performances were held in the girls U12 600m event. Aoibheann Fitzpatrick was crowned Connaught champion, crossing the line with a time of 1.54 for the three lap event.

Aoibheann was followed in quick pursuit by her team mate, Caoimhe Kilkenny who was rewarded the Connaught bronze medal with a time of 1.56. Both girls improved their personal best times by 7 seconds recorded at the Galway Indoor Championship last year. Caoimhe also qualified for the All Ireland finals in the 60 metres sprint by finishing in fourth position.

Club Secretary, Anne Burke stated "Only three athletes from Connaught can qualify for the All Ireland Indoor Championships. It is an outstanding achievement for the Club that two of these athletes will represent our Club." Anne added, "Our success was a result of the athletes putting in hard work in training every week." The All-Ireland Finals will be held in the AIT Indoor Arena.

Anne noted "The club wish to thank all the Athletes, Parents and Coaches for their commitment to Ballinasloe and District Athletic Club. Congratulations and best wishes are extended to the athletes who have qualified."

Veronica Burke recently represented the club on her way to winning the Women's 3,000m Walk event during the GloHealth Senior Indoor Championships at the Athlone International Arena.

In addition Veronica competed in a 20km qualification walk in Douglas, Isle of Man.

minutes over Veronica's previous personal best last October in the London Championships.

Veronica will make another attempt at the European qualification time in the coming months.

Anne added "The club wishes her well in her efforts to achieve the qualification time."

If you are interested in joining the Athletics Club, please contact Anne on 087 638 5575. They train in St. Brigids Grounds (while the Track in Bracknagh is still awaiting repairs) every Tue and Thursday nights – 6pm to 7pm.

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BALLINASLOE RUGBY CLUB START NEW JUNIOR LADIES TEAM

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

Ballinasloe Ladies Rugby Club has gone from strength to strength since Declan Murphy and a group of interested coaches set up a female team 3 years ago.

The Club now fields four successful teams. The Under 15's teams have been in numerous finals and the under 18s won the Connacht Cup final in Westport this year.

With membership numbers growing and 2017 seeing Ireland hosting the Women's World Cup it was decided to develop the club further. A meeting was held in Gullane's Hotel in February 2017 and over thirty women from eighteen upwards have committed for the new Junior Team for the forthcoming season.

Manager, Simon Hyde stated, "With the Women's International World Cup taking place in Ireland, the IRFU and Connacht Branch are increasing the resources for women's rugby. It is hoped that our club's new team will continue to grow in numbers and follow in the footsteps of their younger club team mates in bringing the silverware back to Ballinasloe. With many girls making the Connacht Inter-Pro teams every year since we set up, it's likely that we will see some of our girls in the Green Jersey of the National Squad."

The coaching team for the new junior team consists of Manager: Simon Hyde, Backs Coach: Richie Sheppard and Forwards Coach: Dermot Tierney Junior.

Captain of the Juniors, Rachael Tierney who was involved in the cup final win is encouraging more ladies to join. "Taking up rugby was probably the best decision I've ever made. It is different to other sports. My teammates are more like my family and you'd do anything for each other on or off the pitch. Rachael added, "The determination and



2016/2017 Aviva Schools Team and Coaches

confidence in the team was high leading up to the cup final. We worked hard all year and there was no way we were leaving the sportsground again without the cup. Winning this year meant everything to me because honestly I don't believe I could have taken another loss at that level and I felt I owed some of the older girls the victory."

Simon noted, "We would like to thank all our sponsors for their fantastic support over the past few years, including Gibbons Pillar House and Valarie's in Aughrim for keeping us fed." Simon added, "We would also like to thank our coaches for the voluntary time they have spent to upskill themselves with child welfare courses, refereeing courses and coaching courses."



2016/2017 Conacht Interpro Ballinasloe Girls: Georgina Codyre, Aisling Murphy, Aoibheann Reilly, Niamh Kenny, Tosh Shepard and Sarah Dent.

The first training session for the Juniors is on Wednesday, May 03 at 7.30pm at the Rugby Club.

If you are interested or have any queries you can contact Simon Hyde on 087 905 26 24. If you are interested in playing on any of the other ladies rugby teams, please contact Chairperson, Declan Murphy on 086 854 8046.

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Jackie Treacy pulling his last pint

RUGBY SALUTES 40 YEARS OF JACKIE TREACY'S SERVICE

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

Jackie Treacy's Retirement function, held recently at the rugby club grounds in Graiguenawoneen was a two tier event - as first the club's new dressing rooms and gym were officially opened and dedicated to the memory of Jackie's late wife, Pauline in a ceremony that took place at 6 o'clock prior to a Junior 1A league fixture between Ballinasloe and Monivea.

Club President, Liam Courtney, as well as the Connacht Branch Senior Vice Pres, Mossy Moran and Connacht delegate to the IRFU, Adrian Leddy, all spoke, acknowledging the fine construction of the changing facilities, in addition to paying tribute to the memory of Pauline.

The complex was blessed by Fr. Michael Finneran, PP Clontuskert. The complex costs were met by a combination of a grant from the former Ballinasloe UDC and club fundraising. Part two of the evening was a farewell party for Jackie held in the clubhouse after the game that went on till late.

Pauline Treacy passed away in 2013 while holding the position of Senior Vice President. Pauline was famous for her "stews" which went down a treat after a match with home and visiting teams while Jackie served the customary pint of Cidona to the players and a hot toddy or two to warm up the supporters.

Jackie Treacy has been a great stalwart of the rugby club for many years. Both he and Pauline ran and managed the bar and clubhouse for close to 40 years overseeing many functions, parties and hospitality days. They also served on the club committee for many seasons. Jackie continued in the bar/clubhouse after Pauline's death three years ago. He retired at the end of last season.

The events were attended by Jackie's immediate and wider family, past Presidents of the club, current and former committee members and

players, current and former local councillors as well as a wide host of friends and well wishers.

Club President, Liam Courtney, and former President, Ms. Geraldine Kelly (family friend) paid tributes to Jackie referring to his great commitment and dedication over the years and thanking him for his time and service. They then made a presentation to mark his service.

The next phase of development for the club is the provision of a 2000 square meter astra turf training area.

Ballinasloe will be playing Monivea in the Connacht Heineken Junior Cup final at the Galway Sportsground on Sunday March 26th at 3 o'clock pm. It will be their first appearance in the final in 31 years and it will be a huge occasion for the club.



Geraldine Kelly (centre) made a special presentation to Jackie Treacy to mark his service to the club over the last four decades with Liam Courtney (Club President on right).

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UNDER 16 FOOTBALLERS SNATCH DOOLEY TROPHY IN THE KINGDOM

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Top L-R: C. Coleman, C. Potter, A. Keighrey, C Coleman, O. Dooley, M. Poland, S. Madden. R. Dolan, J. Callaghan, O. McCormac, S. Jennings, R. Parker, D. Jennings, P. Potter.
Bottom L-R: J. Mitchell, C. Conneally, F. Donnellan, P. Reilly, C. Reynolds, J. Mitchell, J. Haney, N. Kelly and Aidan Dooley.

Ballinasloe U16 GAA team successfully brought home the Dooley Trophy after a narrow win against Dr. Crokes GAA in Killarney.

The hosts, managed by Pat O'Shea, who previously managed Kerry to an All-Ireland Final, were strong favourites.

Over 60 players and parents travelled to take part in a two day fixture. On arrival the hosts provided refreshments and introduced 3 inter-county players to greet their visitors and supporters.

Following their victory, the shield was presented to the Ballinasloe Captain, Conor Coleman. "We would like to dedicate this Shield to all the supporters and especially to our management of Aidan Dooley, Pat Potter, Des Jennings, John Mitchel and Cathal Coleman for the countless hours of training and support. Without them none of this would have been possible", stated Conor in his post-match speech.

Manager, Aidan Dooley stated, "To see our players out there giving it their all and coming out with a win was a fantastic

spectacle." Aidan added, "The future is looking bright for Ballinasloe GAA with our U16s beating a top Kerry side".

Following the large crowds and interest in the two day fixture, Dr. Crokes Club have committed to coming to Ballinasloe next year.

Chairperson, Seamus Duffy stated, "The club would like to thank the players who performed excellently on and off the pitch, the parents for their support and the management of Dr. Crokes for organising the event. Seamus added, "Finally a big thank you to Joan Madden on the photography and Niall Poland for the music entertainment."

Ballinasloe GAA club are running a football and hurling camp during the Easter break for children between the ages of 6-14. The camp is designed to give children an opportunity to learn new skills, meet new friends and have fun. The hurling will run from April 10th to 12th, 10am to 1pm. The football will run from April 18th to 20th, 10am to 1pm.

The camp costs €30 for the football and hurling if done separately or €50 if they are partaking in both. For those wishing to enrol in the Hurling Camp, Rory Waters can be contacted on 087 131 4423. For the Football Camp, Jack Parsons can be contacted on 086 265 3997.

The club is holding a health and wellbeing seminar on Friday 21st of Friday at 7.30pm in Gullane's Hotel.



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GARBALLY CONNACHT JUNIOR CUP WINNERS



BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Front Row (Left to right): J. Greaney, O. Dooley Captain, S. Egan, O. McCormack, M. Devine.

Middle Row: B. Daly, M. Mitchell, S. Jennings, C. Goode, O. Curley, T. Fitzpatrick, N. Collins, J. Claffey, S. Horkan, C. Treacy, J. Canny.

Back Row: C. Silke, J. Canny, K. Blackweir, P. Grehan, C. Finn, P. Flanagan, C.P. Galvin.

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Garbally College recently won the Top Oil Connacht Schools Junior Cup title after a dramatic final against Coláiste Iognáid at the Jesuits Sportsground. This is the first time the school has won this cup since 2004.

Captain, Odhrán Dooley stated, "We left the dressing room on the day, and we knew we could all trust each other and that each man would give it their all." Odhrán added, "When we were behind in the second half, we kept belief and didn't lose our heads. It wasn't easy, but we were able to squeeze the win."

Senior Vice President of Connacht Rugby Brian O'Beirne, (brother of local Doctor Eugene O'Beirne) presented the Cup.

Odhrán went on, "I would like to thank our manager Ronan Flanagan, Assistant Manager, Johnny Farrell and Selectors, Frank Fahey and Iomar Barret who have given us so much of their time and support."

"Also a huge word of thanks to the other sporting teams in Garbally and the other outside clubs for facilitating our players, their health and fitness for the season," Odhrán added.

Pictured are the team celebrating on the pitch after the presentation.

SWIM COMMUNITY GAMES QUALIFIERS

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Some of the Underage Community Games Regional Swim Finalists pictured at the Coral Leisure Centre

Ballinasloe Swimming Club held their Community Games Qualifiers which was held in Coral Leisure Centre.

As a result, many of the swimmers then competed in the Regional Finals in Tuam. Head Coach, Fiona Flynn stated, "All of our swimmers have improved greatly since the recent competitions." Fiona added, "We would like to thank the management and staff of Coral Leisure Centre, Carmel Greally Community Games Organiser, parents and all the children who competed."

Following a successful year, the club recently elected a new committee for the upcoming new term which are as follows: Head Coach, Fiona Flynn, Chairperson, David Dolan, Secretary, Sinead McKeon,

Treasurer, Ivan Kelly, PRO, Rochelle Trappe-Stokill, Gala Secretary, Teresa Dolan, Club Development Officer, Caroline Kennedy, Committee Member, Damien Clarke and Children's Officer, Elaine Gately.

The new term sees the introduction of a "One Day Only Swimming Club". These training sessions will cater for those who have less time to train during the week. "These classes are fantastic for those who still wish to partake in swimming training, be part of a great team and enjoy the discipline of a training programme brought to them by qualified Coaches," noted Fiona.

There will be two teams selected based on the level of the swimmers. The A team swimmers will have the option to train on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4pm to 5pm. The B team swimmers can train on a Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 5pm to 6pm.

Fiona is encouraging more people to get involved. "We are accepting new members throughout the year, so feel free to contact us at any time to avail of a swim trial to assess the right options for you or your child."

If you would like to join the Swimming Club please contact Secretary, Sinead on 087 910 9909. More information and regular club updates can be found on the Ballinasloe Swimming Club Facebook page club and the website ballinasloeswimmingclub.com

Supermacs Win Historic First All-Ireland Junior Inter Firms Hurling

The Supermac's team that won the All Ireland Inter Firms Junior Final against Romoquip from Birr, Co Offaly 2-17 v 2-08, were captained by John Mc Donagh (son of Una and Pat) — he works in the Marketing Department at Ballybrit. Having won their Semi final in UL, Supermacs got home advantage and opted to play the final under lights in the Duggan Park. Managed by Sarsfield's Paraic Earls — the team drew players from all parts of the Supermacs corporation & suppliers but Killimor — Daly were the most supportive Galway club on the panel — contributing 7 players to the winning campaign. Their players of Iomar Creavan, Clement Earls, Conor, Duck and Andrew Daly, David Skehill and Brian Concannon all contributed to a bit of history in winning the All-Ireland in the town where the Restaurateur, Hotelier and Entrepreneur — all started out!



Pat and Una McDonagh with their son John after Supermac's won the All Ireland Junior Inter Firms Title in Duggan Park, Ballinasloe.



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FIT TOWN ACTION TEAM SIGN OFF FROM HECTIC CAMPAIGN

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Walking Programme - Exploring Ballinasloe



Team Building

It's been an eventful 6 weeks again for the Fit Town Team as they take on the challenge to secure the title of Galway's Fittest town for 2017.

The action packed schedule did not disappoint with a range of activities on offer across all ages, abilities and fitness levels. The project which is an initiative of Galway Sports Partnership, focuses on getting more people in the community involved in physical activity with a key theme around inclusion.

The Fit Town project is an all Community undertaking and its success to date can be attributed to the buy in and commitment from clubs, businesses and schools together with the high level of volunteers who give their time freely to support new members over the 6 weeks and beyond. It is a great opportunity for clubs to build capacity and participants are encouraged to sign up and become active club members. For the individuals it is a time to set new life goals and last year saw many of the fit town participants taking part in various events and challenges throughout the country.

The 6 week programme ended on a high with the Fit Town Celebration Day which took place on Sunday 26th March and was kindly hosted by the Ballinasloe GAA Club this year. The days events included; Ballinasloe Cycling Clubs Couch to 50k Cycle, Ballinasloe Road Runners Couch to 5k Run and a 5k Community Walk which was open to everyone and lead out by Liam Roche, of Rosway Walking Club.

Following the events refreshments were served in the clubhouse (kindly sponsored by Supervalu Ballinasloe, Beechlawn Organics, Ballinasloe Library and local food businesses). The Sports Expo which took place upstairs allowed groups to showcase and promote their club and importantly to invite new membership. There was plenty of fun and games for the little people with outdoor activities (Tommie Costello, Cuckoohill), Art Action (Lily Kelly) and Face painting Niamh, Eugene Freelance local make-up artist.

The next phase of the project is evaluation and results will be announced over the coming months. Many activities will be continuing and everybody is encouraged to keep up with their new active lifestyle by contacting individual groups.



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AUGHHRIM MANOR

BY BARRY LALLY



What picture is conjured up in our minds when we come across the word “manor”? A stately home deep in the heart of the English countryside? Perhaps the setting of a novel by Evelyn Waugh?

The word denotes much more, however, than a house. Introduced to Britain during the Norman Conquest in the 11th century as an instrument of colonial settlement, the manor was a unit of land with fixed boundaries, a self-regulating social and economic organization which acted as a means of supporting the larger feudal structure through a complex hierarchy of tenurial relationships across all classes of society.

While the ultimate purpose of each manor was the provision of knights and troops for royal service, self-sufficiency was regarded as of enormous importance. Thus the ideal manor would comprise both arable land and pasture, as well as woodland, a reliable source of water from a river or streams, a fish pond, and a church or monastic institution to minister to the spiritual needs of the colonists. Presiding at the manorial court was the resident lord, holding the settlement in the name of the king, and vested with authority to dispense justice, including the imposition of the death penalty in appropriate cases.



At the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169 the territory of Hy Many, roughly coterminous with the present-day Diocese of Clonfert, was under the lordship of the O'Kellys. Whatever sense of security they may have felt when Henry II signed the 1175 Treaty of Windsor with Rory O'Connor, confirming the latter's kingship of Ireland beyond the lands already held by the invaders, was certainly shattered twenty years later by the action of Richard I in granting all Connacht outside the King's cantreds to the Anglo-Norman William de Burgo.

In 1200 King John quickly began to parcel out land west of the Shannon, and in 1235 Sir Richard de Burgo asserted his father's grant by invading Connacht. Amongst the first manors to be established in the province were those of Creagh and Aughrim, both allocated in 1253 to Sir Richard de Rupella, a cousin of Henry III and a powerful figure at the English court. Little is known of the Creagh manor, which seems never to have functioned properly as such.

Our knowledge of the Aughrim manor, embracing the parishes of Aughrim and Kilconnell, is somewhat more

extensive. It comprised 2,880 acres, divided into farms of 120 acres each, and the list of the original English tenants is extant, featuring some surnames still common in the West of Ireland, such as Griffin and Prendergast.

In 1268 a stone-built castle was erected by Rupella at Aughrim soon after he had been authorised to construct a gallows there for the execution of thieves. The site of the castle was later occupied by a 16th-century O'Kelly tower house, which was to feature in the 1691 Battle of Aughrim. The vestigial ruins of the latter building are shown in the accompanying photograph.

Sir Richard was on Crusade to the Holy Land from 1248 to 1254, and again from 1271 to 1272. During the first of these expeditions he spent some time at the Sinai Monastery of St. Catherine of Alexandria, as a result of which he developed a special devotion to its patroness. So much so that when he established the Priory of the Canons Regular

of St. Augustine at Aughrim in 1270 he saw to it that the foundation was dedicated to St. Catherine. Today nothing remains of the Priory other than some pieces of masonry incorporated in the ruins of a 17th-century church adjoining the village graveyard. An ornate baptismal font is on view at the Clonfert Diocesan Museum in Loughrea.

The Aughrim manor was never economically viable. It failed to attract settlers from England in sufficient numbers, and became more and more dependent on native labour of doubtful reliability. Moreover, by the early 14th century it had come under increasing attack by the dispossessed Gaelic Irish who burnt the castle in 1307 and 1315, so that by 1350 the O'Kellys had regained control of the area, in whose hands it remained for the following two and a half centuries.

A visitor to Aughrim in 2017 will search in vain for evidence of its medieval manor. Such evidence is, alas, non-existent, except perhaps in the case of the 19th-century Catholic parish church whose patroness is – yes, you guessed it! – St. Catherine.

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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