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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 7 Issue 5: Dec '17 - Jan '18

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Photo by Robert Riddell

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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 7 Issue 5: Dec '17 - Jan '18

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ARTICLES AND PHOTOS WELCOME  
Deadline For Next Issue 17<sup>th</sup> Jan.

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## REAMHRÁ



The annual "Mother Hubbard" games with the County Councils annual budget still rumbles on. Don't pass it and the Council can be abolished, do and core programme of services such as grass cutting, estate management and supporting the community and voluntary sector have to take a chop.

What is missing from all the noise, of whether the Property Tax on your house should go up a few euro to fund the shortfall or not; belies a bigger problem that seems to devoid of serious analysis or comment from local or indeed national media.

Cork and Kerry Councils have all done their business-Cork with an increase of €20 million and cute Kerry with an increase of €10 million, Donegal is about to do the same with an increase of €4 million Population wise (with the exception of Cork) they are all smaller than Galway county which at 2011 census had a population of 175,124. Critically however, each of these small western counties have managed in the past three years to secure MORE and added increases of the National Exchequer Equalisation fund, than us !! In 2017 Galway managed to only receive some €2.8 million whilst Donegal got €16.4m., Mayo €11.5m. and Tipp (with a population the lowest of the four) received €16.5m.

The shortfall in the total budget amounts to €2.6 million in Galway; imagine if we only got 1/3 of what the former Taoiseach's territory got-€3.5 million or let's not be greedy-1/5th of the bacon Michael Lowry could pork barrel for Tipperary-€3.3 million.

Somebody, somewhere, made that decision. It was like the IDA policy created in Dublin (that won't allow any new advance factories be planned or built outside of the targeted hub cities). These policies have to be altered by our national representatives, all of them-those in Government, those in power and those who are non-aligned.

When local community groups like BACD (Annual Average Budget €180,000) have to raid the Social Fund or our Financial Co-operative to do the work of the semi-state (IDA Annual Average Budget €140m.) charged by Government to attract jobs and local residents have to organise their own estate maintenance on top of a new property tax because of flawed national policies to suit the M50 City State or other Metropolis; it is time to wake up and smell the coffee.

My wish for 2018 is that genuinely after the lost decade we get serious about standing up for a livelihood and future-West of the old River Shannon.

Beannachtain Nollaig agus Ath Bliain Nua Faoi Mhaise Agaibh Go Leir.

Le Gach De Ghui,  
COLM CROFFY, Editor.



The Wizards and Witches have been quickly stored away and the Christmas decorations dusted down and on the shop windows. It does not happen with the help of a magic wand so credit to all the premises in town who have put in an effort and entered the now annual shop window competition and to those who have generously contributed to the lighting of our town for Christmas.

It shows who sees the bigger picture and the knock-on benefits for all by cooperating as a team to make the town as attractive as possible to customers/visitors. It is easy to come up with excuses why not to participate but the positives far outweigh the negatives.

We want to make a visit to the town a pleasant and enjoyable experience and hope that they will spend a few euro while here. It has been proven that the success of events throughout 2017 is down to organisations and businesses working together to achieve a common goal.

We have an excellent community spirit but for 2018 I would like to see more participation by young adults in the town. It is time to differentiate ourselves from a trend all over Ireland and ask for their help and assistance to participate more in sporting activities to keep Ballinasloe on the sporting map but also to take leading roles in local community organisations as their input would be invaluable.

The Biannual Ballinasloe People of the Year award ceremony was a huge success and I congratulate all the nominees in all categories. Well done to the Town Team on the work they put into same.

On a final note I would like to thank all the individuals who have contributed in many ways throughout the year to continue making Ballinasloe Life a resounding success, in paper and online format, from the little acorn that sprouted some 7 years ago this January.

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](mailto:ballinasloelife@hotmail.com). Deadline 17th Jan.

# BEC

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# MUNICIPAL BUDGET REJECTED

BY -STEPHEN COLEMAN

**The Ballinasloe Municipal District Council recently**

**met with the other Municipals of Galway to discuss and agree funding for the coming year where Cathaoirleach Aidan Donohue said he was "very disappointed" with the allocated funding. The allocation for the area of €4,722,672 has been rejected by the Municipal Council.**

"I'm not happy with it, definitely not" Cllr Donohue commented, noting that the Municipal's funding is €162,000 less than last year's. "We don't think it's enough to run the area how we ran it last year. We even wanted to increase it last year, so it's going to be really difficult now."

The sharp decline in funding is largely due to the reduction in property tax. "At the last Municipal meeting, Galway County Council agreed to a cut in property tax, so we're in a deficit for 2018. There was a gap of about €1.4 million" Cllr Donohue added. He believes that if property tax had remained at its higher rate, the budget for the year could have been a slight increase from last year's. As well as the property tax reduction, the total funding allocation has suffered from a loss of revenue from Non-Principal Private Residences and higher wage demands.

"The budget has been diminishing year after year. It didn't allow us sufficient funds to carry out basic services fully. Under that budget, and probably under the final budget, we'll have an issue with maintaining parks and open spaces, housing estates, delivering new housing, maintaining roads" declared Cllr Dermot Connolly. "The grants for community groups will also likely be cut back, so really the aspects of what the council delivers as a core is under threat."

With €30,000 cut from estate-maintenance, Ballinasloe representatives rejected the Council budget. Cllr Michael Connolly proposed the rejection, describing it as "nailing

more businesses to the cross." Cllr Dermot Connolly was in agreement, stating "We are now in a much worse position than in previous years when we could at least cut the grass in our estates."

Fortunately, however, the town has benefitted from different national investment schemes to make up for where the funding is reduced. "Our Senior Road Engineer, Damian Mitchell, has pointed out that we are getting different aspects of funding" Cllr Donohue noted. Over the last year, the town has received €300,000 thanks to the Community Facilities Scheme, the Local Improvement Scheme, and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Municipal areas across Galway are disappointed with their budgetary allocations. The five area councils-Connemara, Loughrea, Tuam, Ballinasloe and Athenry-Oranmore-all initially rejected their individual budget allocations. The overall cut for Galway County is approximately €1.45 million.

Other Councillors see the problem as not local but national. Cllr Michael Connolly has openly questioned why Galway is faring so much worse financially than other counties in the region. Cllr Dermot Connolly noted that the Equalisation Fund allocation for Galway County is just €2.9 million, while Donegal and Mayo have received between €10-16 million from it. "Galway is of a similar size to Donegal and Mayo, so why the huge difference?" he questioned.

It has since been agreed that the Galway Municipals will meet again at the end of the month to agree on what is hoped to be a more promising budget allocation. "I'm more hopeful now after attending a strategic policy committee for the budget than I was before. Hopefully Ballinasloe will receive a higher budget from this appeal" commented Cllr Michael Finnerty.

Fingers crossed there will be a budget adopted at County Hall – surely our councillors would never vote for their own abolition ??



Cllr Michael Connolly, who proposed that the budget allocation for Ballinasloe be rejected.

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# TOWN SECURES ADDITIONAL €100,000 FROM NATIONAL RENEWAL SCHEME

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

Minister for Community Development Michael Ring T.D., has awarded Ballinasloe €100,000 as part of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The scheme has allocated over €21 million to towns and villages across Ireland this year.

"I have placed a particular emphasis this year on projects which have the capacity to support the economic development of rural town and villages" Minister Ring commented, "the scheme will also support improvements to public amenities in town and village centres, to help make them more attractive places in which to live and work and to visit."

**Of Ballinasloe's allocation, €86,000 will be invested in to the repaving of footpaths and the repainting of road lines. The remaining €14,000 will be allocated to the Town Team's development & marketing projects.**

"The €100,000 from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme does help with the disappointing Municipal budget" Cllr Aidan Donohue acknowledged. "The Council has always received complaints about the state of footpaths in town. They've been in a dangerous state for a while, so it's a great investment for the town."

**"The footpaths in town really need a lot of work" commented Cllr Michael Finnerty, "Ballinasloe has the highest amount of claims in Galway County, and a large proportion of them is for falls and trips on the footpaths. You can see the fine footpath on the Railway Road, but it's about getting that standard across the board. The big dig will fix footpaths in the town centre, but we need to focus more on the outer areas of town."**

Accessibility Ballinasloe were delighted with the investment, having signalled the need for the investment in the footpaths. "The project will improve accessibility in town and will complement the recommendations made as part of the Walkability Audit which formed part of the overall Town Enhancement Plan" said their Chairperson Marion Ruane. "We've been working with community groups, the Ballinasloe Town Engineering Team and the Galway County Council to ensure the town's infrastructure is accessible to both residents and visitors alike. Recommendations from

the Walkability study were a key element for the investment" commented Marion.

**For the Town Team's allocation, they are investing the funds into three projects: St Brigid's Future Symposium, a skills and infrastructural audit of the area and marketing the town as an investment and tourism location through a variety of programmes including the Sports Hub.**

"These are three projects that we're really working towards, and the extra funding is very helpful" commented Lyn Donnelly, Manager of Ballinasloe Area Community Development. "We want to develop the town to become a more suitable location for tourism and investment. These projects will help us market ourselves as an attractive enterprise town."

**The overall allocation of towns and villages within the Galway County Council was €1,004,231. The nationwide allocation was €21,637,425, and Mayo County Council received the largest share of €1,348,178.**

Ballinasloe received the joint-highest share for Galway County, with Loughrea also receiving €100,000, which will be invested to enhancing the lakeside and offering better amenities for visitors.

**Corrandulla received the next highest allocation, with €98,000 being invested on the playground and resurfacing works. Ballyglunin, Caherlistrane and Clifden all received €80,000 in the scheme. Much of the investment in Galway is going towards local infrastructure and public amenities.**



Accessibility Ballinasloe ran a walkability audit of the town



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# TOWN FINALIST IN ENTERPRISE TOWNS AWARDS



The Church Gallery Theatre recently hosted the Bank of Ireland Enterprise Towns Competition judging panel. Judges Tom Hayes and Pat Byrne evaluated the Town Team's detailed application on a 6 hours fact finding mission.

Ballinasloe was one of 78 towns shortlisted for the award, which saw €110,000 distributed across various cash prizes.

The presentation consisted of a 20-minute video, which was put together by the Town Team. The video addressed the various attractions of the town whilst over 25 local groups and organisations also gathered to showcase their contributions and the range and depth of social enterprise.

After the video, the judges asked open questions about the bid. Judging for the awards was done over a number of criteria: enterprise in the town, attractiveness of, local authorities and agencies, town leadership, overall community support, local publications and recognition awards, and the overall impression from the visit.

County Galway had the most entries for a single county, with eight towns selected. We competed with Clifden, the Latin Quarter, Headford, Portumna, Oranmore, Loughrea and Salthill, none of whom won awards.

"Whilst it was disappointing for all the groups behind our bid and application not to be in the medals, we have a wonderful promotional video from the process for promoting the town and we also have a renewed sense of optimism and pride in what we have achieved to date and how attractive our community is, for a potential entrepreneur" stated Seams Duffy, Chair BACD

The Town Team 20-minute promotional video is available for viewing in a number of segments, which are all viewable on our Youtube Channel 'Ballinasloe Life' or on [www.ballinasloe.ie](http://www.ballinasloe.ie)



BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

## BACD

### APPLIES FOR NEW INNOVATION SPACE

As part of Enterprise Ireland call for community development companies to deliver more job creation at local and community level, BACD submitted an exciting and innovative proposal for some €200,000 of funding.

The application was one of 80 nationwide short listed for a final oral hearing in mid October and involves the support and capital investment of both Galway and Roscommon County Enterprise teams.

Based on a triangle of enterprise space located between Monksland, Roscommon and Ballinasloe, the project will be jointly promoted, jointly managed across the three pilot campuses to young start up high tech companies in software, international traded services and other desk or lab based innovative enterprises.

Roscommon County Council are offering premises in the Monksland Industrial Estate (with further bespoke premises in a new build in Roscommon town) and Galway County Council are offering the 5,000 square feet of ready to go office based development in the upper floors of the new Library.

It is hoped that if the project which would run for a pilot for three years will foster strong links between the three campuses of the GMIT, AIT and NUI Galway and the post graduate students in a variety of disciplines.

It has been the first time that the two County Councils have jointly approached Enterprise Ireland in partnership with a community enterprise and development company to bid for a national open call.

Tainiste and Minister for Business, Enterprise & Innovation, Frances Fitzgerald will make the announcement before Christmas.

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# WESTERN POSTFORM SECURE NEW SITE FROM COUNCIL TO KEEP 50 JOBS LOCAL

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

Western Postform Ltd., who operate in Brackernagh, Ballinasloe, have purchased a greenfield site opposite the Poolboy Industrial Estate, for a new factory from the Galway County Council. The grounds were originally bought by the Town Council and zoned part residential, industrial and mixed. The development of the M6 saw some 10,000 tonnes of soil removed for earthbanking the new motorway, which levelled out the hill on the site. The new factory will join KPW, An POST, ESB, Cal Cool, Domac and the NCT as well as Garbally Oil on the south side of the town.



motorway. It's just a matter of providing them with a space to work."

At present, the firm employs over 50 people, with many of them living locally. "It was important for me to keep the workers we already have" Alan explained, noting how glad he was that the firm could strike the deal with the County Council.

The site opposite in Poolboy Business Park is 3.67 acres and has been purchased for €120,000. "Currently, we're operating on a 20,000 sq foot premises and we're leasing 10,000 sq foot in Athlone. Our new factory will be sized at 40,000 sq foot" Alan commented. The notable size increase means taking on 10 additional staff. While most of the staff at Western Postform are local, Alan says there is a "huge shortage of carpenters in Ireland" right now, as the trade has been neglected since the downturn in 2008. Now the firm will be hoping to find some skilled tradesmen to join the team.

Established in Ballinasloe in 1980, Western Postform Ltd. is a manufacturer of bespoke fitted furniture and washroom systems. The company was first set up by Seamus Shinnors, who retired a few years ago, and Michael O'Grady, who remains a director at the firm. "We have 35 years' experience in working with architects, designers, contractors and clients. We have earned a reputation for delivering a quality product on time and within budget" explained Alan O'Grady, Managing Director at Western Postform.

Over the years, the business has grown to be one of Ireland's leading suppliers to the educational, healthcare, pharmaceutical, hospitality and commercial sectors. Their operations have now exceeded their current base in Brackernagh. "With the wide range of work we carry out, and the ongoing demand for our products, our current factory is just too small" Alan commented.

Prior to the purchase, they considered relocating to Athlone for their new factory. Aidan Donohue, Councillor and Chairman of Ballinasloe Municipal District, encouraged the firm to negotiate with Galway County Council for the land sale and to retain the manufacturing firm within the precincts of the town. "It's important to keep our businesses in Ballinasloe in any way we can accommodate them" Cllr Donohue stated. "We have the facilities the businesses need – high speed broadband, access to the

Work continues now, Alan promises, as the management plan for the new site. "We are hoping to have planning submitted by the end of the year and construction of the new plant should take approximately 10 months, then." He praised the County Council with their co-operation over the sale of the site. "We're planning on investing a further €3.5 million into the new factory and we would love to continue to work with the Council and the stakeholders in the locality in the future."

"We're glad to make sure businesses feel comfortable and happy here in Ballinasloe," stated Cllr. O'Donohue and ensuring that they have the facilities to grow and continue their operations.

Alan agrees with Cllr Donohue on the ideal location of the town, remarking "it's a very central location, as we carry out work all over the country." Of course, the impending effects of Brexit remain to be seen, though the business doesn't foresee any immediate issues.

More info about Western Postform, their operations and products can be found on their website, [www.westernpostform.ie/](http://www.westernpostform.ie/)

## BALLINASLOE LIFE Christmas Cards



Ballinasloe LIFE in an effort to reach out to our Diaspora and remind them that they can stay in contact throughout the year and that we would love to help them with a business or investment idea - are producing a limited set of local themed Xmas Cards - designed by KPW Print with photography by Robert Riddell. Priced at €4.99 (plus postage and packing if ordered by telephone from KPW Print) they will be available from late November in the LIFE Magazine outlets - Salmons, Dolans, Town Hall Theatre, Corrib Oil and Edel at KPW Print 090 9642297. **Please support if you can**



# SECOND ANNUAL CHRISTMAS WINDOW DISPLAY COMPETITION

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



It's time to "Deck the Halls." Ballinasloe Town Team (a sub Group of BACD Ltd) is offering you the chance to "support local" and vote again for the best dressed shop window this Christmas.

Last year over 40 in town and out of town stores made a huge effort to dress in a very festive and creative way their shop and business fronts for the build up to the Christmas season and it helped enhance the atmosphere with the new festive lights for shoppers and strollers alike.

All you have to do is take a stroll around the locale and have a good look at all the beautiful window displays. When you've done that, vote for your favourite, using a voting slip at the Credit Union Office (or other official ballot boxes) or online through [www.Ballinasloe.ie](http://www.Ballinasloe.ie). Only one vote allowed per person.

The winner will be announced on the Town Website – [Ballinasloe.ie](http://Ballinasloe.ie) on the 20th December.

All those who cast their vote through the official competition route (not by just liking on Facebook) will be entered into a draw for over €250 worth of local Christmas Shopping Vouchers.



Utah, who came second in last year's Window Display.



Sheridan's Stores, who won last year's Window Display.



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**A planning application for a new Advance factory has been lodged for the IDA Business & Technology Park on the Creagh Road. The 50,000 square foot facility will hopefully have a green light by the end of quarter one 2018 and a factory can be constructed within 9-12 months.**

Currently, the Technology Park contains 17 acres of unused land. Due to IDA national policies, a factory cannot be built on the site speculatively-it requires an occupant ready to move in upon completion. For any firms looking for factory space in the West or Midlands, it is taking on average, at least two years to acquire land, attain planning permission and fully construct their space.

**Critically, any indigenous firms looking to expand are finding it difficult to utilise any of the brownfield industrial sites locally. Spurred by the shock of seeing some 120 jobs relocate from the Enterprise Centre to Loughrea due to lack of suitable premises, the Ballinasloe Active Community Development (BACD) decided that to copper-fasten the attractiveness of the town for investors, planning permission and the construction process "shovel ready" is the best route.**

After several discussions with the IDA it became clear that Ballinasloe wasn't on their agenda for proposed new building and marketing. As such, BACD will attempt to jointly market the site and advance unit.

**BACD applied for a €30,000 grant from the Ballinasloe Credit Union Social Fund, to pay for the planning and construction design of the**

**factory. In addition, BACD are matching €5,000 from their own income towards the costs of the project. The planning application fees will cost roughly €10,000 and Galway County Council will not be waiving them for the Charitable Company.**

The site will facilitate a 40,000sq foot factory, ideal for potential bio-medical, pharmaceutical or bio-technical manufacturers. The interior of the factory will also be designed to be adjustable, flexibly meeting the investor's needs and requirements. Many locally feel that a Monksland to Parkmore corridor of Bio Medical and sub supply manufacturers would be an idea marketing vehicle and concept for companies of scale and size who wish to cluster together in the congestion free Midlands.

**"We're delighted to have agreed the advance site with the IDA. The Technology Park offers many positives for any investors, so making it ready to occupy within 9 to 12 months is a big boost to marketing ourselves as an enterprise town" commented Seamus Duffy, Chairman of BACD.**

The full site in the Technology Park could be ready to occupy as early as November 2018, depending on when an investor or firm decides to locate.

**This is a key investment into the enterprise of Ballinasloe, as any large-scale Manufacturer that locates will offer employment. This site for the factory will compliment the successful expansion of SurModics which currently employs 140 workers and indeed Aptar, which has over 120 of a workforce.**



## J&S PHOTOS

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L-R: Evelyn & Declan Flanagan,  
Michael McCullagh, Kevin &  
Brenda Flanagan.

## SELLING TO THE GENERATIONS

Ballinasloe estate agent Michael McCullagh got his auction permit in 1960 as a 21st birthday present from his uncle Andrew Jennings, who was an established auctioneer at that time. In July 1964 Andrew died suddenly and Michael sold his first farm by auction in Lismany, Lauretstown, later that month.

In 1965 he was commissioned to sell Cleaghmore Villa, owned by the Guinness Company, by Public Auction.

**The property did not sell at the auction but concluded within a fortnight and sold through private negotiations to Declan & Evelyn Flanagan, who are still residing there.**

In 2016, Michael sold by private treaty "Aishling" at 1 Mountpleasant Avenue to a son of Declan & Evelyn- Kevin & his wife Brenda who restored the Georgian house and added a modern addition to the rear and are now residing there.

**Michael was very honoured to have sold to two generations of the one family, over a space of 51 Years**





**Ballinasloe Credit Union has recently hired a new manager, replacing the recently retired Noel Madden. Paul Morgan is coming in to the role with a wealth of experience in Irish Credit Unions and banking, and he hopes the BCU can continue to serve the community during his time here.**

Paul is originally from Gorey, Co Wexford, but moved to Vancouver, Canada when just 5 years old. After spending 10 years across the Atlantic, he returned to Gorey to finish secondary school. He attended University College Dublin, where he graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Commerce and a Masters Degree in Economics. He moved back to Canada with his partner, Catriona, where they lived for eight years and had two sons.

While there, Paul took up a role with the Business Development Bank of Canada in Vancouver. "I worked all around Canada" Paul commented, "I spent three years in a town called Terrace, a town similar to Ballinasloe." He returned to Ireland in 2001 and joined Ulster Bank, where he worked for 13 years. "I spent five years at George's Quay, the head office, working in corporate banking and credit. I was then the head of sector in Athlone" Paul outlined. He then decided to leave Ulster Bank and joined the Credit Union Development Association (CUDA) in 2014. Paul was involved in Risk Management across a number of Credit Unions. "I learned an awful lot about

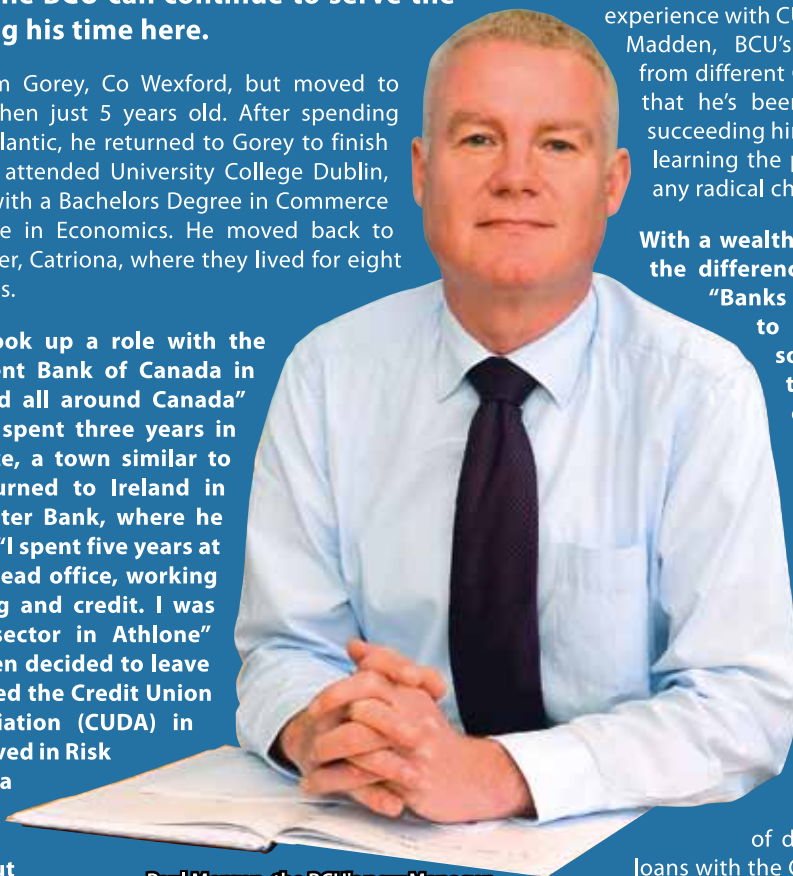
how the unions function, how they're all different with local ideas and their base" he explained.

"I'm really excited now to be involved in managing the Credit Union in Ballinasloe. I've held senior management roles at Ulster Bank, but the role at a Credit Union is different. I'm really glad to have the experience with CUDA to prepare me for this." Paul knew Noel Madden, BCU's recently-retired, long-serving manager, from different Credit Union meetings. "I'm very conscious that he's been here for such a long period of time, succeeding him is a big responsibility. I'm taking my time, learning the processes and procedures. I'm not making any radical changes to start."

**With a wealth of experience in both, Paul is aware of the differences between Credit Unions and banks.**

"Banks are good for personal lending, subject to meeting all criteria outlined. When somebody falls outside the criteria, they may not get what they need," he explained, "the difference with the Credit Union is that we take a number of different factors into account. A particular circumstance may be viewed in context, such as poor lending credit because of the economic crash. If there's evidence and a willingness to repay, the person can be backed." Approval rates for Credit Unions across Ireland are above 90%, and Paul insists that loans can be provided to a family in every circumstance in which it is necessary.

Following the economic crash, the fear of debt has prevented many from taking out loans with the Credit Union. However, there are signs now



Paul Morgan, the BCU's new Manager

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that this is changing. "Evidence over the last 6-12 months suggests that people now are becoming more confident to take loans. Over the last few years, people have actually been saving their money with the credit union as well. People who want to improve their homes or upgrade their cars, they're prepared to take out these loans now" Paul commented, mentioning a new loan called "Renovate", a specialised loan for home improvement.

**Paul says that the Credit Union specifically enjoys fantastic local interaction. "Local involvement with businesses and social bodies here has been the strongest I've seen across the credit unions I've dealt with" he expressed. The farming community have also been greatly involved, mostly due to the Cultivate loan. This loan is specialised to farmers and the repayments are dependent on their cashflow.**

"Credit Unions offer so many loans that people hold a great loyalty for them. Back to school, Communion, Christmas loans, car renewal, unanticipated expenses – the way we structure repayments with our members means that often, they come back again the next year for the same loan or undertake another one," Paul explained. He also mentioned that the interaction with members hasn't changed, you still talk to somebody at the counter to put a loan in place and you know who to contact if issues arise. "We would like to get numbers up on the website, but we're not looking to replace the customer desks with the website."

**BCU has been synonymous with local events in Ballinasloe, and Paul insists that this will continue to be the case. "The Board of Directors set up a social fund at the beginning**

**of every year which is spent on sponsoring local activities and endeavours throughout the year" he commented, "we discuss where we can assist in the community and do our best with it. The Church Clock renovation is a good example."**

With €100 million in assets, BCU is a significantly sized Credit Union. "We want to lend money to members, that's our purpose. We're always improving how we deal with our members in at the customer desks. We want to keep that customer-experience as positive and streamlined as possible" Paul concluded.

**You can learn more about BCU and the loans they offer on [www.ballinasloecreditunion.com](http://www.ballinasloecreditunion.com). The Credit Union on Main St is open from 9:30am-5:30pm from Monday to Friday, and from 9:30am-4:30pm on Saturdays.**



The staff at the Credit Union

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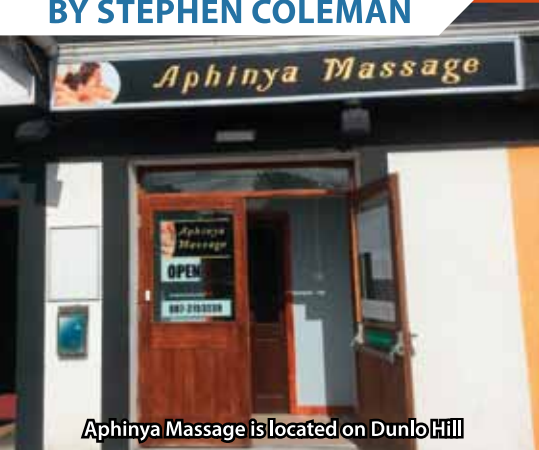


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# JIMMY CONWAY'S NEW MASSAGE BUSINESS

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



Aphinya Massage is located on Dunlo Hill

**Jimmy Conway, a former local pub manager, has recently opened a massage shop on Dunlo Hill, in Ballinasloe. The retiree has opened the business for his nephew's wife, Aphinya, to manage and be the principal masseuse.**

Jimmy was born in Whitehall, Dublin. He attended Larkhill School and the O'Connell Christian Brothers. After finishing his education, he was an apprentice in Ballymun House and later progressed to be the manager of Laurence Lounge in Ballyfermot. A short while later, he worked for Semperit Tyres as a supervisor, for ten years. He later took voluntary redundancy and started his own waste company, Relay Waste, in 1984. 6 years later, he left for New Zealand, where he worked



Aphinya, the qualified Thai masseuse

as a security guard for a Data Bank. He lived there with his wife and two of his daughters, with one deciding to stay when they chose to return to Ireland.

**After three years in New Zealand, Jimmy visited his sister in Ballinasloe. His brother-in-law, Tommy Sheridan, owned the Jekyll and Hyde Pub on Dunlo Street, and asked him if he would manage it with him. "I said yes, why not, and that began my 24 years – and counting – stay in Ballinasloe," Jimmy commented.**

Throughout his time in Ballinasloe, he has run three very successful bars. One on Main Street with his late wife, Irene, for four years; "Jimmy the Hat's Bar" on Society Street for five years, and even the Cellar Bar for 10 years, leaving him a popular figure among pub frequenters.

**Jimmy has four daughters, two in New Zealand, one in Dublin and one in Wexford. Between them, he has 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, all spread across the three locations. They range in age from one to 28. He was married to his late wife Irene for 48 years.**

Having retired a number of years ago after 50 years of working, he can reflect on a diverse work life. "I never settled in a particular industry, I guess. I got to work in a few different worlds, and that's been a fantastic experience for me," he reflected.

**Jimmy decided to open Aphinya Massage in Ballinasloe to offer his nephew's wife, Aphinya, a chance to**

**run her own massage shop. Aphinya is a qualified Thai masseuse and has much experience in massage therapy.**

"I saw how successful massage shops are in Athlone, in Galway, and I decided, why not try it out in Ballinasloe? I would say it's my hometown and I think it could work out well," he explained, acknowledging that this is the only current massage shop in the town. "We all saw the downturn over the last 10 years, but over the last year something like 12 new businesses have opened up in town. That is some improvement and I hope it can continue. The town needs a boost, and the more business that locates here, the better. It's another reason why we set up here."

**Aphinya Massage offers a range of services and you can also purchase gift vouchers at the shop which are ideal for a Christmas present. The shop is open from 9am until 7pm, seven days a week.**

You can contact the shop on their Facebook Page, Aphinya Massage, or by calling 087 215 3239.



Jimmy 'the Hat' Conway



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# VAL'S VINTAGE CUPBOARD

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

History, stories and nostalgia await

you on Dunlo Street with the opening of Val's Vintage Cupboard. The recently opened antique shop is a treasure-trove of vintage ware and items that are sure to capture the eye. The store is managed by Valerie Sharpe and Amy O'Connell, two ladies whose love for history and antiques has aided them in finding their feet in the business.

Valerie Sharpe originally hails from Arklow, County Wicklow. In 1991, she married David Sharpe of Ballinasloe, where she has lived since. She has worked in different shops around the town but found herself most enjoying her time with the Crafters' Corner. Here, her love for arts and crafts pushed her further towards the antiques store.

"I always wanted to open my own shop," Valerie explained, "I just love design, upcycling, arts and crafts. I felt that the antique store would cover them all."

Together with Amy O'Connell, from Kentucky, USA, the two opened Val's Vintage Cupboard on Dunlo Street. The two met working together at the Crafters' Corner and shared the love of the hobby. "I would say I specialise in arts and crafts, which I've always enjoyed," Amy mentioned. Valerie, likewise, loves design, antiques, and upcycling. Together, they hold a broad knowledge of all things antique.

Walking in to the store, an intriguing sense of nostalgia hits you immediately. "People sometimes call it a memory store," Valerie commented, "they may see things that make them think back to their grandparents or back to simpler times." The large, diverse inventory is sure to offer an education to anybody who walks in. "We know a lot of history behind what's in the store," Amy mentioned, "and if we don't, we're very keen to find out."

The store has something for everybody, Valerie insists. "The familiarity of some of the items really draws people, as well as our vintage collections. We have vintage perfume bottles that are really popular with girls of all ages."

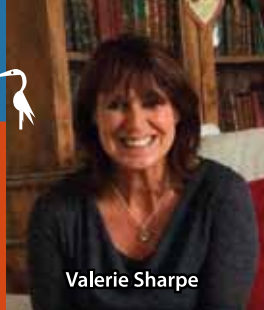
"Every day is a new experience," Amy comments, "it's always fun, always educational and people bring in all kinds of interesting items." Their short time managing the store has seen their collection grow widely, with all sorts of collectables: coins; watches; hats; perfume bottles; rosary beads; kettles; pots and baskets. They have a steady flow of customers, allowing the store to run happily.

The two are happy to buy antiques that come in to the store, as well as offering upcycling services. "We have taken on items that people wanted stencilled, painted and decorated. Of course, we're careful not to swamp ourselves down so we try not to take too much. It's a time-consuming process," Valerie explained.

All going well, the two would like to share their love for arts and crafts by starting some classes in town. "We'd love to help others enjoy working on painting, decorating, drawing – everything," Amy explained, adding that they would like to work together with some local organisations to run these classes.

With so many unique pieces in the store, the two do grow attached to what they have. "There's a Guinness toucan in the window, it's my favourite piece here," Amy commented, while Valerie was caught for choice. "I love so many items here, and when they're sold it feels like we sold a part of the furniture!" she explained.

The current success of the store has motivated the two, and they're hopeful that they can maintain their business and keep enjoying themselves. "The store feels like a home away from home – a home where strangers come in and ask about the clock," Valerie expressed, mentioning



Valerie Sharpe



A small selection of what the store offers

how happy she is there.

"The people in Ballinasloe are lovely," Amy mentioned, noting that the two of them weren't native to the town. "If everybody can get together and support local businesses, just like we've been supported, others will be encouraged and find the same success," she added.

You can visit their Facebook Page, Val's Vintage Cupboard, where there are photos of different items the store is currently selling.

The store is opened from Tuesday to Saturday, from 10am-6pm. Valerie and Amy welcome all to the store, whether to discuss an item or sell an item.

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# E-CIGARETTE STORE OPENS IN TOWN CENTRE

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



**St. Michael's Square has recently seen the addition of a new e-cigarette store. This store offers 'vaping' liquid and equipment to those customers-trying to move away from Tobacco products.**

The store was opened by Gerry Devaney from Galway. Gerry has worked in retail for the past 27 years, starting out with his dad's stall in Eyre Square at just 16. At 18, he opened his own stall in Eyre Square, which he still operates and in 2004, he invested in a small mobile phone shop in Galway which operated until 2014. The phone shop has since transitioned in to an e-cigarette store.

"I decided to open the e-cig store in Galway in early 2014 as I felt the product could really help people who wanted to give up smoking. I managed to quit smoking myself after 25 years thanks to the electronic cigarettes, I really felt they helped" Gerry commented. "Since opening that first store in 2014, we have opened up eight more. We're now open in Westport, Claremorris, Athlone and our latest store is Ballinasloe."

"The store is run by two great guys: Ciaran Boyle, the manager of the store and Chris, a part-time staff member. They're both e-cigarette users themselves so they can offer the best advice to new vapers, especially if you want to transition from smoking to vaping." The team have been enjoying their first month in town and Gerry says

the store is doing better than expected. "It's going well so far, and it can only improve as more people learn about us and what we do. If we get busier, we may need more staff and longer opening hours" he stated.

Gerry has also thanked the people of the town, who have welcomed the store's opening. "I would love to see more stores opening back up and I'm sure they will. Many shops that have been vacant for a while are being re-opened now with new businesses. It's important for people who want to live and work in town."

The Ecig Store offers a huge range of electronic cigarettes and e-liquids. The store's aim is to ensure that all customers are completely satisfied with their purchase and the sales service. "We want our customers to feel comfortable in knowing that they can pop in and Ciaran or Chris will look after them and give them the best help and advice" Gerry added. The store runs a loyalty programme, where you can pick up a loyalty card to save 10% on your purchases. They also take orders online on their website, offering next day delivery. Currently, the store is open from 10am-7pm from Monday to Saturday.

You can keep up to date with the store, and their promotions and giveaways, on their Facebook page: The Ecig Store Ballinasloe. You can also visit their website – [www.theecigstore.ie](http://www.theecigstore.ie) or call the store on 090 963 1585.

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# MICHAEL WARD'S MENSWEAR 40 YEARS ON MAIN STREET

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



24 August 1990: Noel Finn, Bernie Hanlon, Marian Costello, Agnes Ward (RIP), Michael Ward, Kathleen Ward, Maureen Grady, and Gabriel Lesley.

This month, Michael Ward's Menswear is celebrating 40 years in business, on the Main St., having opened a small outlet across the road in 1977. "I was only 24 when Pat McDonagh of Supermacs, who I grew up with, offered me a rent-free premises to start a business. It was right across the road from my present store, where the seating area of Supermacs now is. I jumped at the opportunity" said Michael.

In 1980, however, Michael had to cross the road to rent a new premises. "Pat was originally laying out the Supermacs premises as a pub, but decided to change it to a family restaurant, so he needed the full premises. I moved the store across the road to a unit that was a half occupied by Autofactors, half empty. A few years later I rented it all," Michael elaborated.

The current shop location was built in 1990, the previous building, a grocery store run by Haslams, was purchased by Michael, knocked down and rebuilt over two years. The store has seen a consistent customer base over the last 40 years, though Michael admits that the recession in the mid-2000s affected them. "It brought down turnover, so we had to downsize. We closed our second floor which featured ladies wear and some of our staff moved on" he mentioned.

Michael Ward's Menswear, and Ballinasloe as a whole, has slowly recovered over the last few years. "The town is improving the whole time now. The store has seen some changes too. Fashion is becoming younger, more specialised. We get a lot of young men coming in now looking to buy suits for weddings and other special occasions," Michael stated. He added that after the crash in 2008, the store would rent suits more than selling them. This trend has reversed now with the recovery.

Michael formally retired in 2016, handing over the management to his son Joe, who runs it. "I wish him the best, of course. I still come in to the shop a lot and greet customers. I believe the shop still has a bright future" Michael commented.

To celebrate their 40th anniversary, the shop held a customer night on 23rd November, dubbed 'Charcoal Thursday'. "It wasn't quite Black Friday, but it was about as close as you could get!" Joe Ward commented. "We would like to make this an annual night, as a reward to our loyal customers."

With four decades behind them, the Ward's team have been dressing and fitting out successive generations of men and boys. "Many of our customers now have been clients for years. There's a great amount of loyalty for the store. The town overall has been very supportive, which is great for local businesses" Michael commented. "I'd like to say a big thank you to Pat McDonagh, who really helped me start out and for his offer of the premises. I've

had some great staff over the years, and thanks of course to my late mother, Agnes, who worked with me, as well as to all my friends and family, my wife Kathleen, and children - Joe, Nicola, Fiona, Michael, Cathal for their support over the 40 years" he concluded.

"We're looking at continuing to operate here for a long time, another 40 years at least," Joe commented. "Without that belief, we wouldn't be able to do it. It's the belief Michael held when the store opened."

You can keep up to date on the store's special offers and competitions on their Facebook page, Michael Ward's Menswear.



The shop's interior in 1990.

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# NEW PHARMACY FOR DUNLO HILL

BY STEPHEN  
COLEMAN



Tuam-born Billy King, who has worked in pharmacies in Ballinasloe town for over nine years, has now opened his own Pharmacy in Dunlo Hill. His mother, Kathleen, was a native of Ahascragh, while his father, Paul, was a Tuam man. Billy graduated from NUIG with a Bachelor's Degree in Science before studying Pharmacy in Liverpool for four years. After doing a pre-registry year, he worked as a qualified pharmacist in the UK and in Ireland. With his wife Maria, Billy is the father to boys Paul and Christopher.

Billy is well known with the pharmacy customers. "I take a big interest in being a hands-on pharmacist" Billy explained. "I like to talk about prescriptions with my customers, or about over-the-counter medicines. It helps build a rapport between myself and the customer, as well as helping them in better understanding of what they're getting."

"Pharmacies nowadays are following a chain model, a co-op model. It's not very family-based. I prefer my pharmacy to offer individual attention and work closely with our customers. I'm the owner and operator, so I'm always close to what's happening" he said, where he is assisted in the store by Edel Larkin of Eyrecourt and Kate Treacy from Aughrim.

Over his years in town, Billy has liaised with different hospitals, healthcare, GP and mental health services. He

has also been involved in sponsoring different local community competitions. The pharmacy works closely with patients from the Day Hospital and supplies medicines.

"I wanted to be my own boss" Billy explained his inspiration to open the pharmacy. "I wanted to keep helping people and to offer a more hands-on approach than the other model that seemed to be becoming prominent. I was getting older, so I decided to back myself to run it now and give it a go."

Billy's pharmacy is the second new opening in the Dunlo Hill complex in recent months as the town has seen an uptake in new businesses. "There's a few new businesses opening up and really things are looking up for the town. There are still a few empty units that are perfectly suitable" he commented.

In setting up, Billy had to follow a strict inspection criteria for the shop-fitting. "The store had to pass HSE regulations, and then regulations by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. Aside from the regulations, it was pretty straight-forward to go from an empty unit to being operational" he mentioned. He was also happy with the parking available outside the store. Early business has gone well for Billy, and he's happy to be retaining customers who stop by. Growth, while slow at first, has continued, and he's very happy with positive feedback from his customers.

Billy King Pharmacy is open 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays from 9am-1pm. The store also opens for two hours on Bank Holidays and will post notices online for these times.

You can contact the pharmacy on their Facebook Page – BILLY KING Pharmacy – or by email at [billykingpharmacy@gmail.com](mailto:billykingpharmacy@gmail.com)



Billy King and Edel Larkin in front of the new pharmacy



Edel Larkin and Kate Treacy

*Happy Christmas to all our customers*



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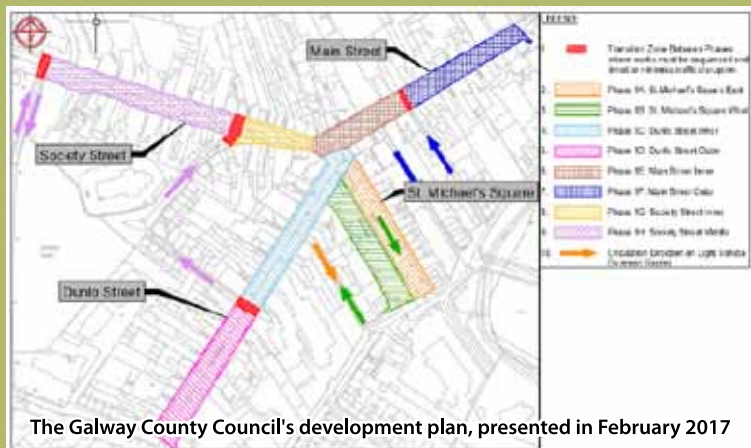






# BIG DIG SET FOR EARLY NEW YEAR

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



The Galway County Council's development plan, presented in February 2017

The Town Enhancement Plan is scheduled to commence in Ballinasloe town centre, in mid-January, which will see the main streets of town dug-up over a 32 week period. Divided into phases, St Michael's Square will be the first part of town centre to be renovated and reconstructed. Works will only be taking part in one area at a time, so as to minimise disruption. Dunlo Street will be next after the Square, followed by Main Street and then Society Street. One-way traffic and parking restriction measures will be adopted during the construction phase, and a temporary bus-stop will operate on Dunlo Hill when Dunlo Street is receiving its face-lift.

According to the Galway County Council Engineering Dept., works will take place from 8am-8pm, generally, from Monday to Friday. Works won't take place during weekends and bank holidays, except for when the central junction is under construction. There will not be works on and around St Patrick's Day and it is planned to have some night time work.

This phase will primarily feature the relaying of underground waterways, the repaving of limestone footpaths and the relaying of asphalt roadways. The over-road aspect of the overall plan, the introduction of new lights, removal of old cables, erection of new benches and cycle-stands, will take place a few months afterwards. The Council are encouraging the Contractor to have a liaison member of the crew work hand in hand with the direct business owners affected and to apply the lessons learned from the Brackernagh phase.

As of the time of printing the contract for the Town Enhancement Scheme has not yet been awarded which means the confirmed start-dates are yet to be announced, but it is anticipated that the bulk of the work will be done before Fair week 2018. "Things are in place, everything should be good to go," commented Cllr Aidan Donohue, who expects construction to commence in mid-January.

Issues are however arising now in regards to the cost of the overall project. Tenders for the project have been received by the County Council and are running at almost 20% higher than anticipated, when first mooted some 4 years ago. With the scheme already causing serious disruptions for the town, any extra delay and the completion of the works will come at the expense of the businesses that are affected.

"I was elected Chairperson for Ballinasloe and District Municipal Council two years ago, and the big dig was supposed to be ready to go then. The cost for the project is about €1 million higher than it was expected back then" stated Cllr Michael Finnerty. "The extra cost is mostly due to work that will be carried on throughout the night, so that part of the project is done quickly and it doesn't disrupt the town for longer than it needs to."

"The money for the Enhancement Plan has been ring-fenced, but now there's the extra cost" Cllr Dermot Connolly commented, "with the issue with funding from the Galway County Council, I'm just wondering where this extra finance will come from, hopefully Irish Water will help."

You can keep up to date with the Town Enhancement Plan on our Facebook page, Ballinasloe Life Magazine, and on [www.ballinasloe.ie](http://www.ballinasloe.ie)

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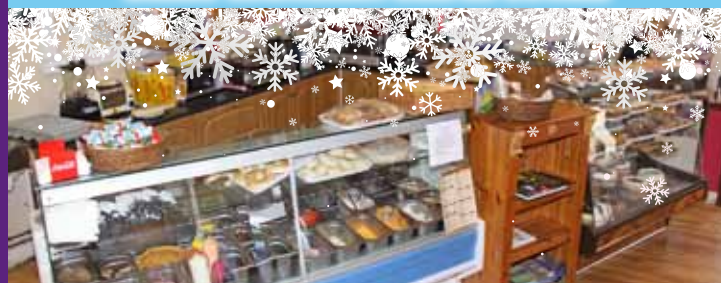
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# SECOND ANNUAL PEOPLE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Town Team recently held a gala evening for their second-ever Ballinasloe People of the Year Awards in the Shearwater Hotel with almost 500 guests and community organisations in attendance. 54 nominations for people and organisations were honoured, with each nominee receiving a certificate recognising their achievements. RTE Sports Journalist Darren Frehill hosted the event, which was sponsored by the Credit Union, the Shearwater Hotel and KPW Print.

The Town Band under the baton of Noel Madden welcomed attendees with a fantastic symphony performance before everybody could move to the Plaza Suite for the event.

Seamus Duffy, Chairman of Ballinasloe Area Community Development (BACD), opened the proceedings, welcoming

everybody and updating the gathering on the Town Team's projects, over the past 2 years - specifically mentioning the Zombie Walk that brought a sellout crowd of over 2,100. He also reminded the audience that while the Enterprise Centre was almost sold out again - the town has no capacity for new industry and he was pleased to announce that funding had been recently secured from the Credit Union to apply for full planning permission for a new advance modern light industrial factory on the IDA Business park to be shovel ready for new industrialists. He also mentioned that the group were in the process of hosting a seminar on the possible future uses of the old St. Bridgid's Hospital complex. "Our next priority is the Festive gathering and Town Illuminations and I thank all those associated with the staging of the evening and the awards especially the sponsors, whilst saluting all the nominees for their work in sustaining our community".

Adrian Ahearn, Chairman of the Credit Union, spoke about how their Board and organisation were very much agreed to be supportive and acknowledging all the efforts of the many group and clubs that make up the fabric of our town and community. "The Credit Union used to sponsor the old Mayoral awards some years back as we have been anchored in the needs of our local community and we know and appreciate the efforts of volunteers, in a way that no other financial co-operative does. I want to thank the organisers and congratulate the nominees and winners this evening" stated Adrian.

M.C. Darren Frehill, in congratulating all nominees said "I was blown away, reading some of the nominations. It feels almost unfair to single out winners." He mentioned his younger years growing up in the locality and how the sports clubs were a key aspect of his formation and how pleased he was to see so many people in their sporting attire at the event.

Nominees for all categories were introduced and awarded certificates of achievements by Adrian Ahearn. An interlude for food followed, during which the local music group Pleáracá performed. The break concluded with soprano Ciara Lawless, a sixth year student in Our Lady's Bower, Athlone, performing some well known classics.



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The category winners, were then announced as follows:

**Arts, Cultural and Heritage Award** – Lawrencetown Community Development-Heritage & Tidy Towns Focus Group

**Business Community Spirit Award** –Gullane's Hotel

**Social, Community & Civic Pride Award** – Ballinasloe Social Services

**Sports and Recreation Volunteer Award** – John Donnelly (Cycling)

**Sports and Recreation Individual Award** – Heather Payne (Soccer)

**Sports and Recreation Team Award** – Ballinasloe Itosu-Kai Karatedo Ireland

**Young Person's Award** – Julianna Green & Laura Frehill

**Hall of Fame – Lifetime Achievement Award** – Liam Kelly

Liam Kelly received the Hall of Fame award from Tom Quinn, the winner of the award in the inaugural event two years ago.



John Donnelly (Cycling)



Heather Payne (Soccer)



Ballinasloe Itosu-Kai Karatedo Ireland

Jacinta Divilly, Co-Ordinator of the Town Team closed the evening, thanking the crowd for their support and congratulating the nominees, especially Liam for his lifetime achievement award. "I of course want to thank our sponsors for the evening. Thank you again to the Ballinasloe Credit Union, for sponsoring the Awards once again. Thank you to the Shearwater, who ensured a fantastic evening here tonight, feeding over 480 people supper in less than 30 minutes. And thank you as well to KPW Print, our new sponsors for the award" she concluded.

Denis Naughten, Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment, got a few moments on stage to congratulate the nominees and winners. He specifically praised the young nominees and their talents. He also mentioned the Town Team's projects, praising their continued efforts to make Ballinasloe a better place to live and work. "Between the Surmodics Investment, the e fibre project and the advance planning for new industry, the work of the Town Team is being responded to and supported by a listening and encouraging Government who will help those communities that are trying to help themselves" noted the Minister.

A raffle ran during the evening, with all proceeds going towards the continued enhancement of the Christmas Lights & Illumination Festivities. The Tops prizes was a €500 travel voucher from Kellers Travel, which was won by Mrs. Murphy of Brackernagh.

Videos of each category winner are now available on our Facebook Page, Ballinasloe Life Magazine, as well as our recently launched Youtube Channel. You can also view the collection of videos from the evening on [www.ballinasloe.ie](http://www.ballinasloe.ie)



Julianna Green & Laura Frehill



Liam Kelly

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# SMART RECOVERY GROUP BEGINNING IN TOWN

The New Year will see the commencement of SMART Recovery, a support group locally for people who suffer from addiction. The first meeting will be held on 8th January. SMART Recovery focuses on self-management and recovery training, helping those in need to learn the tools and techniques needed to live a happier life and to gain independence from their addictive behavior.

Woodlawn's Nicola Hampson is a key figure in bringing SMART Recovery to the town. She is a member of the Galway Mental Health Association and has been involved in many different groups as a mental health advocate. "Anyone can have problems with substance addiction such as alcohol or drugs, or addictive behaviours, such as gambling or overeating. They're all welcome to SMART Recovery meetings. All addictions are supported together within the same meeting" Nicola explained.

Meetings are informal, with much cross-talk and focus on topics, tools or techniques as determined by the group at the beginning of each session. "Every meeting is different, but focuses on helping you take personal responsibility for your own recovery. You get the chance to learn how to change your life from one that is self-destructive and unhappy to one that is constructive and satisfying" Nicola explained.

After suffering from mental health issues for much of her life, Nicola found that her recovery encouraged her to want to help others. "The SMART Recovery approach is different to other 12-

step programmes" she explained, "labels are not used, spirituality is seen as a personal matter and the disease model is not a part of the programme." These differences in approach mark the programmes unique and perhaps more suitable for some who suffer and have found other programmes unhelpful.

Weekly meetings are typically 90 minutes, and everybody is invited to attend as necessary as wherever they are on the "Cycle of Change". Everybody is invited to attend, regardless of where they are – whether actively succumbing to their addiction, or even relapsed – they are welcome. Abstinence is of course the overall objective, but it is recognised that this can take significant time and effort. SMART Recovery illustrates and practices tools and techniques based on real-life situations without judgement, so it can be a help for anybody regardless of where they are in their journey.

SMART Recovery is a non-profit organisation which was first established 25 years ago in the US and now operates all over the world. In Ireland, groups have been running for the last two years and there are now

45 meetings nationwide. A pilot SMART Recovery programme has been running in Galway City for the last seven months and the feedback has now lead to establishing meetings across the county, such as in Ballinasloe.

The venue of the first Ballinasloe meeting is still to be finalised. More information will be on [www.ballinasloe.ie](http://www.ballinasloe.ie)

You can learn more about the SMART Recovery programme on [www.smartrecovery.ie](http://www.smartrecovery.ie) or you can contact Nicola Hampson on 086 792 9171.



Nicola Hampson of SMART Recovery

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# OVER 2000 ENJOY THIRD ANNUAL HALLOWEEN ZOMBIE WALK

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

Over 2,200 people from all ages journeyed through the haunted woods and nature trail of Garbally Park for the town's third annual Zombie Walk. The event ran for two nights over the Bank Holiday weekend and saw groups of 15-25 spend 20 minutes walking through the haunted, undead-infested woodlands of the historic Clancarty Estate.

The crew of zombies, witches and other terrifying misfits was composed primarily by members of the Musical Society, Panto, Town Hall Theatre, as well as some visiting delegations of musicians, actors, re-enactors from neighbouring villages. Walkers were led through the spine chilling trail by guides who were all at one time workers in either the Mansion, Estate or Farm.

The Make-up teams, costumes and props ensured an immersive Halloween experience for all in attendance. In total, there were over 140 volunteers each night to make the event happen, not including the White Lady – Ghost of the wife of the second Earl, who fell to her death in mysterious circumstances.

The bookings this year reflected a lot of visitors and families who were staying in town for the weekend in hotels or with friends.

Proceeds of the Walk, after costs, expenses and contributions to the core performance art groups who help out is to help fund the Town Team's contribution for the Christmas lights and festive gathering.

Chair Seamus Duffy praised the community spirit and all those who volunteered in such numbers to make the event happen and again paid special tribute to Fr. Colm Allman and the Governors of Garbally, as well as Ms Patricia Kilgannon, Principal and the Board of Management of Ard Scoil Mhuire.



A small portion of the cast of undead and wicked for the Zombie Walk.

## ZOMBIE WALK INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

<b>INCOME</b>	€10,500.00
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Marketing / Signage/ Flyers	€600.00
Snacks/ Water/ Food	€1,000.00
Event Insurance & Indemnities	€550.00
Production, Props, Lanterns, Make Up etc	€1,200.00
Generators, Fuel, Electrics Bulbs, Supplies	€ 400.00
Barriers , Staging Equipment, Hi Vis Vests	€ 500.00
Civil Defence First Aid Cover	€ 300.00
Garbally/ Scoil Mhuire Schools	€500.00
Bursaries	
Ballinasloe Musical Society	€ 1,200.00
Sports Clubs & Societies ( who provided stewards )	€ 600.00
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>€ 6,850.00</b>
<b>Surplus for Town Team projects</b>	<b>€3,650.00</b>

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# TINY TOTS CRECHE & PRESCHOOL DONATES TO CHILDREN'S WARD

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

The staff and children of Tiny Tots Creche recently presented a cheque to Doctor Shahid of Portiuncula's Children's Ward for a generous sum of €410.50. The funds were raised through a pyjama day at the preschool based in the Enterprise Centre. Dr. Shahid has said that the money will be used for the painting of the children's ward and for updating parents' accommodation.

Jennifer Sheridan and her hardworking team in Tiny Tots feel that teaching the children about charity can be rewarding for both parents and the children. "A great way to reinforce charitable values is to make giving a community activity and that's why we chose the Children's Ward this year. It's a valuable resource on our doorstep and many of the children have used or visited the ward" Jennifer commented.

"We encouraged the staff and children, with the help of their parents, to participate in charitable activities such as our recent pyjama day, Cheerios' ChildLine breakfast, and the shoebox appeal. The Shoebox Appeal especially was a huge success last



The children and staff of Tiny Tots Creche presenting Dr Shahid and Nurse Karen Leonard with a cheque for €410.50

year. We praise each child when they show generosity and empathy to others," Jennifer concluded.

You can follow the Tiny Tots' activities on their Facebook Page: Tiny Tots Crèche and Educational Preschool, or by visiting [www.tinytotscreche.com](http://www.tinytotscreche.com) You can contact Jennifer by calling (090) 964 4480.

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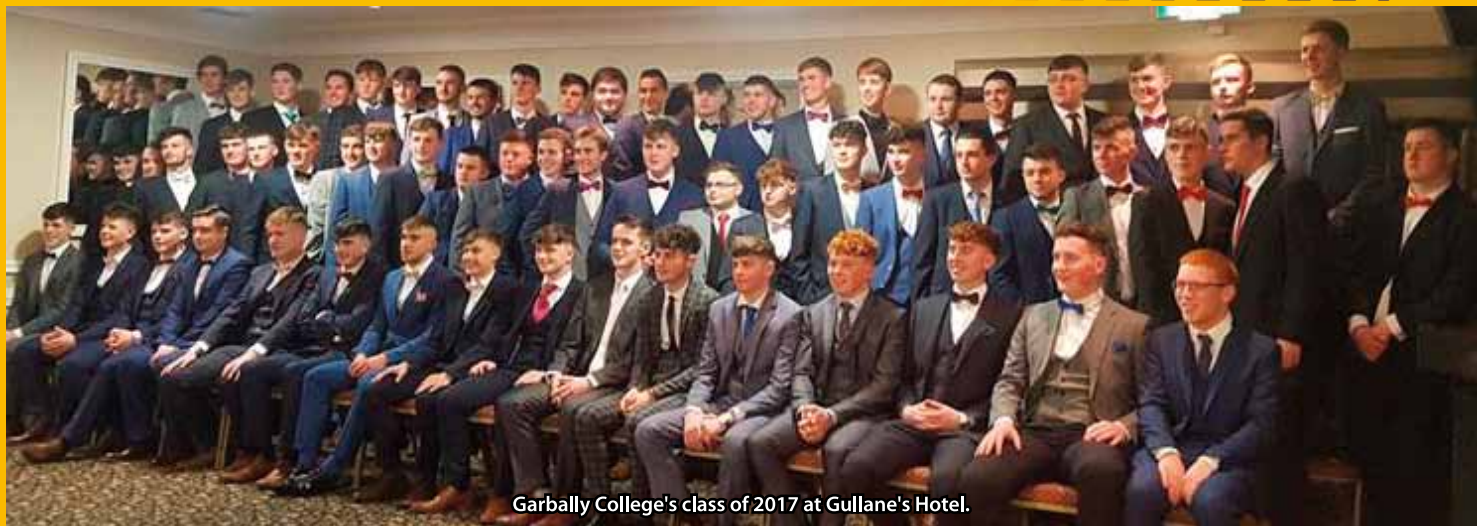
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## GARBALLY COLLEGE GRADUATION



Garbally College's class of 2017 at Gullane's Hotel.



Darragh Connelly and Daniel McMorow.



Oisín Leyden, Jack Dillon, Oisín O'Riley, and Iarla Muldoon.



Brian Coughlan, Glen Kelly, and Nathan Donelan.



Daniel Reddan, Patrick Sheehan, and Shane Downey.



Gíaran Tumulty, Matthew McCormack, and Conor McGann.

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## ARDSCOIL MHUIRE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS MUSICAL



Ronettes - Catherine Glynn, Hannah Moore, Laura Frehill and Maria Colohan.



Audrey - Zara Campbell.



Julianna Green & Laura Frehill

### STUDENTS CAMIO WALK FOR CHARITY - BY JACK DELANEY

**Ballinasloe Transition Year students, Juliana Greene and Laura Frehill, walked the Camino to raise over €1000 for Suicide or Survive, a charity which works towards the prevention of suicide in Ireland.**

Juliana and Laura walked over 33km per day for six days to complete their 200km journey, which ended in Santiago. The idea of raising both money and awareness for Suicide or Survive (SOS) originated from Juliana's mother who works as a physiologist for the charity. Laura describes the planning process as "challenging" as they had to plan the route, get permission from both the school and the charity while also booking accommodation and travel for the trip.

The girls began by holding a movie day for first years within Ard Scoil Mhuire which raised over €320. "The kind donations given by both the school staff and students inspired and motivated us to finish this journey-not only for the charity but also for ourselves" Laura commented. She explains that the whole school body was "very encouraging and supportive" and added that many teachers wished them well on their journey. Many of their peers sent their best wishes via social media both in the lead up to and during the trip.

The girls went through many feelings during their "long and tiresome" journey. They started with steely determination, but their days brought out an array of emotion. "We went from being inspired to being wrecked. We would be grumpy at 6am, inspired again during the day, then exhausted and peaceful before bed," Julianna explained. The most challenging element of the trip for the girls was finding the motivation to get out of bed every morning. "Our muscles were in agony, and walking so far in 30 degree heat wasn't easy," Julianna elaborated.

Day six saw them complete their journey. "The feeling of accomplishment was immense," they noted, receiving certificates for their endeavours. "We have so many wonderful and lasting memories from the trip. We got to meet new and interesting people, taste authentic Spanish dishes, view the golden cathedral in Santiago, as well as collecting stamps at every location along the way" Julianna explained, remarking how positive an experience it had been for them both.

A representative from the charity who worked closely with the girls on their trip said that they were "extremely grateful because they made a substantial difference to the funds used to provide vital services to those in need." Laura said "We learned that in life, you have to keep moving forward and work as a team. Also that you must enjoy the little things in life," especially hot showers."

**Their fantastic efforts in raising funds and awareness for Suicide or Survive saw them nominated for the Young Person's Award at the People of the Year Awards.**

Juliana and Laura encourage everybody who wants to know more about Suicide or Survive to contact the charity through Facebook, through their website [www.suicideorsurvive.ie](http://www.suicideorsurvive.ie) or by phone at 1890 577 577.

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# THREE COUNTY FINAL TITLES IN ONE WEEK FOR CREAGH N.S.

Creagh NS will go into the Christmas Holidays reflecting fondly on their sporting achievements for 2017. Having won three County final titles in just one week in 2017, the school will be looking to continue their form when games return in the New Year.

## GALWAY CO. FINAL VICTORY FOR HURLING TEAM

The historic week was kick-started by the school's hurlers who won the 13-a-side county final. The team produced a string of fantastic performances to defeat Gaelscoil Riada, Athenry BNS, and Claregalway NS to cement their place in the final.

Creagh faced Tynagh/Killeen in Loughgeorge for the final. The Ballinasloe school took a slender lead into half time, despite playing without their injured captain, Shane Fitzpatrick. Creagh went on to take control of the game, but Tynagh/Killeen clawed their way back to set up a dramatic closing. After coming inches away from victory in 2016, the Sucksiders showed their character to hold out and claim their victory by a score of 2-9 to 2-6.

"It's a thoroughly deserved victory" commented coach Eric Ward, "They're a group of talented players and I'm sure they will go on to experience more success with their clubs and hopefully in county colours in the future."



Galway County Final winners from Creagh NS with their teachers and coaches Mr. Eric Ward and Mr. Liam Geraghty.

## ROSCOMMON CO. FINAL TROPHY FOR FOOTBALL TEAM

Next up was the boys' football team that won the Roscommon Top Schools football final for the first time in nine years. The team defeated St Joseph's Boys' NS Boyle in Ballyleague, one year after Creagh lost against them in 2016 final. They easily dispatched Ballybay NS in the semi-finals to face St. Joseph's for an incredible third time in the campaign. The final was very evenly matched, with both sides enjoying spells of dominance. Shane Fitzpatrick, Creagh's captain, took the game by the scruff of the neck and dragged the team back into contention after falling to a few early scores. A very mature second half display by Creagh saw them

secure victory. The trophy was finally lifted by joint-captain Joey Tierney. "We had some real heroes in the final" commented coach Mark Ronaldson, "Jason Cunningham and Ciaran Clark were fantastic in front of goal, Charlie Naughton was solid in fullback and Diarmuid McDonagh was excellent in goal."



Roscommon County Final Winners from Creagh NS with their teacher and coach Mr. Mark Ronaldson

## GALWAY CO. FINAL SUCCESS FOR CAMOGIE TEAM

The Camogie County Final took place in Loughgeorge to top off Creagh's fantastic week, and the girls were determined to match the boys' teams in victory. The team met Gaelscoil Dara, Renmore in the final where the Creagh side, composed of girls from 3rd to 6th class, saw their valiant efforts pay off. "The girls showed determination, dedication and perseverance" said coach Ria Curtin, "they really played as a team." Team captain Shaunah Mitchell kept her teammates believing and fighting, helping them rise to the challenge. Aoibheann Fitzpatrick and Ava McKeon both picked up injuries during the game but didn't give up on playing. "To win the county final is a huge achievement for us," declared coach Claire Kelly, "it's actually the first time that our school was won it. All the players should be extremely proud and I have no doubt that they'll continue to achieve great things in the future."



Galway County Final Winners from Creagh NS with their teachers and coaches Ms. Ria Curtin and Ms. Claire Kelly



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# OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



**Ballinasloe Town Twinning Three Fairs Gathering, Shearwater Hotel**  
L-r: Cllr. Aiden Donohue (Chairman Ballinasloe Municipal Council), Mary Phelan (Secretary Fair & Festival), Eileen Mannion (Mayor Galway County), Kim Connaughton (Queen of the Fair) and Mike Kelly (Chairman Ballinasloe Twinning Committee).



**Ballinasloe Town Twinning Three Fairs Gathering, Shearwater Hotel**  
L-r: Marie Annick Cebon (Chalonnnes Sur Loire), Catherine Gagneux (Consul to the French Ambassador), Breda Mulrennan (Galway County Council). Back: Cllr. Mike Finnerty, Cllr. Michael Connolly, Alan Farrell (Galway County Council), Pierre Aballard (Chalonnnes Sur Loire) and Cllr. Donal Burke.



Minister Denis Naughten and Minister Heather Humphries were at Moore Community Hall to celebrate the success of the Red Grouse Project. The project focused on the conservation of red grouse, a game-bird found in Ballydangan Bog. The bog was successfully re-drained as part of the project. Paraic Duff (Moore Community Group) and Pat Feehily (Roscommon Gun Club) addressed the crowd explaining the project which was run with Bord na Mona.



**Ballinasloe Golf Club Presidents Prize Presentation**  
L-r: William Duthie President, Muriel Duthie, P. J. Carty (Overall Winner), Olivia Walsh (Best Lady), Dermot Salmon (Sponsor).



Members of the Artlink Collective Group at the opening of their exhibition in the Library: Catherine Patrickson, Rosemarie Langtry, Jackie Eastwood, Tom Finn, Ness Porter Kelly, Noreen O'Sullivan, Catherine Kelly Desmond, Anne Towers and Lucy Kelly Desmond.



Winners of the Ballinasloe Golf Club Wizards and Witches Golf Classic, sponsored by Dubarry. L-R: Mike Dowd, Barry O'Keefe, Brian Geraghty (Dubarry), Tony Dolphin, Iggy Colohan and Breege Dooley.



Some of the 28 artists that took part in the Happy Faces from Different Places event with Lily Kelly Art Studios.  
Left to Right: Ben, Ellen, Ellen, Lily, Sean, Nuala, Brian, Fatima, Mary, Rosemary, Emel and Nuala.



Ballinasloe Tennis Club Fundraising Stall at the October Fair selling cakes, sweets, snack, drinks and toys, manned by junior members Joy Enubele, Evelina and Fiona Zancanaro, Roisin Finn.



# DECEMBER EVENTS GUIDE

<b>Friday 1st</b>			<b>Monday 11th</b>			<b>Friday 22nd</b>		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm	Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm	B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm
Lw'town NS' Magic Woman'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Irish Rural Link Computer	B'sloe Library	7pm-9pm	Rudolph Saves Xmas	Town Hall Theatre	5pm
Fundraiser Table Quiz	Rugby Club House	8pm	Panto 'Sleeping Beauty'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Tommy Tiernan	Shearwater Hotel	8pm
Michael Regan	Shearwater	9pm	Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm	The Legend of Luke Kelly	Lukers of S'Bridge	8pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm	<b>Tuesday 12th</b>			Happy Bar Stars	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm	Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Toxic Twins	Maud Millars	10pm	Gables Art Group	Church Gallery	Last Day	Anchormen	Maud Millars	10pm
Evan Blake	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	Age Action Computer Class	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm	Hickory Wind	The Pillar House	10pm
The Heads	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm	Winter Festive Art Exh	Church Gallery	11.30- 12.30	TradStone	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm	Age Action Computer Class	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm	Ken Solo	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
<b>Saturday 2nd</b>			A' Retirement Book Club	B'sloe Library	4pm-5pm	<b>Saturday 23rd</b>		
Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm	Bag Pack East Gal Cancer	Tesco Supermarket	First Day
Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Winter Festive Art Exh	Church Gallery	6pm-7pm	Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Church Gate Collection	St. Vincent de Paul	6-8pm	Panto 'Sleeping Beauty'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Mullagh GAA Stars	Gullanes Hotel	7pm	Grow	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm	Country Market Xmas	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm
Joe Hession	Shearwater	9pm	GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm	Bagatelle Live Room	Lukers of S'Bridge	9pm
Paul Casey	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm	Tea Xmas Dinner Dance	Gullanes Hotel	9pm	Crossfire	Maud Millars	10pm
The Goodlife	Maud Millars	10pm	<b>Wednesday 13th</b>			DJ Johnny F	Downey's Bar	10pm
Kora	Downey's Bar	10pm	Cuidu Support Group	B'sloe Library	10am-12	Eoin Maher	An Tain	10pm
Martin Cunninham	An Tain	10pm	Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm	Live DJ Upstairs	An Tain	10pm
Live DJ Upstairs	An Tain	10pm	Nativity Concert BOC	Church Gallery	12.45pm	Coyle Family	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
BoJangle	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm	Age Action Computer Class	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm	Skillet Pot	The Pillar House	10pm
Take Time	The Pillar House	10pm	Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm	The Legends	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Night Owls	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	Panto 'Sleeping Beauty'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm	B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm	Hoppy Bar Stars	Lukers of S'Bridge	10.30pm
Gaegan Pagan's	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	<b>Thursday 14th</b>			The Livewires	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
<b>Sunday 3rd</b>			Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am	<b>Sunday 24th</b>		
Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Panto 'Sleeping Beauty'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Bag Pack East Gal Cancer	Tesco Supermarket	Last Day
Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Rachel Goode & C Concert	Church Gallery	7.30pm	St. Michael's Folk Choir	Outside Gullanes	1pm-5pm
Toy Drop of Event	B'sloe Cycling Club	All Day	Singer's Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm	Pillar House Trad	The Pillar House	6pm
Church Gate Collection	St. Vincent de Paul	10am-12	Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	10pm	Children's Mass	St. Michael's Church	6.30pm
Pillar House Trad	The Pillar House	6pm	Shane Moore	Downey's Bar	10pm	Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm	<b>Friday 15th</b>			Live Music	Maud Millars	8pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm	B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm	Trad Session	Lukers of S'Bridge	9.30pm
The Nudie Suits	Maud Millars	8pm	Panto 'Sleeping Beauty'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Christmas Eve Mass	Creagh Church	10pm
Mike Denver	Shearwater Hotel	8pm	John Molloy	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm	Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Mike Denver	Shearwater Hotel	8pm	Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm	The Blaggards	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Ken Solo	Auld Sod Bar	9.30pm	Live Music	Maud Millars	10pm	Midnight Mass	St. Michael's Church	12am
DJ Johnny Finnerty	Downey's Bar	10pm	Utan Conlon	The Pillar House	10pm	<b>Monday 25th</b>		
<b>Monday 4th</b>			Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	Christmas Day Mass	St. Michael's Church	9am
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm	Dollar Daly	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Christmas Day Mass	Portunacula Chapel	9.15am
Irish Rural Link Computer	B'sloe Library	7-9pm	<b>Saturday 16th</b>			Christmas Day Mass	Creagh Church	10.30am
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm	Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Christmas Day Mass	St. Michael's Church	11am
<b>Tuesday 5th</b>			Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Christmas Day Mass	St. Michael's Church	12.15pm
Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm	<b>Tuesday 26th</b>		
Age Action Computer Class	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm	Town Band, EG & M choir	Church Gallery	12.30pm	Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Age Action Computer Class	B'sloe Library	2-4pm	Sleeping Beauty Matinee	Town Hall Theatre	2.30pm	Sean O'Flynn Cup	Rugby Club	2pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm	Church Gate Collection	The Lions Club	6pm-8pm	Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm
Grow	B'sloe Library	6-8pm	Panto 'Sleeping Beauty'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Plearaca	The Pillar House	7pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm	Ken	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm	GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm	The Dean Live Room	Lukers of S'Bridge	9pm	Live Music	Shearwater Hotel	8pm
<b>Wednesday 6th</b>			The High Reel	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm	Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm	The Fanzines	Maud Millars	10pm	DJ	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm	Desi Egan	Downey's Bar	10pm	DJ Fergal Darcy Today FM	An Tain	10pm
B. Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm	Simon Brody	An Tain	10pm	The Chillibillies	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
<b>Thursday 7th</b>			Maggie Dunne	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm	Pacifica	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Christmas Craft Sale	S Service Day Centre	10am-3pm	Joe Wynne	The Pillar House	10pm	DJ John Finnerty	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am	No Bodder	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	<b>Wednesday 27th</b>		
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	10pm	Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm	Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
John Molloy	Downey's Bar	10pm	The Hush	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	B. Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
<b>Friday 8th</b>			<b>Sunday 17th</b>			The Nudie Suits	Maud Millars	10pm
Gables Art Group Exh	Church Gallery	Last Day	Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	The Humble Superstars	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30	Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	<b>Thursday 28th</b>		
Sale of Work B's of Charity	BOC, Deerpark Centre	10am-1pm	Church Gate Collection	The Lions Club	10am-12pm	Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Ger Long	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm	Pillar House Trad	The Pillar House	6pm	Toxic Twins	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm	Panto 'Sleeping Beauty'	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm	Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	10pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm	Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm	Small Deal	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Beggars Velvet	Maud Millars	10pm	The NoShow Band	Maud Millars	8pm	Christmas Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Toxic Twins	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm	Patrick Feeney	Shearwater Hotel	8pm	<b>Friday 29th</b>		
Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	Colin Galligan	Downey's Bar	10pm	B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Pub Fiction	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	GAA Race Night	The Pillar House	8pm
<b>Saturday 9th</b>			<b>Monday 18th</b>			Amy Brennan	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm	Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Irish Rural Link Computer	B'sloe Library	7pm-9pm	The Goodlife	Maud Millars	10pm
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm	Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm	Treblemakers	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Macey South Live Room	Lukers of S'Bridge	8pm	<b>Tuesday 19th</b>			The Humble Superstars	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Red O'Neill	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm	Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	<b>Saturday 30th</b>		
Red Tape	Maud Millars	10pm	Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm	Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm	Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-5pm	Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
James McKeivily	An Tain	10pm	Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm	The High Reel	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Eric Nugent	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm	Grow	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm	Utan Conlon	The Pillar House	10pm
M. Keane & C. Naughton	The Pillar House	10pm	GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm	Red Tape	Maud Millars	10pm
The Crime	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm	Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm	<b>Wednesday 20th</b>			Eoin Maher	An Tain	10pm
The Heads	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm	Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm	Treblemakers	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Too Tall Paul	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Age Active Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm	Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm
<b>Sunday 10th</b>			Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm	Live Music	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm
Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	Night before Christmas	Town Hall Theatre	8pm	Jiggers of Firm	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day	B. Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm	<b>Sunday 31st</b>		
Charity Trad Evening	The Pillar House	6pm	<b>Thursday 21st</b>			Ladies Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm	Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am	Men's Competition	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Loose Rooster	Maud Millars	8pm	Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	10pm	Pillar House Trad	The Pillar House	6pm
Michael English	Shearwater Hotel	8pm	Colm Bourke	Downey's Bar	10pm	Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm
Night Owls	Downey's Bar	10pm	Take 2	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Live Music	Maud Millars	8pm
Liam's Country Road S	Auld Sod Bar	10pm	<b>Friday 22nd</b>			Road Runners	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm



# JANUARY EVENTS GUIDE

<b>Monday 1st</b>		
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Abbey Folk	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
<b>Tuesday 2nd</b>		
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9.30pm
<b>Wednesday 3rd</b>		
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkeny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
<b>Thursday 4th</b>		
Giorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Mike Denver	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Social Dancing	Downey's	10pm
<b>Friday 5th</b>		
Winter Festive Art	Church Gallery	Last Day
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm
Ken	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Small Ideas	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
<b>Saturday 6th</b>		
The High Reel	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Olivia Douglas	Downey's Bar	10pm
AN Other	An Tain	10pm
Maggie Dunne	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Finnegan's Fury	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Live Music	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm
Sum Craic	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
<b>Sunday 7th</b>		
Pillar House Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm
Colm Bourke	Downey's Bar	10pm
Ken Solo	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
<b>Monday 8th</b>		
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Irish Rural Link Computer	B'sloe Library	7pm-9pm
<b>Tuesday 9th</b>		
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement Bk Club	B'sloe Library	4pm-5pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm
Grow	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9.30pm
<b>Wednesday 10th</b>		
Cuidu Support Group	B'sloe Library	10am-12pm
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkeny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
<b>Thursday 11th</b>		
Giorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	10pm

<b>Friday 12th</b>		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm
John Molloy	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
<b>Saturday 13th</b>		
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm
Red O'Neill	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Lorcan	An Tain	10pm
Bojangle	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Nightowls	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Live Music	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm
Take 2	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
<b>Sunday 14th</b>		
Pillar House Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm
Live Music	Downey's Bar	9pm
Shane Moore	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
<b>Monday 15th</b>		
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Irish Rural Link Computer	B'sloe Library	7pm-9pm
<b>Tuesday 16th</b>		
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-5pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm
Grow	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9.30pm
<b>Wednesday 17th</b>		
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkeny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
<b>Thursday 18th</b>		
Giorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	10pm
<b>Friday 19th</b>		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm
Live Line	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
<b>Saturday 20th</b>		
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm
Amy Brennan	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm
James Dillon	An Tain	10pm
Live Music	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Streetwise	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Live Music	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm
Bothareen	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
<b>Sunday 21st</b>		
Pillar House Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm
Live Music	Downey's Bar	9pm
Live Music	Auld Sod Bar	10pm

<b>Monday 22nd</b>		
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Irish Rural Link Computer	B'sloe Library	7pm-9pm
<b>Tuesday 23rd</b>		
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm
Grow	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9.30pm
<b>Wednesday 24th</b>		
Cuidu Support Group	B'sloe Library	10am-12pm
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkeny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
<b>Thursday 25th</b>		
Giorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Book Club	B'sloe Library	7pm-8pm
The Three Amigo's	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	10pm
<b>Friday 26th</b>		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am-1.30pm
Steve & Friends	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Pub Fiction	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
<b>Saturday 27th</b>		
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm
Road Runners	Canal Bar Shearwater	9pm
Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm
The Wolf	An Tain	10pm
Jock & Davy	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Laker	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
Live Music	Lukers of S'Bridge	10pm
The Livewires	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
<b>Sunday 28th</b>		
Pillar House Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7.30pm
Live Music	Downey's Bar	9pm
Emerald Dave	Auld Sod Bar	10pm
<b>Monday 29th</b>		
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Irish Rural Link Computer	B'sloe Library	7pm-9pm
<b>Tuesday 30th</b>		
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30pm
Sudanese Art Launch	Church Gallery	6pm
Grow	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9.30pm
<b>Wednesday 31st</b>		
Age Action Computer	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkeny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm

## MUMMERS CELEBRATING 40 YEARS



*The Corofin Wren Boys,  
former Champions at the Festival.*

The annual Mummers Festival in New Inn is celebrating its 40th birthday in January. It will be staged in the Leisure Centre the night of the 6th and the afternoon of the 7th.

For the first 10 years, the Mummers Festival was staged in the Ballroom of Ward's in Ballyfa, before moving to the Leisure Centre in 1987.

The festival begins on Saturday night at 7:30pm. Senior Groups will perform for 30 minutes, with a variety of music, song, dance and story-telling. The winning group will receive the Peter Donohue Perpetual Trophy.

On the Sunday afternoon from 2:30pm, the Junior Competitors will showcase their talents. Their show will run for 20 minutes, and young talents throughout the region are encouraged to get involved.

One of the West's longest successful running community festivals, it generates funding for Community Projects in New Inn, as well as helping local and national charities.

Anybody interested in entering the festival should contact Michael Finnerty at 087 382 8281 as soon as possible to confirm their spot in what promises to be another enjoyable event.

**Sun 26th – Annual Festive Gathering in St Michael's Square**

Christmas Craft Fair - Emerald Ballroom 11am-5pm.  
Music in Square 5pm-7pm. Lighting up the Taller Central European Tree, with servings of Mulled Wine. Street performers, face-painters, Christmas carols and much more. Fun for all the family!

*A very happy  
Christmas to all our  
readers, and a peaceful  
and prosperous  
New Year.*

To advertise your events here contact: [ballinasloelife@hotmail.com](mailto:ballinasloelife@hotmail.com) or Call 090 964 5831 by January 17th.



# OUT AND ABOUT CELEBRATIONS

## BALLINASLOE R.F.C. CONNACHT SENIOR CUP WINNERS 1992 TEAM REUNION



**THE TEAM ON THE DAY**

Front row, l-r: G. Gibbons, M. Lyons, N. Reynolds, K. Tierney, C. Ryan, M Devine, E. Geraghty.  
Back row, l-r: D. Feeney, P. Flynn, B. Reynolds, D. Tierney, S. Reynolds, M. Duignan, J. Dillon (R.I.P.), Pat Finn. Mascot Cormac Devine (R.I.P.).



**THE TEAM PANEL REUNITED IN THE CLUBHOUSE**

Front row, l-r: Sean Brooks, Godfrey Gibbons, Michael Lyons, Kevin Tierney, Tom Purcell, Mike Devine, Kevin O'Flynn, Kieran Egan.  
Middle row, l-r: Pat Finn, Damian Feeney, John Hegarty, Sean Reynolds, Pat Flynn, Gavin Kelly, Dermot Tierney, Declan Finn, Raymond Gibbons, Eddie Walsh.  
Back row, l-r: Brendan Reynolds, Enda Geraghty, Cathal Ryan, Michel Georges, Niall Grenham, Liam Feehily, Charlie Couper.



**Former Ballinasloe Senior Cup Captains**  
Aidan O'Carroll ('57-'59)  
& Billy O'Carroll ('54-'55).



**Long Serving Club Members Tom Purcell**  
(above) and Sean Brooks (below) were  
presented with "Appreciation Awards" for  
their many years dedicated service to the club  
by Tom Horkan, President.



**Maria Colohan of**  
Ervillagh, Ahascragh,  
Ballinasloe, who  
received an award from  
Ms Patricia Kilgallon,  
Principal of Ardscoil  
Mhuire, to acknowledge  
her outstanding  
achievement in the Junior  
Certificate.



**Frank Kennedy and family on graduating from DCU recently**  
with a first class honours MSC. in Psychotherapy.



**Congratulations to**  
Ms. Tara Flynn,  
Paul Flynn  
Construction Ltd.  
who was elected  
Chairperson of the  
CIF Galway branch  
at Monday evenings  
AGM.



**David Egan has recently won the Stobart Apprentice Jockeys'**  
Championship. Pictured with his Dad John and grandad Kieran  
Egan of Birchgrove – a local noted horse enthusiast and breeder.



# GIVE A LITTLE – IT WILL HELP A LOT



BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

As we enter the festive season, it's important to remember that it's also the "Season of Giving" and there are plenty of deserving causes to support locally.

**Ballinasloe Social Services** host their annual Christmas Sale on Thursday, 7th Dec. at their Day Centre in Brackernagh. There will be no shortage of homemade treats and Christmas crafts for you to enjoy.

**The Brothers of Charity Rainbow Services, Deerpark,** stage their annual Sale of Work in the Deerpark Centre on Friday, 8th December, between 10am and 1pm. Boundless supplies of Christmas cakes and homemade goodies along with other trinkets and items will be on sale.

**East Galway Cancer Support** will be running a bag-packing fundraiser at Tesco on the 23rd and 24th of December. Volunteers at the check-outs will offer their assistance with packing your groceries, so be sure to thank them with a donation.

**The Lions Club** are running their annual Christmas Food Appeal for families in need. Last year, they distributed 120 food hampers. The collection points for the food appeal will be at local supermarkets and local schools. If you would like to help out, contact Noel Lohan, Secretary at 087 411 4805. The Lions Club will also be running a church gate collection on the weekend before Christmas – Saturday the 18th and Sunday the 19th.

**The Ballinasloe Shoe-Box Appeal** is collecting clothes, shoes, toiletries and non-perishable foods over the festive period. All shoe-box collections will be donated to the Simon Community and the Children's Therapeutic Project in Ballinasloe. Shoe-boxes can be dropped in to Gerry Stronge Photography on Main Street. You can read more on their Facebook, Ballinasloe Shoe-box Appeal.

**St. Michael's Folk Choir** are Carol Singing on Christmas Eve. The choir will be singing Christmas carols outside Gullane's Hotel from 1pm-5pm. There will be collection points all over town, with all proceeds going to the Ballinasloe Social Services and the Samaritans.

**St. Vincent De Paul's Christmas Appeal** will be raised by collections outside St Michael's Church and Creagh Church on the 2nd and 3rd of December. The

SVP Annual Toy Appeal is taking place for the month also, so you can donate any toys into the store on Jubilee St. The deadline to apply for Christmas help is 8th December. This help includes food vouchers, fuel and education assistance.

**Ballinasloe Cycling Club** are organising a Toy Drop event on 3rd Dec. They are accepting donations of €5, €10 or a toy. The group will enjoy a 50km cycle in the morning before a Christmas party breakfast in Gibbons'. All proceeds and donations are going to St. Therese's Children's Ward in Portiuncula. Cyclists must wear red for the day.

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## HEALY'S PHARMACY



Society St., Ballinasloe. Tel/Fax 090 9642252

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY ON FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER

**20% DISCOUNT**  
on jewellery and  
Brooke & Shoals  
candles

**15% DISCOUNT**  
on all Christmas  
stock and  
fragrances

**15% DISCOUNT**  
on Declare, Nuxe,  
Rimmel and  
Isa Dora Skin Care  
and Cosmetics

Declare skincare consultant  
in store for mini facials  
and professional skincare  
advice, please phone for  
appointment

*All customers entered in free draw for a wide selection of great prizes*

**Open 9.15am to 6pm through lunchtime. Tel/fax 090 9642252**

# CHRISTMAS JUMPERS DAY TO HELP HOMELESS

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



Staff: Carmel Dillon, Orla Burke, Geraldine Clarke, Geraldine Deane.

Children: Annie Donoghue, Emma Campbell, Zack McDonagh.



Students at Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh will take part in the fundraiser.



Occupants of the Enterprise Centre supporting the campaign.

## A number of businesses and shops have pledged their support for a Christmas Jumper Fundraiser Day in support of those experiencing homelessness.

Ballinasloe local, Geraldine Deane, came up with the idea to get schools involved in a Christmas Jumper Day initiative for Galway Simon's Bridge Resource Centre in town. She has secured the participation of 27 schools and preschools. The transition year students in Garbally College, Ard Scoil Mhuire and St. Cuan's are incorporating the Christmas Jumper Day as part of their projects towards their Gaisce, President's Awards.

After the positive response from schools, Geraldine extended the invitation to businesses in the area. Local businesses such as Dubarry, AIB, Bank of Ireland, the Credit Union, KPW Design & Print, Surmodics, Parkmore Electric, Moycarn Lodge, Tesco, Supervalu, Costcutters, ADGER, J&S Photos, Coral Leisure, Keller Travel and Salmons are just some of the names getting involved.

Galway Simon hope that the 15th of December sees everyone in town wear a Christmas jumper in their workplace or school.

Aaron Turner, Galway Simon staff, will be delivering a talk to students in each of the schools involved in the fundraiser. The charity's schools' programme introduces students to the causes and the realities of homelessness, creates awareness of the work they do in the community and also encourages students to become advocates by spreading awareness about the issue of homelessness.

Everyone is invited to wear a Christmas jumper or hat and make a donation in support of people experiencing homelessness. All money raised in the Ballinasloe area from this fundraiser will go locally to Galway

Simon's Bridge Resource Centre.

Galway Simon Community provide support and accommodation services to those who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Galway City and County. So far this year their Bridge Resource Centre on Bridge St, Ballinasloe has worked with 179 households including 59 families and approximately 147 children. The centre also provides showering facilities, wash/dry clothes facilities, food packages, social supports, advocacy and advice to those who need it.

Aisling Higgins from the Bridge Resource Centre has thanked everybody who has offered their support and donations to the centre. "Without the support from all the local community in Ballinasloe during the Christmas jumper day, we would struggle to meet the needs of the clients who present for this service on a daily basis."

Ann Conlon and the staff of Crumb and Cream are taking an extra step to the fundraiser and hosting a coffee morning from 10am-12.30pm in conjunction with the jumper day. All proceeds will go to Galway Simon.

"The students and staff of Garbally College are looking forward to our fundraiser on December 15th" commented Grainne Lally, a teacher at the school, "it is fitting that we as a school community support them in their work."

To join in on the fundraiser, simply wear a Christmas jumper wherever you are on December 15th and give a few euro to the Simon's Bridge Resource Centre.

For more information about the fundraiser or getting involved with Galway Simon, you can contact geraldinedeane3@gmail.com



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# NEW PREMISES FOR THE FOROIGE CLUB

BY STEPHEN  
COLEMAN



Having recently moved into a new premises, the Foróige Club is excited to build on their successful first year in operation. The club was founded in August 2016

by Karen Campbell, David Bailie, Caroline Higgins, Joe Johnston and Breanna Viles. "Our desire was to reach the youth in Ballinasloe, to get them involved with our different activities," explained Karen, the current Chairperson.

Ballinasloe's Foróige is a part of the leading youth organisation in Ireland, founded in 1952. There are over 600 clubs nationwide, relying on over 5,500 adult volunteers. The purpose of the clubs is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their development and in the development of society. "I love being able to chill out in a warm room and have fun with my friends," commented one member of the Foróige club, "it's a great chance to get to meet new people."

Now based in the GELS centre in Cullens' Yard off Main St., the club meet on a weekly basis to play games and to work on different programmes. "We've run programmes on mental health, internet safety and bullying," Karen added. As is too often the case, however, the group has struggled with funding. "Our biggest struggle has definitely been finances" Karen reflected, "starting off, we had no finances to buy equipment or to make an established start. We had to build everything up."

A key aspect to the group is that the teens should take the initiative and make the club their own. "Our members are really realising now that this club can be whatever they want it to be. If it helps them see the

importance of community and co-operation, then we're happy to help them work out their ideas. It's exciting to witness" Karen commented.

Over the last year, the group has had 30 members coming to their premises to meet on a weekly basis, primarily from the town and Creagh. The club also got to work with the GAA Club, as they hosted their meetings last year. Currently, David Bailie and Breanna Viles join Karen Campbell to make up the core committee of the club, holding the positions of treasurer and secretary, respectively.

The club is looking forward to attracting new members between the age of 10 and 18 for the upcoming year, as well as catching up with the existing members. Members will get to enjoy the various events planned out for the year. "We'll be taking part in some soccer tournaments, drama productions, table quizzes, discos, and the most important highlight of the club year, the HYPE one-day Festival in Longford" Karen added.

The club meets every Friday from 7pm-8.30pm in the GELS centre in town. If you're interested in joining the club or looking to volunteer, you can contact Chairperson Karen Campbell at 087 764 8587.



The Foróige Club now meet in the GELS Centre.

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# OUR DUGGAN PARK-NEGLECTED SPORTS FACILITY

Ballinasloe Municipal District Council's Cathaoirleach, Aidan Donohue, has raised the dilapidated state of Duggan Park GAA ground at recent meetings, resulting in the Council formally passing a motion to write to the Galway County Board and Croke Park over the future of Duggan Park. Acknowledged as one of the finest playing surfaces in the country, the pitch has been bereft of inter-county and Railway Cup games for several years now.

In 2014, flood-lights were installed at the grounds for a cost of around €350,000, of which the Town Council provided €100,000. It was understood that the grounds would be further developed. At the time, the County Board committed themselves to "a continuous and graduated agreed investment programme in the grounds to restore them to the highest standards".

Aidan Donohue has remarked that Duggan Park now looks "like a bomb hit it", particularly due to the removal of most of the terracing.

"We expected to have terracing on both sides of the pitch, but it's all dug up now and hasn't been replaced, so the capacity has been greatly reduced " commented Cllr Donohue, a former Sarsfields senior hurler.



The digging-up of the terrace has left the pitch-side mucky and unusable.

"Was an actual plan ever drawn up? We know what the development was supposed to include-a new stand and terracing, dressing rooms, new toilets, new turnstiles, a boundary fence between the park and the showgrounds-but I never saw an actual plan" states Aidan.

Of all the grant aiding decisions of the outgoing Town Council-the decision to fund was the only one put to a vote demanded by Cllr Michael Breathnach and supported by Cllr. Gerry Broderick. "With all the applications we had at the time it appear to sidestep all the rules, the beneficiary organisation was not in town, the balancing promoters funds were in doubt and there was no planning permission at the time of the application for the lights or development-which had to be in place for all the other applications under the scheme" states Michael Breathnach, owner of the Oat Gallery Bookstore.

With work on the ground now at a complete standstill, the Galway Board have denied applying for funding to develop Duggan Park after the floodlights were installed. Galway Board vice-chairman Kenneth Fox has explained the situation as solely being due to a lack of funds. "The re-development is a problem, of course. Three and a half years

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<p>Dáil Éireann, Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 <b>Tel:</b> 01-6183056 <b>Email:</b> eugene.murphy@oireachtas.ie</p>	<p>The Square Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon <b>Tel:</b> 090-6625722</p>

**Please ring Constituency Office in advance to make appointment**



# OR JEWEL IN THE CROWN?

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



have gone by since the floodlights but the finances just haven't been available" Fox commented. "Due to debt commitments related to other infrastructure, we're very restricted on extra-borrowing."

**Issues with competition exist also, with Kenny Park, Pearse Stadium and Tuam's Stadium all requiring further development also.**

"Local fundraising is a big part of getting these projects to work. Tuam's committee has raised 50% of the funding required for some of their projects, but they still need more. They don't have four dressing rooms, which is needed now in the game for double-header matches, or ladies' games and men's games," Fox noted. Pearse Stadium was marked for investment with floodlights – which would make it the second Galway Board stadium with floodlights, after Ballinasloe.

**"Big projects are hard to get funded," Fox explained. "Pearse Stadium, due to its commitment with league and championship fixtures means any games with crowds of 10,000 or more in the region are designated to Pearse, the others aren't graded for it."**

"There's great potential for Duggan Park, it's a great central location and attractive for north-south fixtures and provincial fixtures. It has lots going for it," Fox admitted. "The Duggan Park Committee put in a master plan a few years ago. A big piece is to redevelop the terrace on the Sarsfield Road side. It's a finance dependent time-scale."

**When Croke Park was contacted about Duggan Park and Galway Board's funding, they refused to comment and instead redirected to the Galway Board. Whether they choose to respond to Cllr Donohue's letter remains to be seen.**

As of right now, the grounds are only used for smaller Championship games due to the restricted capacity. "It's the only County Grounds with floodlights. I don't see why we're not hosting County League games, which are all in Pearse Stadium. Evening fixtures would suit Ballinasloe so well, especially at this time of the year" said the former hurler Cllr O Donaghue.

**Cllr Michael Connolly has bemoaned the prioritising of Pearse Stadium, complaining that returning home from the stadium results in hours of traffic. "We have neglected these two top venues in Tuam and Ballinasloe for far too long" he stated.**

Duggan Park Committee Chairman Christy Browne says that in 2014, the committee put forward a plan for the grounds. "Priority 1 jobs that needed to be done, including removing old concrete dug-outs and uprooting the concrete seats in the ground. Health and safety was a major concern with us" Christy commented. Continuing, he said "Further

planning, after the floodlights, was sought and permission was granted, but it was halted due to economic issues, so we've had to work with what we have."

**The committee has continued to fundraise, raising between €12,000 and €15,000 each year for the upkeep and small projects. "In an ideal world, we'd love to see a 10,000 capacity ground capable of hosting any game" Christy concluded.**



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*Fair & Festival Committee*

*Back row, l-r: Adrian Ahern, Kieran Eagn, Kevin Murray, Festival Queen Kim Connaughton, Thomas Gullane, Frank Kelly, Niall Clarke, Mal Croffey. Front Row, l-r: Ciara Croffey, Mary Phelan, Kathleen Croffey, Sinead Manning.*



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Adrian Ahern, Mal Croffey.




Kevin Cuniffe talking to  
Phelim Cotton ahead of his  
tractor run in Ballinasloe.



Maeve Carty, Mary Phelan, Sinead Manning, 2016 Queen Shauna Finnerty, Ciara Croffey, Rose Kelly, Jennifer Gilson.

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# COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNICATING

BY MAUREEN CAHALAN

Ophelia and then Brian! Now, we await three or four dry days to allow us time to clean driveways and gather leaves. By the time we get that done and the windows cleaned, we will be moving into the Christmas Season where we greet each other in a positive way.

We also remember those who are gone to their God since last Christmas, and we think of those who are bereaved also. Maybe we will say a prayer for them, or light a little candle. Festive seasons have lovely traditions of gift-giving and exchanges of good wishes, but there can always be an underlying sadness for many of us during such times. Such is life!

There is an old saying-"dream it and you will achieve it." Well, for 2018, my dream for the community of Ballinasloe town and surrounding villages is for us to come together and chat, and support each other in growing our town. There is much reason for renewed hope. Just think back to the wonderful 'Enterprise Weekend' organised by the Bank of Ireland recently. At least 50% more businesses could have participated had the location been larger. The event fascinated so many attendees who never knew what was under our feet locally.

2018 must be the year for us to unite and come together in numbers (and not just five or six people behind closed doors). We now have the location, and we have lined-up motivational speakers and advisors to point us in the right direction so as to grow our town. It is imperative we compete better by working together.

We could work to attract one new big industry, or several more small ones, into our community so that we can build a future for our children, grand-children, and especially those who have had to leave our area but wish to come back and rear their families. What legacy do you wish to leave in your community? I hope it is a positive one and that your footprints will remain when you are long gone.

It is over a quarter of a century since we lost a number of factories, a hospital and two Nursing training colleges. However, together we can achieve so much, so let your New Year's resolution be that you will unite with all the businesses in the area and we can collectively work to get major industry back into the Ballinasloe region. We have so much to offer.

So as Patrick Kavanagh said in one of his poems:

*"To all my journal friends and others  
Who're bound by ties as strong as tethers  
A happy Christmas sisters, brothers & all"*

Advt.





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# BERNIE IS AN UNSUNG HERO

BY KEN KELLY



An employee of Portiuncula Hospital in Ballinasloe, for almost forty years, has won the Unsung Hero title in the Staff Recognition Awards by Saolta, open to the Western Region. The coveted award recognises Leadership and Innovation in the Healthcare Sector for the entire West of Ireland.

Bernie McGuire from Poolboy, Ballinasloe started working in Portiuncula in 1978 where she was mostly to be seen and heard in the reception booth. Always courteous and obliging, Bernie was nominated for the Unsung Hero award by Hospital employees Karen Hurley, Fr. Bernie Costello (Chaplain) and Niamh Brennan. Bernie was one of three nominations and came out on top, accepting her plaque and certificate

from RTE's Maura Derrane, at a function in the Ardilaun Hotel, Galway.

A delighted Bernie said this award resulted from the great staff that worked as a team in the Hospital reception over the years. "They were a great bunch to work with and I doubt if I could have won it without their contribution. It's also a great honour for Portiuncula and I am so proud to get it" she added.

The Hospital was also nominated in two other categories on the night. The Theatre Department was listed in the Quality Improvement section while the Life Facilitation was chosen in the Education Training list, where there were a total of seven awards presented on the night.

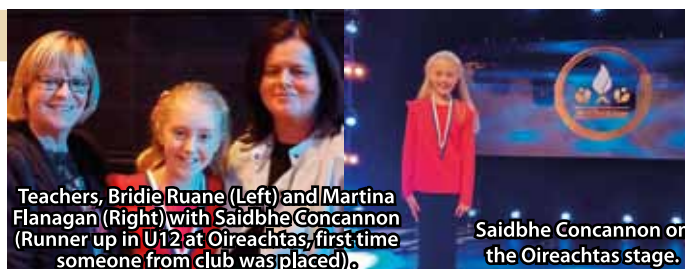
## SAIDBHE CONCANNON MEDAL WINNER AT OIREACHTAS NA SAMHNA

BY JACK DELANEY

Club Damhsa an Sean N6s, from Ballinasloe, recently took part in the Oireachtas na Samhna in Killarney and saw Saidbhe Concannon take home a silver medal. The dancing group who gather every week to learn and promote the traditional dance style, are tutored by Martina Flanagan and Bridie Ruane. Every year, they travel to the 4-day Oireachtas na Samha to showcase their talent and compete-their first venture was in 2013.

The club return each year with larger groups in tow. There were 11 Sean N6s dancers from Ballinasloe's group: Blanaid Fenton, Odharna Raftery, Lauren and Eva Ruane, Eabha, Roisin and Fiona McDonagh, Isabel Carrick, Katie Gibbons, Annie May Dolan and Saidbhe Concannon taking part this year.

250 dancers competed for a coveted place on the live finals show. "It can be a daunting experience for all ages because everyone's dance or style is unique. It's a solo act in front of a large in-house crowd and a live TV audience. You have a panel of judges and an array of lights and cameras. Your best friend is your musician beside you, the excellent box player, who you know you can rely on, because for these few minutes on stage, the dance and the music become one" explained Martina.



Four dancers from the club made it to the live finals which aired on TG4's Steip Beo. The highlight of the weekend came when Saidbhe Concannon was awarded second prize in the U-12 competition. Saidbhe now takes her place as one of the top two U-12 Sean N6s dancers of 2017. "It's a huge personal achievement for her. All her fellow club dancers and teachers are delighted for her," explained Bridie.

"From a small East Galway club we have shared the big stage of competitions and also the small corner sessions with the best Sean N6s dancers and musicians from all over the country. We all love the experience of the Oireachtas," concluded Martina.

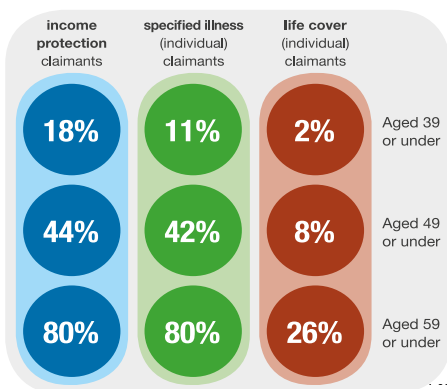
Martina and Bridie encourage anybody who is interested in joining the Club Damhsa to contact them on Facebook, or by calling 087 900 7036.



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Mike Woodsworth (Mechanic, TM UK),  
Dylan, Alan (father)



Dylan charging hard in Belgium.



Dylan flying high at Doon Motocross Park.

**Dylan Stynes from Ardarn, Creagh, Ballinasloe has recently competed in the Motocross Coupe de l'Avenir in Belgium. The final year Garbally College student, who lives with his parents, Alan and Brenda and his younger brothers, Adam and Evan, was chosen to ride for Team Ireland.**

The Coupe de l'Avenir is also known as the Under-21 Motocross of Nations and is a team event where the three best riders from each country race one another. Ireland brought three teams, one under-21 team, one 85cc class team and one 65cc class team, in total 9 Irish riders for the event. Team Ireland finished 9th overall, with Dylan putting in a great performance.

The season for 2017 has come to an end, though Dylan has wasted no time in returning to training. "My pre-season training has begun in November, so I have plenty of time to get myself into shape and to get my bike set up for the 2018 season which starts in March" Dylan stated.

He started his riding at just five years of age when his father got him a 50cc quad. "A few months later, I got my first race bike and I started racing just three months after" he explained, "now, 12 years later, I compete on a TM 250cc fuel Injected, four-stroke Italian motorcycle."

The support of his parents is crucial. "I look after all financial dealings, from day-to-day running costs to sourcing sponsors. Motocross is very financially demanding. The low-points have definitely been the crashes and injuries, though they've been kept to a minimum. The race wins and championship wins, as well as competing abroad

riding with the best in the world, well they more than make up for the lows" explained Brenda, Dylan's mother.

"I won my first championship at 7 years old when I became Irish Champion. Since then I've been picked every year to ride for my country. Last year I was offered the chance to race for the CCM Racing Metcon CCR TM Team to contest the Irish and British Championship. This year I got my first Adult Irish Championship Pro Race win in my first year in the pro class and I finished 3rd overall in the Pro Adult Irish MX2 Championship. I've enjoyed so many great times already," Dylan commented.

"The feeling you get when you win a race or a championship is just fantastic. I know how much hard work I have to put in to get to a competitive level, so performing well is incredibly rewarding. On the other hand, the feeling of just getting on the bike is always so much fun" Dylan explained, describing his pure love for the sport. "I'm really thankful to the whole CCM Racing, Metcon, CCR TM Team for sticking with me for the last two years. I'm so grateful for them and what they have done for me" he expressed.

Dylan's sponsors are CCM Racing, Metcon, CCR, Corcoran Chemicals, TMC MotoX, Fox Head Europe, Macho Martial Arts, Electraction, Jimmy Jones Plant Hire, Swords Motor Factors, Vrooam, ReTink Graphics, Spence Racing, Balbriggan Service Centre, TM UK, Renthal, Ryno Power, SEC Academy and A96 Filming.

With the 2018 season fast approaching, Dylan is always looking for new sponsors to keep him moving forward. If you're looking to sponsor Dylan in any way possible, you can contact him on [dylan195stynes@gmail.com](mailto:dylan195stynes@gmail.com)

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# NINTH SEASON FOR BALLINASLOE PANTO



BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

**It's that time of the year-Ballinasloe Panto is a-go. Painting teams, scenic artists, music scores and a plethora of singing and dancing children are rallied together by an array of bewildered adults. The production of "Sleeping Beauty" is set to run from the 11th to the 17th of December in the Town Hall Theatre.**

For many people, the panto has become a new Christmas tradition as it runs into its ninth consecutive presentation. The production crew have been working tirelessly since September to bring the show to the stage. Countless rehearsals are complemented, with endless costumes to source, sets to design and build, and routines to be choreographed. The gladiatorial work is what is required to bring a thoroughly entertaining show to the stage, and the B'sloe Panto crew haven't failed us yet.

This year's cast sees the return of a few familiar faces, as well as new additions. Roisin Lyons has returned from her Leaving Cert-induced sabbatical to take to the stage, portraying the title role of Beauty. Mike Kelly (a veteran Panto Dame) is returning after an absence of a few years to play Lola, the royal nurse to Princess Aroura. Enda McGrath, a regular, is the perfect performer for the role of William-Mike/Lola's son who falls in love with the Princess. Pat Vaughan takes a break from the high heels this year to play the role of Tickles, the court jester who has the perfect invention to help save the princess from an everlasting slumber-a time machine!

Seamus Feerick has switched the role of the baddie from last year's show, now taking the role of the King. After being involved behind the scenes for a number of years, Emma Greally will be playing the role of the evil fairy-Magnificent. She has allegedly been "cheated out of the throne" and has made it her mission to kill Princess Aroura. She has vowed to stop at nothing to take back what is "rightfully hers".

Her son Rupert, played by the redoubtable Mike O'Reilly, is of course there to help her with the mission but ends up more of a hindrance than a help. Scout completes the principal cast, played by 12-year-old Saidhbhe Concannon of Creagh NS. She will be keeping an eye on the heroes as they try to save the Princess from the evil Magnificent -and she hopes to earn her fairy wings in the process.

Rachel Walker, new to the production team, joins Ria Purcell in choreographing the show. Eoin Croffy takes the helm as director for his ninth season. The production crew is finished off with the musical direction of John Roe who again is a Panto Champion.

Shows begin nightly at 7.30pm with two fancy dress matinees on Saturday and Sunday December 16th and 17th at 2.30pm. Both children and adults alike are invited to dress up in outfits suitable for the stage, where prizes are offered for the best dressed.

Tickets are available online at [www.ballinasloepanto.com](http://www.ballinasloepanto.com), or from the booking office at J&S Photos on Society Street. You can also call 090 963 1566 to book your ticket. Tickets are also available at the door.



Back: Mike Kelly, Enda McGrath, Emma Greally, Mike O'Reilly, Pat Vaughan & Seamus Ferrick. Front: Saidhbhe Concannon & Roisin Lyons.



Back: Enda McGrath, Emma Greally, Pat Vaughan & Seamus Ferrick. Front: Saidhbhe Concannon & Roisin Lyons.

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**With the festive season approaching, the Town Hall readies itself for a busy period with plenty of new and annual action in store.**

On November 26th, the Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre, alongside the Town Team, are hosting a Christmas Craft Fair in the Emerald Ballroom from 11am. There will be over 30 crafters present with a wide variety of items on display. These include jewellery, glass art, paintings by local artists, cakes, calendars and much more.

**Secretary for the Town Hall, Mary O'Connell, added that the event aims to "showcase local crafting talent." The Craft Fair will provide people with an opportunity to buy unique presents. Following the Craft Fair, there will be entertainment in the Square with music provided on the Gig Rig. The Christmas lights will also be switched on in what promises to be an action-packed day.**



The weekly Country Market will be open every Friday in December before Christmas up to and including the 23rd, from 9am until 1.30 pm. Along with the usual wide range of

fresh local produce and crafts the producers will be doing their usual Christmas specials from puddings to mince pies and trifles, wreaths and gingerbread men. The Christmas/Birthday party this year will be on the 16th of December where there will be hot food and entertainment as they are celebrating five years in business. They hope to see everyone during the festive month and the market then takes a break, returning on Friday 12th of January.

**Lawrencetown National School will be hosting their Christmas Show "Magic Woman" in the Town Hall Theatre on December 1st**

starting at 7.30 pm. Pupils of all ages will be participating in the show. Principal Catherine O'Donnell said that the show is "brilliant for the development of children's confidence." There will be a variety of songs on the night with current hits and Christmas classics featuring. The tickets will be pre-sold with a cost of €10 for adults while all children go free.

The Ballinasloe Panto Group will be performing their version of the classic tale "Sleeping Beauty" which kicks off on December 11th and runs until December 17th. Curtains will be raised at 7.30 pm nightly. There will be eight shows in total with a matinee being held on Saturday December 16 at 2.30 pm. Tickets can be booked in J&S Photos. Premium tickets can be purchased on the Ballinasloe Panto website [www.ballinasloepanto.com](http://www.ballinasloepanto.com).



**The Town Hall will be hosting their own Fundraising Christmas Concert "Twas the Night Before Christmas" on Wed. December 20th. As in previous years, there will be music provided by local choirs, musicians and dancers, the Town Band (now up to over 25 members) will be on hand**

**to deliver their Christmas recital, as part of the show. Ms O'Connell said: "Our aim is to showcase the best local musical and stage talent." Tickets (€12 /€10) can be booked online and can also be purchased on the night with curtain up at 8.00 pm. For more information on the event, visit Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre's Facebook page or their website: [www.ballinasloetownhall.com](http://www.ballinasloetownhall.com).**

On Fri. December 22, the Talisman Theatre Company present "Rudolph Saves Christmas The Musical." This is a Christmas Show that tells the tale of a young Rudolph who runs away from the North Pole before eventually returning to try and save Christmas. This show is ideal for 3-10 year-olds. The €12 tickets for this event which starts at 5.00 pm. can be purchased online at the Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre website.

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# McINERNEY RETURNS FROM SWEDEN TO US CLUB

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



Shane captaining his college team.

**Ballinasloe native, Shane McInerney, is returning to former club Boca Raton, Florida after a season with FC Linkoping City in Sweden. The central defender had spent four years on a soccer scholarship, spending one year in New York and the other three in Florida.**

25 year-old Shane, grew up in Kilgarve and has played both soccer and GAA with the town. After attending Creagh NS, he went on to Athlone Community College with many of the friends he played sports with. At this time, coaches from the US came to watch their games. "The scholarship really appealed to me" Shane explained. After changing from a forward to a central defender, Shane was offered the US scholarship for New York.

**Shane has enjoyed a fruitful youth career, where he represented Salthill Devon and Galway United. After representing Ireland at U-15 and U-18 level, he made to the move to the US, where he played for Monroe Community College in New York and Nortwood Seahawks in Florida. "In my final year with the Seahawks, 2015, I had a great year was named on the All-American squad. That's when I really decided that I wanted to play professionally" he explained.**

A number of clubs in the US and in Europe have been interested in the talented player. He went on trial with Cork City and two clubs in Malta, but eventually signed for Linkoping City in Sweden. "I spent six months at Linkoping and I loved it there" Shane mentioned, though injury cut his season short. Despite being offered a new contract with the team, Shane decided to return to Florida.

**As well as playing with Boca Raton, Shane is also a full-time coach for two clubs in West Palm Beach. "As well as coaching, I'm a scout for an international soccer academy in Spain: Marbella**

**United. I help players from Florida who are interested in playing soccer full-time find their way to Marbella" he stated.**

2018 promises to be an exciting year for Shane, who is getting married in February. "I'm excited to get back playing and I'm hoping to sign to a professional club sometime soon" he added. "I'm passionate about what I do, and I'm just very happy with how things have gone."

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# NEW CLUB & COMMUNITY RUGBY OFFICER

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



Tiernan Regan - New Development Officer.



Mini Broncos enjoying their Saturday mornings with the Rugby Club.

have the right people in the right positions within the club structure. I think we have done quite well so far this season, in that respect. "Maintaining and growing the club is our primary objective, and everybody's

With the rugby season under way, the Ballinasloe Rugby Club has employed a new Club & Community Rugby Officer (CCRO) to ensure that students from all around the town will be able to enjoy the sport. Tiernan Regan is the club's new CCRO, a position that is jointly-funded by the club and Connacht Rugby. Tiernan has quickly settled into his role and is coaching ball skills and TAG rugby in primary schools in the locality. He intends to stay busy, having over 20 schools to visit.

The aim of the CCRO is to introduce young boys and girls of all ages to the sport. Kids that take part get to enjoy the benefits of team sports, learn new skills and have plenty of fun with their friends.

The rugby season has commenced fully now after a big pre-season effort by the club committee. "We put a huge effort in pre-season, setting up effective committees and teams of people that could get things done" commented Club President Tom Horkan, "it's always crucial for amateur clubs to

commitment is vital to that. Everybody from the coaches, team managers, players, Child Welfare Officers, our finance team and especially the parents," he continued.

The Bronco's Mini Rugby section has been enjoying great numbers also, as 140 children from ages 6-12 get to play and train on any given Saturday. "We usually have up to 20 coaches here with the kids every Saturday morning, from 10.30-11.30. Hail, rain or shine," remarked Mini Rugby Co-ordinator David McKeigue, who has held his role for 3 years, "that's not even including all the parents who help out. It's a big effort that's always worth it."

Ballinasloe RFC are always happy to accept new players, especially children who may be playing in their primary school. You can contact David McKeigue at 087 937 0283.

You can also keep up to date with the club on their Facebook page, Ballinasloe Rugby Club.



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# UNDER AGE SWIMMERS QUALIFY FOR INTERPRO

**The Swimming Club in Ballinasloe has seen great success recently, with the young swimmers qualifying to compete on a national stage in spring.**

The Schools' Senior Swimming competitions were held in Claremorris, where the town saw great representation. Caoimhe Kennedy achieved personal bests in the 100m backstroke and the 100m breaststroke, while Ruth Dolan won bronze in the 100m breaststroke and silver in the 200m. She has now qualified for the Interprovincial competition in Spring.

**The Ballinasloe Girls Relay Team also recently took part in the Minor Schools' competition in Athlone. The team swam in both the Freestyle and Medley, winning silver in both, now qualifying for the Schools' Championship in February. The team is composed of Sarah Dolan, Sheenagh Hanrahan, Kayla McKeon and Emily Gillespie.**

Four others have qualified for February's Schools' Championship in Dublin: Liam Martin, Evan McKeon, Sarah Dolan and Matilda Kelly. Liam



The Minor swimmers Ballinasloe Swimming Club



The Girls Relay Squad that placed Silver.

Martin has qualified for both the 50m breaststroke and the 50m butterfly stroke, having won gold for the fly. Evan McKeon will be competing in the 50m butterfly, having won silver. Sarah Dolan has qualified for the 50m backstroke and the 50m butterfly while Matilda Kelly will compete in the 50m backstroke, having won bronze.

**Elsewhere, there have been new personal bests for Maia Donnellan, Oisín Kennedy, Louis Markham, Gearoid Markham and Leon Martin.**

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## MICHAEL O'GRADY TO RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD



An avid sportsman all his life, Michael O'Grady from Mackney, Ballinasloe, has been nominated to receive a Community Games National Volunteer Award at a function in Dublin this month. Michael has been involved in community games in Ballinasloe for almost 45 years, starting first when Pat O'Sullivan gave him a list of rugby players to help train. "We got silver in my first year, though we had to wait until 1985 to win gold!" Michael commented.

Sports have always been a part of Michael's life. He played different sports while attending Garbally, and later played with the town's soccer and rugby teams. He even won All-Ireland medals in pole-vaulting. He has also helped train young people in sport: he trained the girls' soccer

team in Bealnamulla, Athlone, where he was a primary school teacher and principal.

"Community Games brings people together who otherwise wouldn't have met. And often, they maintain these friendships" Michael commented. "I actually heard that a few of the lads we had years ago were all together in a flat in New York, nine or ten of them!"

Michael has been the Chairperson of Galway Community Games, as well as the Vice-Chairperson and Chairperson for the National organisation and was instrumental in securing a National Home Office for Community Games in Athlone. Michael's contribution to community games, both in Ballinasloe and nationally, deserve the nomination for the award. He hopes to see Ballinasloe's youth continue to participate and find success in community games for years to come.

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# 30 YEAR FAMINE ENDS FOR PADRAIG PEARSES HURLERS

Padraig Pearses Senior Hurlers recently ended their 30 year wait for the Roscommon Championship title when they put in a fantastic second half display to overwhelm Four Roads, in Athleague, to lift the County Cup. Since last lifting the trophy in 1987, the Pearses Senior Hurling team had lost eight titles without any solace. The side put in a great performance in Athleague, with Daniel Glynn scoring 15 points, helping his side to a 1-20 to 1-13 victory.

Emotions boiled over at the final whistle as Pearses' supporters rushed on to the field to congratulate and celebrate with the players. Family, friends, past players and mentors embraced the victors as they finally won back the County Senior Hurling Title. Joint captains Mike Donoghue and David Loughnane lifted the Mickey Cunneiffe Cup.

For joint captain, Mike Donoghue, it had been a very difficult year as he recovered from injury. "I shattered my collarbone in the junior final we won, also against Four Roads. My aim from that day forward was to recover and get right for the final. The lads put in a huge effort in the last three months, which made my own recovery that bit easier. I felt like if we play as well as we can, we could beat anyone in Roscommon. We kept improving year on year, and we really brought our A-game to this final" he stated.

"Winning the final was the best feeling I've ever had. I've been trying to win it since I was 17 and we always fell just short. To lift the cup with David was an honour. There are only two captains to lift the cup from Pearses, both heroes of mine: Tom Shaughnessy and Alfie Barrett" Mike added. "We've brought some of our U-17s into the training panel in the last two months. All of our underage teams are competing in

finals every year, so the future's certainly bright. Our older players have plenty to pass on to the young lads as they come up."

The team of course appreciates the invaluable input from the coaches at the club. Manager Mike Malone, selectors Robbie Donoghue and Alan Loughnane, trainer Mike Kelly and his team of John Mulvihill, Pat McKenna, Aidan Berrigan, Brendan O'Sullivan and Peter Mulvihill all put in huge amounts of work. Their coaching and preparation for the team was well rewarded with the team's best performance produced in the final.

"We slowly built up the squad during the year as we felt that they had the quality to contest in the championship. So many of the players were young and had to deal with exams, or they were involved in football and other sports. We had to be careful with them at first. As the year went on and we qualified for the semi-finals, we really pushed on and trained like a championship-winning team" commented Selector Robbie Donoghue.

The longest serving player on the panel was Shane Sweeney, who returned from Australia this year and re-joined the team. "I started hurling senior back in 1997. I played in six finals, with two going to replays, so I'm delighted to have finally won one after 20 years. You could really see as the year went on that this team had some class young players. With some hard work, maybe we'll even pinch a Connacht title," Shane reflected.

Another long-serving member of the team was goalkeeper Padraic Dolan, who started playing senior in 2002, aged 18. "I felt like we had the right mix to go all the way if we got things right. The game against Athleague was a turning point, when we came back from being 5 points down to win with 14 men. It got the momentum going," Padraic commented. "The relief was the biggest feeling for me. We had been trying for 15 years. After so many finals, it felt like it would never

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Joint Captains Mike Donoghue and David Loughnane lift the Mickey Cunniffe Cup



Shane Sweeney with his wife Amy and his son after the final



Back Row: Jamie Donoghue, Matthew Feehilly, Gavin Downey, Kelvin Kelly, John Paul Dolan, Karl Feehilly, Tomas Seale, Daniel Glynn, Adam Finnerty, Micheal Donoghue, Jimmy Donoghue.

Middle Row: Sean Dunne, Tomas Sweeney, David Loughnane, Shane Naughton, Padraic Dolan, Teige Cogavin, Keelan Daly, Cathal Kelly, Daniel Staunton, Eoghan Cogavin, Dara Mulvey.

Front Row: Ben Fallon, David Dolan, Shane Sweeney, Oisin Kelly, Jamie Curley, Eoghan Costello, Leon Feehilly.

happen. It was an unbelievable feeling."

With very little underage success for a decade before 2010, a concerted effort was made by the Minor Hurling Board to become better organised and to raise the standards of underage hurling. This effort has been rewarded with several underage titles since 2010, and 17 players from those teams were on the successful senior panel this year. This infrastructural change has placed Pearses in good stead for the next few years.

The influence from the victorious 1984 and 1987 teams were on show, with some of the current panel having strong links to the teams. Eoghan Costello played at corner back this year and his father Tom played fullback in the 1980s. Keelan Daly slotted in as the other corner back where his father Sean also held that same position in the 1987 team. Gavin Downey played wing forward, and his father Tony also won a county medal in 1987. The tradition of hurling is well and truly alive in the club.

"It was a great relief for the team of 87 to shed the burden of being the last Pearses squad to win the final. The word locally was that the club would never win a hurling county title until all of the team had passed away. We were looking over our shoulder in case a hitman from Offaly would take us out!" Tom Costello commented.



Daniel Glynn receives the man of the match award from Roscommon Hurling Committee Vice Chairman Martin Mulvey



Tom Costello, fullback in 1987, celebrates with his son Eoghan



Proud Mother Gretta Dolan celebrates with her sons John Paul, David and Padraic after the Final Whistle

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# 1917, 1967, 1977 - MEMORABLE YEARS

Over one hundred years ago, St. Grellan's Football Club in Ballinasloe were the dominant senior team in the county and while recent years have been lean in capturing trophies, the footballing spirit in St. Grellan's is as committed as ever. We look back, with pride on the great team that won seven senior county titles in a row (1913-1919), as well as the contribution Ballinasloe players made in every All-Ireland senior football success down through the years.

As we near the end of 2017, we recall that great game, played in Mountbellew, 100 years ago, in June 1917, when St. Grellan's defeated the pick of Co. Galway team by 1-5 to 0-8. The team trainer was Tom Keating, a Tipperary native who came as a schoolteacher to the town. A report in the "East Galway Democrat" of the game stated "Never since the dawn of the GAA in Ballinasloe has a greater honour been secured by the local Football Club, than that which the St. Grellan's fifteen achieved in Mountbellew on Sunday last. After a stiff contest with the best selection the rest of the County could provide, they have emerged victorious and added one more conquest to a career which any team in Ireland could be proud of.

"For three successive years, Ballinasloe has proved itself to be the leading Football club in Galway and now they have gone one step further. It is a magnificent victory-a glorious feat. Ballinasloe stands today in the limelight of the Gaelic world, as a little town which is cradling the bone and muscle of first-class athletes, men worthy of their native place, of queenly Connacht and of Ireland. Bravo, Ballinasloe" the paper stated.

The "Democrat" also reported "On the journey home, large crowds greeted them in Caltra and Ahascragh while bonfires blazed on the roadside at 'old historic' Derrymullen. On behalf of the townspeople, Rev. T.J. Joyce, Adm., congratulated the team on their great victory and the great honour they had conferred on the town."

The Ballinasloe team on the day was: Denis Egan (capt.), Joe Dunne (goal), D. O'Connor, Peter Higgins, M. Connor, Jack Deeley, Johnny Egan, Peter Keighrey, Jack Hanniffy, Gilby Jennings, Tom Egan, Peter Fallon, Joe Walsh, Paddy Roche and Michael Knacker Walsh.

Fifty years ago, in 1967, in a tense Town Street League final, Derrymullen defeated "The Hill" (St. Grellan's). It was historic occasion as a bumper crowd turned up in Duggan Park to witness the Sean Keeley-led Derrymullen side narrowly claim the trophy by 1-10 to 1-8. The Fr. Broderick Cup was presented to captain, Mike Day, by the Chairman of St. Grellan's, Michael Walshe. In this Golden Jubilee year of their success, the winners would like to salute the management and players of "The Hill" for their loyalty and sportsmanship exemplified at all times.



**The Derrymullen winning team of 1967**

Back row: l to r: Sean Keeley, Jimmy Coughlan, John Egan, Kevin Hession, Tom Madden, Jimmy Colohan, Tony McDonagh, Brendan Tully, Barry Stronge.  
Front row: l to r: Marty Tully, Christy Cregg, Pat Trappe, Johnny Coughlan, Mike Day, Jimmy McDonagh, Willie Tully, Johnny Madden.



**The Hill team of 1967 - runners up**

Back row, l to r: Tommy Finnerty, Michael Connell, Patrick (Toby) Grehan, Michael Ronaldson, Mickey Hodgins, Willie Devlin, Paddy Curley, Josie Dowd, "Boy" Loughnane, Eamon Devlin, Mattie Carr, Vincie Ward.  
Front row: l to r: Jimmy Hodgins, Christy Grehan, Jimmy Murphy, Tommie McKeigue, Seanie Caulfield, John Dowd, Jack Dempsey, Seamie Fogarty, Michael "Pie" Carr.



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# IN BALLINASLOE FOOTBALL HISTORY

BY WILLIE TULLY

1977 saw St. Grellan's win their first and only Galway under 21 football title when they defeated Michael Breatnach's by 2-8 to 1-8, in the final played in Tuam Stadium. Leading by 2-5 to 0-4 at the interval, the Ballinasloe team held out against an opposition that included eight minor players, in a nail-biting second half. The scorers for St. Grellan's, on that famous day forty years ago, were Johnny Whelan 1-3, Kevin Mitchell 1-1, Michael Cunningham 0-2, John Manton and Barry Brennan 0-1 each.

P.B. Ryan was the Team Manager and Trainer, while the Selectors were Martin Ryan and Willie Tully.



**St. Grellan's Co. Under-21 Champions 1977**

Back row: I to r: Johnny Whelan, John Manton, Michael Cunningham, Barry Brennan, Liam Hannon, Pat Cunningham, John Creaven, Kevin Mitchell.  
Front row: I to r: Sean Riddell, Sean Kelly, Joe Boswell, Liam Whyte, Noel Jennings, Sean Brennan, Jack Coughlan.

40 years later at their Celebrations



Back row: I to r: Johnny Whelan, John Manton, Mike Cunningham, Barry Brennan, Liam Hannon, Pat Cunningham, John Creaven, Kevin Mitchell.  
Front row: I to r: Sean Riddell, Dessie Geraghty, Joe Boswell, Ollie Whyte (representing his late brother, Liam, who was captain), Noel Jennings, Sean Brennan, Kieran Barrett.

Many great players have worn the Black and Amber jersey over the years, some attaining All-Ireland glory, but all representing St. Grellan's in the true spirit of sportsmanship and commitment. One name really stands out among the "greats." John "Tull" Dunne captained the Galway All-Ireland winning team of 1938 and later went on to manage the historic three-in-a-row team of 1964, 1965 and 1966, where his son, Cyril, wore the number 10 jersey with distinction during that period. John also saw his father, Joe, feature on All-Ireland day in Croke Park when, as Bandmaster of the Ballinasloe Brass and Reed Band, he headed the parade of the teams in the 1938 football final, as the Artane Boys' Band were unavailable.

*We regret the names of the Ballinasloe 1975 Centenary Football team were omitted, under the photograph, in the last issue.* The following are those in the photo. Back row, left to right: Johnny Kilcommins, M. J. "Inky" Flaherty, Kevin Bleahen, Michael Phelan, Michael Meade, Willie Devlin, Liam O'Neill, Paddy Monaghan, Gerry Farrell, Michael Walsh. In front, left to right: Pdraig O'Neill, Eamon Devlin, Johnny Costello, John Kenny, Cyril Dunne, Anthony Farrell, Frankie Walsh, Sean Meade.



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# NEW CLUB GEAR RANGE LAUNCHED FOR GAA SEASON 2018

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



Ballinasloe GAA club are launching their new club gear at the beginning of December, which will be available from local suppliers. "With over 30 teams representing the club at all grades in Football, Hurling and Ladies Football, there was a consensus within the club that we should have uniformity of the gear worn" said Seamus Duffy, Club Chairman. "In the past, many variations of the Black and Amber club colours were acquired by individual team managers from a range of suppliers" he added.

A sub-committee was formed to develop the idea of club uniformity. In line with the club policy of sourcing all requirements locally, a package has been put together with Noel Mannion of NM Sportswear and Ronan Lally of Cooper Leisure. The gear will be available in various sizes and is an ideal practical Christmas gift for any sports fan in town.

The Mothers and Others team were fully kitted out in the gear when they competed recently in an All-Ireland competition in Dublin. This marked the first use of the new gear, which it's hoped will be broadly used over the next few years. It will be available from local suppliers NM sportswear, Coopers Poolboy and from Hogan's Society Street. All tops will have the Ballinasloe club crest embroidered onto it.

While club activity is quieter this time of the year, there are still a number of ongoing events. The Ladies Winter League, which involves six teams with a panel of 15 each, continues every Friday night from 8.30pm. Bingo continues in the Emerald Ballroom every Tuesday night at 8pm, featuring some bumper prizes to be given out in the lead up to Christmas.

The GAA Club will also be holding their annual Race Night on 29th December, which promises to be a huge social night. Further

details will be advertised through the Clubs Facebook page, Ballinasloe GAA. The annual reviews have taken place for the three club codes and the annual general meeting will take place on Friday, 1st December at 8pm in Gullanes Hotel.

The club has over 100 coaches, all in a voluntary capacity, and are always looking for more help. They are specifically looking for the involvement of the parents. You can become involved with the bingo nights, the lotto teams, the football or hurling teams, or in the administration of club affairs. Given the multicultural make-up of the Ballinasloe area, the GAA Club welcomes new families to the town and invites them to become involved over the New Year.

For any inquiries, you can contact Secretary Gerry Seale at [secretary.ballinasloe.galway@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.ballinasloe.galway@gaa.ie) or 0872376976. Likewise, you can contact Chairman Seamus Duffy on 0872506431.



Ryan Kelly Ward, Isabelle Ward, Ciarán Reilly, Stephanie Ward, Cormac Casey and Shane Jennings.

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FINE GAEL



# JUNIOR GOLF CONTINUES TO MAKE STRIDES LOCALLY

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

Ballinasloe Junior Golf Club has enjoyed an exciting few months. The young, local talent has been steadily progressing and it promises to be an exciting 2018 for the players.

The Junior Captain's competition saw a great turnout, with all participants performing well. Cian Connolly was the winner with 43 points. Caolon Scully and Conor Rice finished 2nd and 3rd.

The nine-clubs team also managed to undo Cregmore in a playoff match. "Thanks to everyone that put in the time and effort, and especially to the lads on what was a really well deserved win" Club mentor Aidan Dooley stated.

In the Shane O'Grady Match-Play competition, Cormac McNally beat Caolon Scully to claim the trophy. "I'm very happy with the way I played this year, and if I play as well again in 2018 I hope to be competing for gross prizes and fighting for a place in some of the senior teams" stated Cormac.

Niall Conneely, represented Ireland in the Grand Final of the Wee Wonders Under-9 Championship in Scotland. Niall qualified by finishing second in the Under-9 All Ireland Final at Rosses Point Golf Club. He then finished 17th in the Grand Final at the famous Saint Andrew's Golf Course in Scotland. Mark Conneely, Niall's father, said that "the putts wouldn't drop but his ball striking was as good as the rest of them there. He played against Europe's best under-9 golfers, so we're delighted."

Niall has also earned himself an invite to the European Championships in Gullane Golf Club next May. "I am looking forward to the Under-9 European Championships in Scotland next May, as long as it is not the same weekend as my communion" Niall commented, "I also can't wait to play in the Under-9 Munster Championship in Fota Island, it will be my first time to play there. I am working hard on my putting and wedges over the winter."

Philip Murphy from Murphy Sweeney School of Golf is set to travel

around to local schools over the coming months. "We're delighted to be associated with Ballinasloe Golf Club. We are looking forward to continuing our junior and senior teaching here in the coming season and wish you all a happy and successful 2018" said Philip.

"We hope to provide an even bigger push to advance Junior Golf in the Club. We constantly strive to advance our junior golfers to higher standards" commented Aidan Dooley, junior-convenor for the club.

Membership rates have been reduced this year for Junior Golfers. The Club hopes to attract some younger members who may be interested in learning how to golf. You can learn more about the club and membership by visiting [www.ballinasloegolfclub.ie](http://www.ballinasloegolfclub.ie)



Cian Connolly: Winner of the Junior Captain prize this year, pictured with Aidan Dooley (Junior Convenor) and David Flynn (Men's Club Captain).



Far Left: Niall Conneely, who represented Ireland in the Grand Final of the Wee Wonders Under-9 Championship in Scotland.

Left: Cormac McNally: Winner of the Shane O'Grady Junior Match Play Trophy.

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# TWO IN A ROW FOR FIT TOWNS

BY STEPHEN COLEMAN



All participants together for the Fit Towns Celebration Day.



Racing with wheelbarrows for the Celebration Day.



Getting active at the celebration

## For a second year running, Ballinasloe is the Fittest Town in County Galway.

The programme, which runs for six weeks, proved to be even bigger and better than before and the scale and diversity impressed the judging panel this year. Inclusion was the overarching theme for Fit Town Ballinasloe, and the focus was on targeting groups where participation levels in physical activity were generally low. "All 60 plus programmes were carefully planned to ensure participants were encouraged to get involved over the six weeks" commented Marion Ruane of Fit Towns.

"The project gives clubs and organisations the opportunity to grow in membership. Everyone involved recognises the importance of sustainability and this year in particular efforts were made to focus participants on committing to their new activity, as well as the importance of goal setting" Marion elaborated. "The evaluation process provided a useful insight into outcomes, and it is heartening to see clubs grow as a result of the programme. Many participants have gone from not exercising regularly to running 5k in six weeks, and from there on to 10k and half-marathons over the next few months." Participants have also

gotten involved with other sports, such as golf, tennis, cycling, football and swimming.

The six week programme concluded in a 'All Community' Celebration Day which was hosted in the GAA Clubhouse. It included three main events: 5k run with the Running Club, 50k cycle with the Cycling Club and a 5k walk open to all members in the community. Children enjoyed outdoor obstacles with Tommie Costello of Cuckoo Hill and face painting with Niamh Loughnane. Refreshments were provided by local businesses and kindly sponsored by the Library, Supervalu and Beechlawn Organic Farm.

The Fit Towns team are now working together with Galway Sports Partnership and Galway County Council to progress their key projects: Outdoor Sports Equipment and Recreational Trails Audit and Feasibility Study. If successful in the above applications, monies from the Fit Town winnings for both years will be re-invested directly.

"We'd like to thank everybody for the support we've received over the past three years. I'm happy to say that the community has really embraced the project, and it's given us all a new energy and belief that Ballinasloe is a great place to live" Marion concluded.

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According to a biography published some years ago in the United States, a certain John Mullen was born in Ballinasloe on 11th June 1847, one of the seven children of Dennis Mullen and his wife Ellen (née Mulry). Dennis and his brother Thomas were coopers, supplying barrels to the town's mills and breweries. Probably they had their workshop in Woodslip Lane off Main Street, then the local cooperage centre. Ballinasloe industries, however, had been adversely affected by the advent of the canal in 1828 and the railway in 1851, and this may have prompted Dennis in 1856 to take himself and his family, brother Thomas included, to seek better prospects stateside.

Eventually the Mullens ended up in Oriskany Falls, a village in central upstate New York, a region that was still a significant if declining centre of wheat and flour production. It was a place where Dennis and his brother could ply their trade, and they each bought small houses in the shadow of Miller's Flour Mill, where young John, having completed his primary education, took an apprenticeship at the age of fourteen.

He proved to be an assiduous worker with an aptitude for practical mathematics, leading his boss to proclaim: "Mullen ain't never made a mistake with figures!" His application and intelligence paid off when he became manager of the mill before his twentieth birthday. Advised that he would never be taken seriously in American business circles as plain Johnny Mullen, he decided to acquire a double-barrelled name like his contemporary, the financier John Pierpont Morgan, and opted for Kernan as a middle moniker, after Frank Kernan, an Irish-American U.S. Senator he greatly admired.

Realizing that the future of wheat production lay in the West, Mullen hit out for Kansas on a Conestoga stagecoach in 1867. Working first as a mill hand and agricultural labourer, he later graduated to managing the Banner Mills. Fresh pastures beckoned, and in 1871 Mullen moved to Denver.

A lawless mining town, Denver in Colorado Territory at the time J.K. arrived there was described by one commentator in terms calling to mind the setting of a Hollywood Western: "As you wander about these hot and dusty streets you seem to be walking in a city of demons. Every fifth house appears to be a bar, a whisky-shop, a lager-beer saloon; every tenth house appears to be either a brothel or a gaming house; very often both in one. In these horrible dens a man's life is of no more worth than a dog's. The Vigilance Committee has to keep things going by means of the revolver and the rope. Sometimes, when the store-keepers open their doors in Main Street, they find a corpse dangling on a branch." It was destined to be Mullen's home for the rest of his life.

Denver's saloons and houses of ill repute held no attraction for the teetotal and clean-living J.K. Mullen. So anxious was he to get a start in the local milling business that he accepted a job at the Merchant's Mills for just bed and board. However, within two years he was promoted to

manager. In 1874 he married 23-year-old Kate Smith who hailed from County Cavan. They had met when they were both teaching Sunday school. A feisty young woman, as a teenager she had undertaken, unaccompanied, numerous lengthy journeys in the West, pioneer-style in a covered wagon, her wagon train surviving several attacks by Cheyenne Indians bent on avenging the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre by U.S. Cavalry. The couple went on to have four daughters.

By 1877 Mullen had set himself up as the owner of the Colorado Milling and Elevator Company. He understood the importance of employing the latest technology and was always a hands-on manager, never slow to tackle a physical task if the need arose. Five years later, J.K. was the leading flour producer in the state, and at the time of his death in 1929 his company owned nearly 300 mills, warehouses and grain elevators from Oregon to Missouri.

J.K. gave away unrecorded thousands of dollars to religious, civic, social, and purely personal causes, amounting eventually to about one-third of his net personal worth, to an extent that at times the solvency of his business enterprises was jeopardized. A man of his times, however, it never occurred to him to lend his support to non-whites in need. The Catholic Church was a major recipient of his largess, and he used his influence to push his bishops towards ecumenism, on one occasion sharply rebuking the Bishop of Denver for disparaging remarks he had made about Protestant clergymen in a sermon. At various times Mullen criticized Church dogma, fund-raising tactics, and authoritarian, incompetent, or corrupt priests.

Mullen was baby-faced, stood five foot eight, with large hands and feet. His interests included reading, chess, and frequent weekend poker games, all conducted at home. His philanthropy notwithstanding, J.K. was probably not an easy man to like. He tried to dominate all aspects of his business and family life. We have an unflattering account of him in the early years of his marriage, returning home in a foul mood and, wallowing in self-pity, loudly lamenting his lack of a son and heir in front of his young daughters, whom he would then proceed to terrify by his outrageous behaviour. In 1906 he met his match when he was confronted in his office by an angry neighbour who accused him of insulting his daughter. The man horse-whipped the miller, raising welts on his body and threatening him with a loaded pistol, thus proving that at least one of the customary practices of the Old West had survived into the 20th century.

Finally, are we on sure ground in claiming Mullen as a "sham" (native-born Ballinasloe person)? The question needs to be asked because, strange to relate, the local parish records contain no entry for John Mullen's baptism or that of any of his siblings. Neither does Griffith's 1855 Valuation tell us anything about the location of his family home. The only basis for the attribution of a Ballinasloe origin is apparently an 1865 census return for Oneida County, New York. Perhaps tellingly, Mullen seems never to have mentioned Ballinasloe in his personal correspondence, of which much remains extant, nor to have ever made an attempt to re-connect with his alleged hometown. Had the family been resident in the postal district of Ballinasloe, not the town? Was there something discreditable in their past to cause them to falsify a census return and thereby give a bum steer to any future investigator? If the multi-millionaire businessman wasn't born in Ballinasloe, then where was he born? Therein lies the mystery of J.K. Mullen.

# WALKING THE WINTER BLUES AWAY



**Winter can often be a time of snatched moments of just getting out for a quick walk with pet or family but where to go ? – Fit Town Team are currently researching and mapping a variety of walks and trails around the town centre and environs. Fair Green, Canal, Garbally Woods (accessible from Ard Mhuire pedestrian track) are all popular traditional locations.**

You can learn more about the project on [www.ballinasloe.ie](http://www.ballinasloe.ie), where you can find updates as they come. Until then, why not enjoy the frosty mornings with these walks? Just be sure to always wear your high-vis vest! You can follow the dotted lines on the next page.

## About Walk One:

*This 3km walk is considered easy, with no notable variances in altitude or height. It is also wheelchair accessible.*

This walk starts at the carpark beside the fire station and the Emerald Ballroom. Along the walk, you will pass by Portiuncula Hospital, the GAA grounds, the athletic track and the soccer complex. This walk in particular highlights the town's fantastic sporting facilities. The walk loops around back to the Fair Green to where you started.

The overall walk should take you about **40 minutes** at a leisurely pace. This walk is recommended for beginners and small groups.

## About Walk Two:

*The moderate walk also starts from the Fair Green carpark, covering about 5km with this walk, enjoying a pleasant, rural environment. It is not wheelchair accessible.*

It brings you over a now unused canal section, which was once used to transport goods by boat into the heart of town. You pass along the Old Mill Road and up Beechlawn. This walk, again, loops to the Fair Green carpark.

This walk can take about **one hour** to traverse. It is recommended for people who wish to see more of town centre.

## About Walk Three:

*Walk three is a moderate to hard walk, starting again at the Fair Green carpark. This walk covers 8-11km, depending on your own preference. This path is wheelchair accessible. The initial walk may turn about **an hour and 30 minutes**, though the extended walk is closer to **two hours**.*

As with Walk One, you head towards Harris Road and Duggan Park until you reach the gates of Garbally College. This walk brings you out along the Portumna Road, which can be quite busy at times. Be sure to wear your high-vis vest and always be careful along the road. You get to continue on past the tennis club and the rugby grounds.

One of the big attractions along this walk is the Beara Breifne Way, which replicates the walk taken by O'Sullivan Beara in the early 17th century after the defeat of the Irish Chieftains at the Battle of Kinsale. In addition, Patrick Sarsfield retreated along this route back to Portumna Castle on

his way to Limerick before departing in what is historically known as the Flight of the Wild Geese.

The route dissects the golf course and you reach the tarred Pollboy bog road. From there it's a straight walk up past the Recycling Centre and over the bridge over the motorway. You then pass the Tesco roundabout and you can return to the carpark.

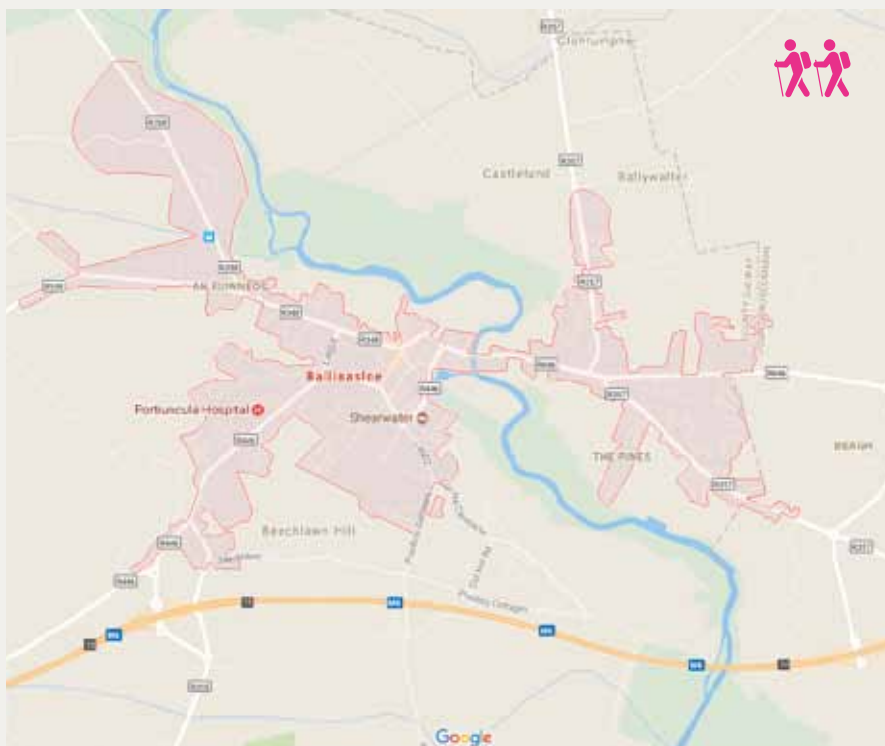
For fit walkers, or if you're seeking an extra challenge, you can add 3km to the walk. This part is not wheelchair accessible.

When on the Pollboy bog road, observe the 'yellow man' arrows until you find yourself on a rough gravel road running alongside a now unused canal bed. From here, follow the farmland access road until you return to the Pollboy bog road. From there, you pass the Recycling Centre, over the bridge and return to the carpark from the Tesco roundabout.

## Rosway Walkers:

Liam Roche, who suggested these walks for Winter readers of LIFE, is a senior member of the Rosway Walking Club: a group of walkers from the local area who meet every second weekend to enjoy walks like these.

**If you're interested in joining the walking club, you can contact Liam Roche on 087 228 7076.**



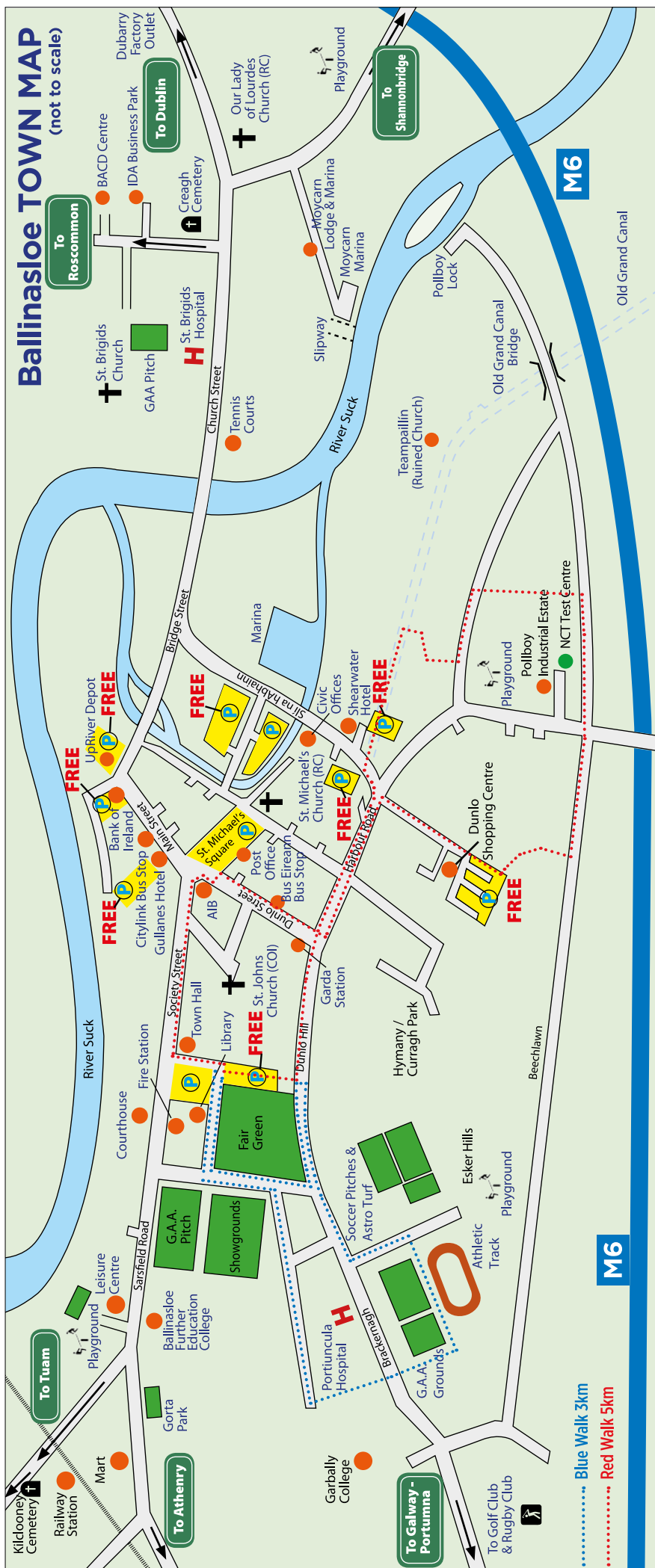
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## Ballinasloe History Walk

**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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