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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 7 Issue 6: Feb '18 - March '18

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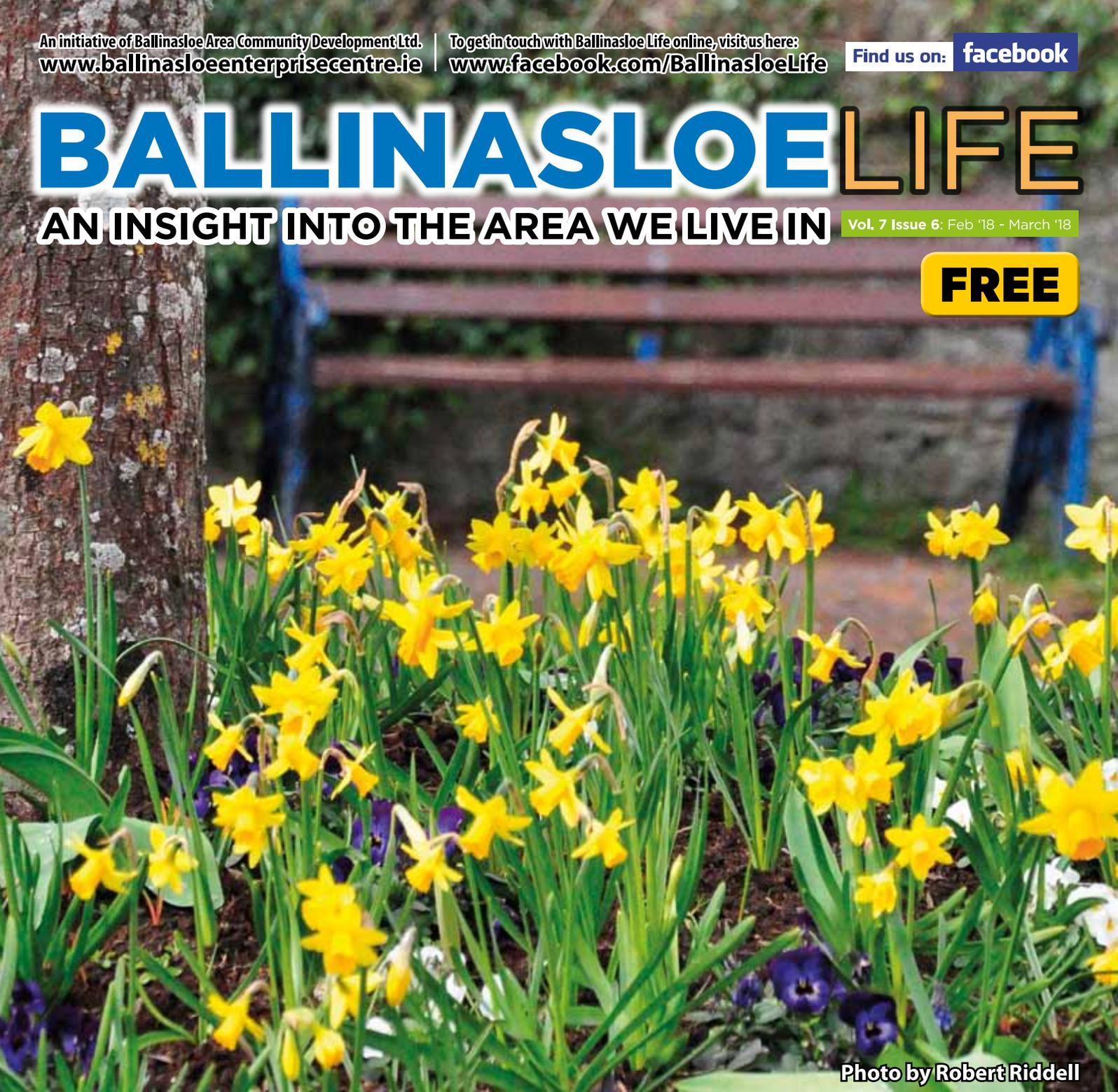


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# BALLINASLOELIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 7 Issue 6: Feb '18 - March '18

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ARTICLES AND PHOTOS WELCOME  
Deadline For Next Issue 13<sup>th</sup> March.

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## REAMHRÁ



As we face into another fresh year of challenges the familiar new year bleating back drop of the trolley scandal greets our post Epiphany blues, almost as regular as the Crib following the witches lanterns of Halloween.

Our local General Hospital did not come out the worst as reported in these pages and elsewhere and continues to survive and thrive delivering approximately 2000 babies a year, over 15,000 Operations, 22,000 outpatients visits; attended to by some 700 plus staff on a budget of roughly €64 million.

We are very fortunate as a town to have such a Medical and Health Facility developing and servicing our families and communities. We constantly hear about the difficulties of aged care on this island – how prone they are to flu, bone breakages, infections – the perennial bed blockers of the system. Anyone that tuned into Joe Duffy in the past few weeks to hear of the new professional Home Carers and their plight at the hands of Service Companies would be forgiven we were living in a Dickensian age. Countless studies from the CSO out are telling us that the demographic shift of this century is upon us – in that 60% of the islands population will be living well into their 9th decade and comprise the majority of inhabitants in less than 12 years' time. Our system can't cope now – never mind 12 years' time.

12 door knockers up from the wonderful Hospital and Healthcare campus, located in the same Brackernagh, are a band of community activists concerned with the care of the elderly, the infirm, the marginalised in our community – the Ballinasloe Social Services Centre. In so far as the nuns were instrumental in helping us with a hospital- this unique care bear team are determined to keep us all out of it, for as long as we can.

For their efforts – the State pays for 50% of their total needs – the guts of €200,000. After 9 years of horrific gouging of cuts to front line services and these are at the sharper end of the stick – meals on wheels, home help, home care, physiotherapy – these Charitable Healthcare groups as well as looking after their client groups – chiefly our elderly – (post the cruise liner generation, as opposed to retirees) and those in social need; have to go out and collect money to pay for the same services that are saving the state a small fortune – by keeping folks out of the acute care hospital system.

They are community heroes in our midst and fully deserve our support but within a 1 km stretch of the old N6 is all about what is wrong about our Healthcare's priorities and we have a few short winters to fix it!

Le Gach De Ghui,  
COLM CROFFY, Editor.



It was great to see the number of people from Ballinasloe who showed pride in their town and came out in force to voice their opposition to the proposed Waste Transfer Facility in Poolboy.

Objections have been lodged and a diligent, hardworking committee are making progress to stop this facility being built in the environs of Ballinasloe. We need this pride to be harnessed in other ways too.

Everyone has interactions with people in the business community, be it in Ballinasloe, Galway, Athlone, Dublin, Ireland, Europe, America and worldwide and you need to use these opportunities to promote Ballinasloe as a place to have a business base. Location is central, transport infrastructure is excellent, proximity to International Airports via Motorway a huge advantage, an educated workforce from local colleges and Universities, what more could you ask for.

Then there is the quality of life, no travel/parking issues as there is in the cities, quality primary and secondary education facilities and top of the class sporting facilities and leisure centres.

We are currently updating our list of available commercial space in the area. If you have a premises that you want included on this list for prospective clients please contact Lyn in Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre 09096 46516 or email info@ballinasloeenterprise.ie We have some space still available in the Enterprise Centre and are jointly promoting the 5,000 sq. ft. modern facility available in the Library Building with Galway County Council.

We expect that before the end of quarter 1, we will be in a position to jointly promote and market a new 15,000 sq. ft. facility in the IDA Business Park. The good news is that Full Planning permission has been granted but now the real work begins.

The motto is "what can we do for ourselves, not what others can do for us".

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

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

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

# BEC

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# MODERN NEW FIRE STATION UPGRADE

BY IAN O'BOYLE



Plans are in place for the Fire Station in Ballinasloe to be upgraded in 2018 according to Alan Farrell, Acting Director of Services of Galway Co. Council. The station was due to be refurbished and extended before the last recession.

The town's current Fire Station which is located on Society Street has needed an upgrade for quite some time now since the back of the station was extended over 30 years ago. The new building will have enough resources to facilitate the needs of the growth of population in Ballinasloe and surrounding areas.

The Fire Service contains two Standard Fire Tenders which are to be upgraded soon, a Mobilised Water Carrier and Fire & Rescue Jeep. The site on the Fair Green side of Society Street has been home to the local Civil Defence for many decades, who work hand in hand with the Fire Service.

The Fire Unit currently employs 12 Retained Fire Fighters which hasn't changed in 3 years, two of which are female. Station officer Barry McKeon leads the force alongside Sub Officer Tom O'Grady. The crew work within a 15-mile radius around Ballinasloe, which can be tough in some case scenarios.

Speaking on behalf of crew members, Barry was unstinting about their dedication and commitment to the job. "We currently have 12 Fire Fighters employed within our station, all

of whom give 100% every day their called out. The training and skill which is needed in this job can be very tough on the body, but that still doesn't stand in our way. I can't thank my colleagues enough for what they have done for our station, without them we wouldn't be where we are today".

The Old Town Library has been in temporary use by the Civil Defence and the plans are in essence to get the Civil Defence to move fulltime to the Library facilities to free up space and upgrade/renovate the Fire Station.

Since then there have been many requests by the public and local councillors for renovation of the building, which in turn could attract new business occupants. There have been talks in the past between councillors on how they could use the building if it was adapted in the right matter, and now it looks like they have come to a progressive solution.

Mr Farrell has advised that the Old Library in Ballinasloe would be the ideal location for the new station to be placed at.

All members of the Ballinasloe Municipal District Council have welcomed the upgrading of the Fire Station and hope that much more funding will be put into the rest of the towns services in years to come. Mr Farrell has said that he will be raising this matter with the County Corporate Department soon, and will report back to the Municipal District Council.



Station Officer Barry McKeon alongside Sub Officer Tom O'Grady.

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# KILCONNELL LANDFILL DELIVERS €300,000 BACK TO TOWNS INFRASTRUCTURE



BY IAN O'BOYLE

**In 2008 when Greenstar/Celtic Waste were operating the landfill in Kilconnell, a condition of planning was that the haul route from Kiconnell to Cappataggle had to be upgraded to accommodate the trucks using the route. The operator of the landfill agreed to give €1 million towards this, which the total cost of the works came to €1.3 million.**

Mayor of Ballinasloe Municipal District Council, Cllr. Aidan Donohue explains: "The outstanding €300,000 to complete the upgrades came out of the roads budget from the Ballinasloe area to complete these works. When Galway County Council took over the running and remedial works of the landfill upon request from both the Department and the EPA, a request was made by the present sitting councillors that the €300,000 that was taken out of our roads budget to complete the roadworks be reinstated to the Ballinasloe area".

**The Department have agreed to this and now this money will be in the town's budget for 2018.**

The Municipal District Councillors agreed to allocate €120,000 towards a specific project in the Municipal area at their December meeting and the remaining €180,000 be divided equally to the six councillors for nominated works in the area. It is yet to be formally decided which project the €120,000 will be spent on.

**The €30,000 allocated to Cllr. Michael Finnerty will be mostly spent on Hedge Cutting, where he claims that this project may not be the most glamorous, but is effective and of benefit to all sorts of road users—pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular.**

Cllr. Michael Connolly states that "€30,000 isn't a lot of money for doing any full re-development" but in any case he has plans in mind to use his allocated funding on footpaths and road works in the surrounding area.

**There has been no decision as of yet by Cllr. Donal Burke on what he plans to do with his given allocation funds, as he believes that further discussions need to take place with the Council Engineers at the next meeting in February, about the priorities which are put in place on spending the funds.**

According to Cllr. Dermot Connolly, his allocation of €30,000 is planned to be fairly distributed between the town's roads and small roads outside of the town itself.

**Cllr. Tim Broderick was regrettably unavailable for contact to elicit plans on his intended use of his allocated finances. LIFE will bring updates on both Cllr. Tim's allocation and more interestingly on what the €120,000 will be allocated to over the coming months.**

This on top of the €88,000 awarded to the District Area last November from Minister Michael Ring's REDZ Village & Town Enhancement Scheme for footpath refurbishment will provide a welcome injection of investment.

**Meanwhile as we go to print the final elements on the BIG DIG Tender are being topped and tailed with the shortlisted contractors Tenders assessment has been completed and even though the most economically advantageous tender has come in €1m over budget GCC have committed to proceeding with the project. Final negotiations are currently underway and it is hoped the project will start at the end of quarter 1 (March 18).**

As soon as the contractor has been appointed (which is

to happen imminently, a liaison officer will be appointed, who will be meeting with the local businesses and stakeholders to inform them of full details and programme for the works.



*Kilconnell Abbey located close to the Landfill.*



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# TOWN TEAM REFOCUSING FOR YEAR AHEAD

BY IAN O'BOYLE



Some members of our hardworking Town Team with Minister Denis Naughten, Cllrs Michael Connolly, Aidan Donohue and Senator Maiura Hopkins at our second annual People of the Year Community Awards with Seamus Duffy, Lyn Donnelly, Jacinta Divilly, Paula Harley, Carmel Greally, Mike O'Brien, Darragh Lynch and Stephen Coleman.

The Town Team are utilising the early few weeks of the year to regroup and refocus on their mission, objectives and key priority milestones. Critical to their success so far has been the range, reach and depth of its core group but with some members indicating, for a variety of personal commitments, their need to step down the Town Team are looking for about 3 to 4 new members to share the workload.

In essence the group would like to see new members from areas such as education, health and youth. At the end of February they hope to have secured some new skills, faces and sectors for the team.

Jacinta Divilly, the Co-ordinator, reviewed in some detail the completed headline projects of the past three years:

- Benchmarking reports 2014 & 2016
  - Leaflet Drops
- Zombie Walk 2015, 2016 & 2017
- People of the Year Awards 2015 & 2017
- Xmas Illuminations Project 2015, 2016, 2017
  - Sports Hub
- Visual Merchandising/Windows Display Competitions
  - Fit Towns
- Carparking and Access Review

- Ballinasloe.ie – website, revamp and relaunch
  - Business Networking Events
  - IDA Site Advance Planning
  - BOI Enterprising Town Awards

In term of financial resources for the year ahead the Town team were granted €15k from Galway County Council activities along with €13,600 from Town & Village renewal scheme. Some €15,000 must be invested on the following projects in 2018 to secure the draw down:

- St. Brigid's Future Symposium
- Skills and Infrastructural Audit of Area and Marketing the Town as an Investment and Tourism Location
- Sports Hub Project.

A general 12 month action plan was agreed to support and prioritise activities on the following: St. Brigid's Future Symposium, Skills and Infrastructural Audit of Area and Marketing the Town as an Investment and Tourism Location; The Marketing of the IDA Advance Factory, The Sports Hub Project, Ballinasloe.ie, Xmas Illuminations (and the fundraisers and marketing events that go with it ie. Zombie Walk) Additional "Shovel Ready" projects that would require some capital assistance.

A range of other ideas are being discussed in the fields of Tourism, the Cycleway, The Environment, Healthcare, Education, Govt. Decentralisation and the Town Centre management post the "Big Dig."

Most of the Town Team members believe that a dedicated Town Centre Retailers/Business forum or action group would be best placed to micro manage some of the pressing retail and town centre management issues-like changing opening times and group marketing campaigns.

The Team hope to be in a position to outline more specific ideas and detailed plans at the time of the Development Company's AGM in Spring.

**Ballinasloe Town Team:** Val Colleran, Colm Croffy, Jacinta Divilly, Lyn Donnelly, Aidan Donohue, Andrea Duffy, Seamus Duffy, Tara Flynn, Carmel Grealy, Paula Harley, Mike O'Brien, Pádraig Ó Ceithearnaigh and Ger Tully.

**BACD Board:** Kevin Broderick, Donal Burke, Ann Conlon, Michael Dolan, Dan Dowling, Marina Downey, Seamus Duffy, Paul Hargadon, Pearse Keller, Seamus Kelly, Joe Lyons, Noel Madden and John McKenna.

# PLANNING FOR ANNUAL ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

BY IAN O'BOYLE



Preparations are underway for this year's St. Patrick's Day parade which will assemble at the Fair Green at 1:30p.m. sharp on Saturday, March 17.

The parade will commence at 2 p.m. at the Fair Green carpark on Society Street and make its way through Main Street, Sli na hAbhann, onto Dunlo Street and will come to an end at the St. Michael's Square Review Platform.

The St. Patrick's Day Committee are preparing to provide outdoor activities and street entertainment for all to enjoy on the day including music performances from local musicians both before and after the parade. The Committee are targeting school groups, sports clubs, dancing clubs and all members of the community to participate in this year's event.

The organisers have again appealed to all of the business community to assist in the sponsoring the cost of the parade and the prizes. They are also appealing to marching bands who may be interested in participation.

For those interested in getting involved, it is free to enter, and entrants should get in contact with the committee before March 13. Participants may choose from the categories of Education, Culture, Voluntary, Sport and Commercial and there will be prizes awarded for the best entries.

Committee Member, Carmel Grealy said "Everyone is encouraged to come along and join in on the celebrations. It's a lively day for the community and promotes local positivity and team work."

Carmel can be contacted for anyone wishing to get involved on 087 620 7477.

## CHRISTMAS CHARITIES GIVING CAMPAIGN

Over the Christmas period both SVP and the Lions Club held a Christmas Charity giving campaign to raise money and living necessities for those who were in financial difficulty in the festive season.

Both charities carried out tremendous work in order to reach their goals, along with the help of other organisations within the town.

The Lions Club made up 134 hampers full of food and other goods for families who needed them. Most of the produce for each hamper was bought with donated money, though there were also some very kind donations from companies around the area.

€2,146 Euro was collected overall by the Lions Club at their annual church collection, which proved to be a great aid in the overall €6,206 expenditure for goods.

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# CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND FESTIVE GATHERING...

Though Christmas has come and gone, The Festive Gathering, which once again heralded the arrival of the Retail Festive Season, was well supported and marked a buoyant and busy period of local trading over the December period.

The rainfall failed to dampen the Christmas spirit on the day, as a fantastic crowd gathered around the unique Ballinasloe Christmas Tree. The Ballinasloe Fair & Festival stage played host to the evening's musical entertainment.

The Town Band, under the direction of conductor Noel Madden, opened the entertainment programme. Christmas carols followed, with Creagh National School performing first, then Students from Newtown NS followed, along with the Panto dance troop and the evening was closed by the musical talents of Scoil an Chroi Naofa. The evening was presented by the fast-paced MC Pat Vaughan, who was in his costume from the pantomime, where he played "Tickles" the court jester.

In the lead-up to Santa's arrival, a number of tractors from the Ballinasloe & District Vintage Club decked out with bright Christmas lights made an

appearance, driving around the Square in a great spectacle. Santa finally arrived, with the help of the local Fire Brigade, where he was greeted with rapturous applause. After a countdown from 10 to 1, Santa pushed the button to bring the Christmas lights to town for the festive period.

"Once again the Festive Gathering, being on the last Sunday in November, has proved a winner for parents and younger folk alike. We are fortunate as a Town Team to have the involvement of over 35 volunteers, the schools, the Panto, the Musical Society and the musicians as well as the contractors and riggers who all combine to kick start our local Xmas season" stated Seamus Duffy, Chair B.A.C.D.

It is important to remember that the Christmas Illuminations project is always a community-driven one, and would be impossible without the contributions from many local businesses. Their subscriptions are up 10% up on previous years, with the Town Teams own fundraising efforts with Raffles and events – amounted to over €8,000. The total project costs came to almost €24,000. The welcome support of Galway County Council is always required for these type of events and once again the signature TREE and new illuminations helped act as a focal point for the season.

## LOCAL BUSINESS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO LIGHTS

Allied Irish Bank	Delaney's Carpet & Furniture	HFD Retail Dolans Electrical	Michael McCullagh Auctioneer & Valuer	The Auld Sod
An Táin Bar	Domac Plant & Tool Hire	High Society Hair Salon	Michael Wards Menswear	The Bread Basket
Angies Attic	Downey's Bar & Restaurant	Hutchinson Davidson & Sons Solicitors	Murphys Medical Hall	The Deli Store
Ballinasloe Credit Union	Duane's Healthwise Pharmacy	J&S Photos	Niall Hogan Menswear	The Duck Inn/Dunlo Print
Ballinasloe Opticians	Eastern Electrical Wholesale	Joe's Bar	Nicos Takeaway	The Dunlo Tavern
Bank of Ireland	First Stop Barbers	Jorena's Health & Gift Shop	Noonan & Cuddy Solicitors	The Hair Gallery
Barretts - Heiton Buckley Builders Providers	Fletchers Expert Electrical	Joseph Jordan & Co. Solicitors	P Hogan & Co. Solicitors	The Shearwater Hotel
Barry's Cycles	Footsteps Chiropody	Murrays of River Street	Paddy Power Bookmakers	Tiny Tots Creche
Billy's Discount Satore	Fusion Restaurant	Karibas Restaurant & Coffee House	RGR Partners Goode Accountants	Tomas Barbers
Brian Lynch Motor Factors	Gearoid Geraghty & Co. Solicitors	Kathleen's Fashions	Rothwell/Staunton (Dentist & Auctioneers)	Topman Barber
Brodericks Pharmacy	George M Coyle & Co. Chartered Accountant	Keller Travel	Salmons Department Store	Tranquility Beauty Clinic
Bruen Brothers & Co.	Gerry Stronge Photography	Kellers Hardware & Carolines Hair Salon	Scannell Financial Services	Utah Department Store
Cahalan Jewellers	Gibbons Pillar House Bar & Restaurant	Kidz Corner	Society Travel	Utopia Hair Design
Carry Out Off Licence	Grenhams Bar & Off Licence	KPW Design & Print	Spirit 3	Vals Vintage Cupboard
CH Computers & Office Supplies	Grocon Energies	Leahy's Pharmacy	Stanley Clarke & Sons	Vodafone
Chris Daly Shoes	Gullane's Hotel & Conference Centre	Maud Millars	Supermacs	Willie Burke Shoes
Claire Flowers	Harney's Locksmiths & Dry Cleaners	McGuckin Dental Surgery	Talking Heads Hair & Beauty	Wonderland Hair & Beauty
Cregg Stone	Healys Pharmacy		Tech Solutions	Woods & Co.
Crumbs & Cream Coffee Shop				



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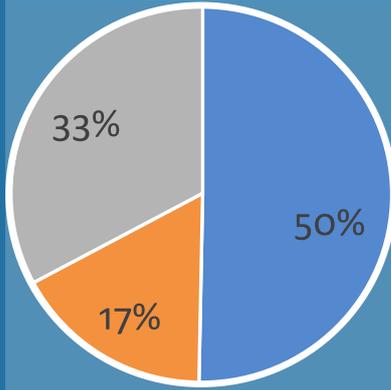
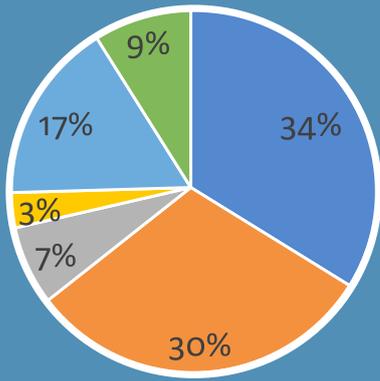
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## Expenditure 2017 - €23,626

## Incomes 2017 - €23,662



- Purchase of New Lights / Replacement Bulbs Repairs €8,000
- Installation, Equipment Hire and Maintenance of Street Lights €7,192
- Insurance & Admin / Regulatory / Signage Costs €1,670
- ESB Costs €750
- Construction Erection, Disassembly and Storage of Xmas Tree €3,914
- Christmas Festival / Switching on Ceremony €2,100

- Total Business Contributions To Date €11,905
- Galway County Council Community Support Scheme €4,000
- Subsidiary Income From Town Team Events €7,757



INCOME	€2017	€2016
Total Business Contributions To Date	11,905.00	10,405.00
Galway County Council Community Support Scheme	3,500.00	3,500.00
Subsidiary Income From Town Team Events	8,153.00	10,813.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23,558.00</b>	<b>24,718.00</b>

EXPENDITURE	€2017	€2016
Purchase of New Lights / Replacement Bulbs Repairs	5,561.00	7,000.00
Installation, Equipment Hire & Maintenance of Street Lights	7,428.00	6,753.00
Insurance & Admin / Regulatory / Signage Costs	1,800.00	1,550.00
ESB Costs	2,128.00	1,963.00
Construction Erection, Disassembly & Storage of Xmas Tree	4,544.00	6,032.00
Christmas Festival / Switching on Ceremony	2,097.00	1,420.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23,558.00</b>	<b>24,718.00</b>

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# KELLERS-THE TOP WINDOW WINNER

BY IAN O'BOYLE



Kellers Display.

Over the Christmas, businesses all through the town, put on a spectacular display of bright lights, decorations and some very nice paintings as part of the Christmas Window Competition, which has been running for two years and has been a great success for the Town Team.

Amy Keller, daughter of shop owner Bill Keller, was stunned for words after their victory. "We were truly shocked with what we have achieved, the amount of hours and late nights we put into this was well worth it." Asking about the customer's reaction, Amy stated that they couldn't have been praised much more. "Everyone who came by the shop were full of compliments for our display, what really shocked us was receiving a message on Facebook from a woman who saw our window display on a bus from Dublin, who had nothing but good things to say."

After Keller's received their prize, it was time for the prize raffle to take place, where one voter would win the prize of €360 in vouchers. This year's lucky winner was Aoife Mullen from County Roscommon, one of the 1800 members of the public who voted.

Runner-up windows were Talking Heads and The Shearwater Hotel. Over 36 shops took part.

For this year's competition every business entered with a €20 voucher for their company, with €360 worth of the prize being given to the winners and the remaining prize going to the winner of the voters' raffle.

The store which took centre stage and took top prize for their amazing display this year was none other than Keller's of Main St. A wonderful piece of work was put on show, with a lovely polar bear standing alongside a sign post pointing for the North Pole. The window was finished off with a Christmas tree and wreaths, adding a vibrant Christmas effect.



Shearwater Hotel Display.



Talking Heads Display.

## NEW MOSAIC ART CLASSES

For those interested in working with Mosaic Art, classes are set to begin at the Enterprise Centre, in Ballinasloe, in early February.

Teacher Aiden Byrne, originally from Portarlinton, now living in Belmont, is a talented artist with an honours degree in Fine Art from GMIT. His passion for art came in his early teens, he now wishes to encourage others to get involved by teaching his own art classes.

The first of Aidan's Mosaic classes began over two and a half years ago in Belmont which have been a huge success. He has set his sights on getting the people of Ballinasloe and other surrounding areas to get involved with Mosaic Art.

Mosaic is a piece of art or image made from the assemblage of small pieces of coloured glass, stone or other materials. It turns out as a very

decorative piece, once completed which can be put up at home, the workplace or anywhere for that instance.

Working with Mosaic can be very beneficial for those who take part, such as relaxation while having fun in the process. Its also said to be very therapeutic which is good for one's mental health and wellbeing.

Classes for adults commence on the 9th of February in the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, running every Friday from 7-9pm for a fee 120 for six weeks. All equipment and materials for designing are provided by Aidan on the nights. Once the six weeks are over students will have their very own masterpiece to bring home with them. Classes are suitable for everyone, no experience is required whatsoever.

For more information please contact Aidan on 0871375415 or email [abyrneoffaly@gmail.com](mailto:abyrneoffaly@gmail.com).

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# HOSPITAL WATCH - TROLLEYS NUMBERS DOWN



BY IAN O'BOYLE

It has been a busy last few months in Portiuncula Hospital coming from reports on Saolta.ie, with the launches of new services as the new chest pain clinic and staff library.

Along with this the hospital's catering department was awarded with the Happy Heart Healthy Eating Award, which is given when the food and menus in the Staff Dining Room meet the healthy eating guidelines as set out by the Irish Heart Foundation and the Department of Health.

A new fairy garden has also been put in place at the hospital grounds which was donated by Jasmine Elkhershi from the craft blog, Procrastimate.com and Grainne Brady from the gardening blog, ShannonOrchard.com. The garden is a vibrant and colourful area for children in the hospital to play in while they are in hospital.

Despite the post Xmas Trolley crisis-figures on trolley and ward watch indicate that only 5 people were recorded to be on hospital trolleys this January. This is a significant reduction compared to this time last year where there were 28 patients without a bed. In contrast to last month the figures are up by just one trolley!

University College Hospital Galway's figures remain much higher than Portiuncula as usual, with a total of 27 patients stuck on trolleys

in January. These figures remain the exact same in comparison to January of last year, but a significant rise when matched with last December where only 11 patients were on trolleys.

Portiuncula Hospital enjoys a ranking of 30th out of 69 public private hospitals across Ireland according to stats on RateMyHospital.ie, an impressive stance over the past months. In comparison to neighbouring hospitals, Portiuncula remains places above Roscommon County Hospital, and 35 above University College Hospital, who still sits close to the bottom of the League at 65.



## PLANNING APPROVED FOR NEW ADVANCE FACTORY

The IDA Business and Technology Park on the Creagh Road will be home to a new 15,000 square foot facility after receiving planning permission for an Advance factory.

This site, funded by Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd, is ideal for potential bio-medical, pharmaceutical or bio-technical manufacturers and the full site could be ready to occupy as early as November 2018, depending on when an investor or firm decided to locate.

This site is compliment to the increase in jobs caused by the expansion of SurModics, which currently employ 140 workers, and indeed Aptar which has over 140 employees.

IDA Artist's Impression of Advance Factory



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# SAYING NO TO NEW WASTE TRANSFER STATION

BY IAN O'BOYLE

In the past few weeks anger and fear has been expressed over the new waste transfer facility proposed to take over from the old waste plant located just outside the town in Poolboy, which stopped operating back in 2005.

Hundreds of people attended a public meeting, regarding opposition to a waste transfer facility, in the Shearwater Hotel on the 10th of January.

Galway County Council granted planning permission to Sean Curran of Barna Waste for the transfer station last year planning reference 16/1286.

The proposal comprises of the construction of a 1,080 square metre transfer building to receive waste and recyclables and unload/re-load these materials within the building to larger vehicles for transfer to other waste/recycling facilities and for ancillary yardage, parking weighbridge, staff office (29.6 square metres) and all associated site services in Poolboy.

The application granted by Galway County Council permits for 23,400 tonne of waste to be transferred at the station each year. The permissible opening hours is 06.00 to 20.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 14.00 on Saturdays. According to the application submitted the following is the approximated number of truck movements per day: 6 bins trucks & 12 skip trucks bringing waste to the station, with

approx two 30 tonne trucks, two 10 tonne trucks and one 15 tonne truck removing the waste from the site each day. The County Council is currently assessing a waste permit for construction waste to start the construction phase of the project and objections had to be in by Jan 24th.

Ballinasloe Area Community development Ltd (BACD) issued a detailed statement on ballinasloe.ie stating their concerns about the negative impact any waste enterprise would have on local tourism and enterprise. BACD Ltd. over the past 20 years have been working tirelessly through different projects (Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, Ballinasloe Life Magazine & Ballinasloe Town Benchmarking Project, to name but a few) to promote Ballinasloe and attract inward investment.

They are liaising with the Poolboy Community Development Council, who are opposing this Waste Transfer Station, and have been in consultation with our local Councillors, TDs and Minister on this matter.

Officers of the Poolboy Community Development Council held a productive meeting with Minister Denis Naughten, including 3 senior officials from the Waste Policy & Resource Efficiency Division, for over an hour in Dublin on the invitation of the Minister at the public meeting in the third week of Jan.

Aishling Dolan, Group Secretary and Dr. Vincent Parson, Chair made



Ballinasloe Says NO Committee Members.

Ballinasloe Says NO Committee Members along with Councillors Donal Burke, Aidan Donohue, Dermot Connolly and Senator Maura Hopkins.



Members of the public look on as Secretary of Ballinasloe Says NO Aishling Dolan gives her presentation on the dump.

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a detailed submission on the feelings and wishes of both the public meeting held in the Shearwater and rationale for objection to what is currently tabled under the planning process and what might be evolved in the future with certain types of infrastructure already adjacent to the sites.

They specifically requested that no further waste permits or licences will be permitted for the Ballinasloe area. Minister Naughten noted that 'we all want the same outcome'. With his officials, he outlined the following:

The Minister does not have Executive Powers, under the Act over waste at a Local Authority Level Waste, licenses are granted by EPA only if the threshold is over 50,000 tonnes for certain types of waste. An EPA environmental impact statement is required if the waste is over 25,000 tonnes. Certificate of Registration and waste permits are managed by the Local Authority/ County Council not the EPA.

In relation to the 73 acres - the officials stated that a substantial landbank would be required of approximately 1,500 hectares for a landfill that this (73 acres) is too small. They do not know the purpose for this site. Factually there is no provision for any new landfill in the Connacht Regional Waste Management Plan – approved at Dept level.

The Minister's team pointed out that with a current planning application under consideration in another part of the Country there

is sufficient national incinerator capacity and there is no need or future demand for any other such facilities.

He acknowledged the 1999 High Court Order and the number of objections which he has received and that residents and businesses in have legitimate concerns . He agreed to notify Galway County Council (GCC) of the 1999 High Court Order and his officials committed to providing an update on the current annual EPA monitoring of the Poolboy landfill.

As we go to print, Mayor of Ballinasloe Municipal District Area Council, Cllr. Aidan Donohue, managed to secure a notice of motion on the Agenda of the Council's last meeting in January, which calls for the decision of original planning to be revoked.

As it is a notice of motion (under the bye laws and standing orders of Council) discussion and debate will happen but no decision can be taken unless it receives the majority of support of the Councillors present to be formally ratified at a subsequent meeting.

The committee of "Ballinasloe says NO" are calling out for new members to join in their campaign to help volunteering.

Ballinasloe LIFE will report on the outcomes of the meeting and subsequent updates through our LIFE Facebook Page and www.ballinasloe.ie over the coming weeks.



John Jordan, Frank Kavanagh, Minister Kevin (Boxer) Moran TD, Michael Tully, Sean Canney TD.

## NATIONAL AWARD FOR LOCAL FLOOD ALLEVIATION GROUP



BY STEPHEN COLEMAN

**Flood Alleviation Ballinasloe Community Project (FAB), has recently won the Community Best Practice Recognition Award 2017 at the Irish National Flood Forum Annual Conference.**

FAB was established in the immediate aftermath of the disastrous flooding of November 2009, filling the void that existed between the municipal authorities and the community. Eight years on, the people behind the project continue to lobby for flood relief measures to be implemented in Ballinasloe.

**"Much has been achieved in recent years with the support of local council officials, representatives and members of the local community, the current flood defence situation is far from ideal in some areas of the town" commented Frank Kavanagh, Vice-Chairperson of Flood Alleviation Ballinasloe.**

Over the last eight years, FAB have engaged with a number of projects: The Ballinasloe Flood Relief Study, which was completed and launched in 2010; Derrymullen Flood Wall completed in record time by Brian Conneely's Building and Engineering Company in 2012. They made submissions and observations to the Ballinasloe Local Development Plan, 2015-2021.

**In 2016 Irish National Flood Forum Conference in Ballinasloe and later that year their flood Insurance Survey 2016 was instrumental in dispelling the statistics given by the Insurance Industry to government regarding levels of flood insurance cover where flood schemes have been completed. It proved to be the key research piece, used by politicians to debate and secure the Flood Insurance Bill through its second stage in the Dáil in November 2016.**

Most recently, Kevin "Boxer" Moran, Minister for the Office of Public Works and Flood Relief, presented FAB with the Community Best Practice Recognition Award. Chairperson Michael Tully accepted the award in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel, Athlone.

**The current committee comprises: Michael Tully (Chairperson), Frank Kavanagh (Vice-Chairman), John Jordan (Secretary), Pat Harte (Treasurer), Brian Conneely, Mary Cunningham, Willie Devlin, Ann Jordan, Colm McCann, Anne-Marie McCormack, Josephine Goode and John Slattery.**

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**Cathal Cregg, originally from Boyle now living in Ballydangan, has taken to wordsmithing as he gets set to publish his first book this year. The acclaimed qualified stone cutter and food nutritionist, plans to hit the book world in the years to come.**

Cathal's working career began by carving Celtic Crosses and hand-cut lettering after completing a stone cutting/carving apprenticeship in 1982.

Today he now runs one of Ireland's largest stone working companies, Creggstone in Ballinasloe, which employs close to 90 workers from all around the midland area. Creggstone carry out work nationwide from the top of Donegal to the bottom of Cork, with recent projects completed on the luxurious Adare Manor Hotel in County Limerick, along with refurbishing Courthouses all over the country and the magnificent refurbishment of St. Mel's Cathedral in Longford.

In his early days Cathal had a passionate love for mountain marathon running and orienteering, where he has gone onto being one of Ireland's greatest. He went on to accomplish some amazing feats, such as climbing Croagh Patrick 7 times in 14 hours. To this day he still holds the record for the fastest time to climb the five peaks of the British Isles in an astonishing 16 hours 15 minutes and 43 seconds, which includes travel time.

Cathal's love of sport has frequently tied in with raising funds for numerous charities all across Ireland, and he has managed to raise

hundreds of Euros for each given charity. Nowadays he plans to use his writing skills to raise money for people in need all over Ireland.

Cathal started writing poetry and short stories in 2015 and has become a skilled writer in doing so. His inspiration for writing comes from life itself, the people who he meets every day and conversations with others on a daily basis.

Despite all his hard work and training Cathal



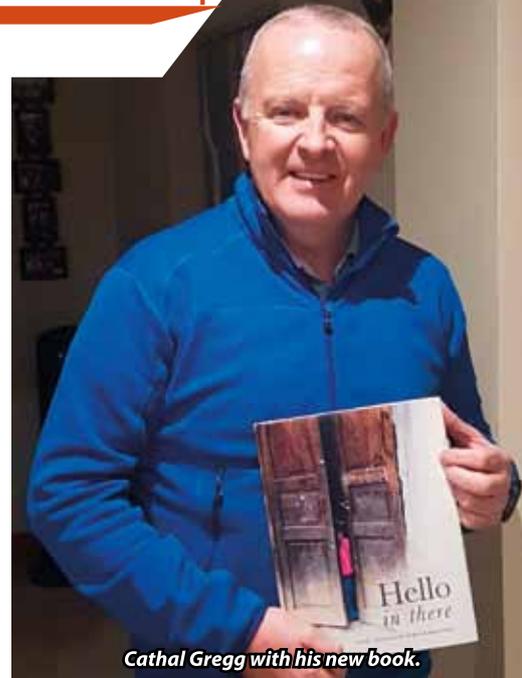
Cathal Cregg and Jackie Pando Kelly.

put his spare time into writing a new book "Hello In There", with the help of UCH Doctor Jackie Pando Kelly, which is filled with poetry based

on down to earth stories during the last economic crisis, and people who have suffered with life problems such as Cancer and Alzheimer's.

This concept has been on Cathal's mind for quite some time, and he is delighted that his ambition has come to life. The book title comes from the famous American musician John Prine's song, in which he granted permission for Cathal to use the song as his title and wished him lots of success with the book.

The book is set to launch on the 27th of February this year in the Ballinasloe Town Library, with special guest Cork GAA star,



Cathal Cregg with his new book.

Sean Óg O Halpín officiating. Copies of the book will be on sale in the library for €20 and other stores in the coming months, with all proceeds going towards numerous good causes.

Cathal now has his sights set on a new book which will be filled with short stories asides to poetry on the same topics of his current one.

"I must mention a huge thanks to Dr. Jackie Pando Kelly for working with me on the book, and to my wife Patricia along with our children Steven, Gary and Rachel for all their amazing support" stated Cathal.

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# GET YOUR GARDEN INTO SHAPE THIS SEASON



**Barry Ward of the Ballinasloe Garden Centre is renowned locally for his love of all things horticultural. The Centre has been awarded multiple Board BIA Quality awards.**

After a long cold winter, it is time to prepare to bring life back into the garden. The key aspects in any garden start from the ground up, if you haven't already then try setting up a compost area in your garden. This could simply

be a ready-made compost bin, or you could build a compost bin yourself. Not only will you have somewhere to put your garden waste, but your plants will benefit from the rich compost created when it all breaks down. To ensure the best results going into the summer months it is a good time to replace the old soil with new fresh compost.

**At Ballinasloe Garden Centre, we believe in taking care of our planet. Why not take advantage of a wet morning and do your plastic spring clean? Recycling last year's seed trays and pots is the perfect opportunity to get prepared for spring planting. This can be done by soaking your plastics in a basin of diluted household bleach and scrubbing where necessary. It is important to rinse the plastics with clean water.**

February and March are a great time to start seeds such as geraniums, begonias and anthuriums. They'll need to be grown in a warm glass house or similar, to ensure good growth. To find out more about early seed propagation drop into your local garden centre. Roses are cherished by the Irish gardener. Now is the perfect time to prune rose bushes and repeat flowering climbing roses. This can be achieved by shortening back the shoots that flowered last year and removing old wood. Early pruning means early flowering. By adding pot ash and old farm yard manure to the soil around your roses, you can give them the extra nutrients to spur on their growth.

**Early Spring is a great time to prune fruit trees and soft fruit bushes, well before sap begins to rise. Take care to shape the trees and bushes appropriately. Remove excessive branches to promote better sunlight and air circulation for**

## CHILDREN'S COMPUTER CODING AND LANGUAGE CLASSES

Computer coding classes will be available for children aged 7 to 17 beside Tiny Tots Creche at the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, Creagh.

**Liz Mulry, who has over 20 years' experience in the field will be teaching participants all aspects of game coding such as creating computer animations and designing their own games. No experience needed and bringing your own laptop is required. The classes will take place every Tuesdays 6.30 - 7.30pm and will cost €5 per person.**

Liz will also be providing language classes for primary school students. German classes will be held every Tuesday at 7:30pm to 8:30pm and French classes from 7:30pm to 8:30pm. Both classes cost €5 per child.

**"The classes are held in a relaxed and fun environment and students have vastly improved since their first lesson," she stated. Places are strictly limited at the moment, so it is important to book early. For more information or to book a class contact Liz on 087 9177323 or 09096 86889.**

richer, healthier fruits. Adding potash and old farm yard manure to loosened clay around the plant will promote plentiful fruit come summer. Help your bushes and trees to develop by keeping the base clear of grass and weeds, add bark mulch to suppress weed growth.

**BY BARRY WARD**

*Advt.*

'The grass is always greener on the other side'. Our most frequently asked questions currently of year are lawn care related. Lawn care is very individual, and we always advise that you should give the grass time to recoup after the winter. Hold off on giving your lawn its first cut until it appears over grown. Avoid cutting your lawn in very wet or frosty conditions. Remember to regularly cut your lawn and nourish it, for a magical transformation of the garden.

**For more information and advice find us on Facebook at Ballinasloe Garden Centre Deer Park or speak with a member of our team on site.**

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# BALLINASLOE WOMAN ELECTED CHAIR OF CIF

**Ballinasloe's Tara Flynn has recently been named Chairperson of the Construction Industry Federation. Tara, from Creagh, has been actively involved in many aspects of the community, namely with Pdraig Pearses where he is currently the Minor Football Board Chairperson. She is also the current Vice-Chairperson of the Garbally College Parents' Association.**

Tara started working with her father, Paul Flynn Snr. almost 25 years ago. Their company, Paul Flynn Construction, is very much a family run business with Paul Snr. emphasising traditional values in all dealings with clients. "Quality and integrity are the cornerstones to our reputation" Tara commented.

**She has been an active and dedicated member for the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) for many years, having first gotten involved by attending the CIF Western region meetings in Galway. "I was elected Vice-Chair of the CIF Western Region in 2016, and most recently I was elected Chairperson" Tara detailed. 2016 also saw her elected on to the Master Builders' and Contractors' Association.**

"I am truly humbled and honoured to be named the first lady Chairperson of the Western Region, and will do my very best for our members while I am in this role. We have such an array of competent builders and consultants, and one of my aims as chair is to increase our membership and attendance at our CIF meetings" she stated.

**As Chair of the CIF, Tara has reflected on how construction companies in the west have struggled over recent years and the changes that have been prompted.**

"Due to the recession, local Ballinasloe construction companies, including ourselves, had to re-structure and re-evaluate. I'm keenly aware of the issues affecting construction in the region. This is a time of recovery, but due to geography and other factors, this recovery seems to be happening at a slower pace

in regional areas. My father founded Paul Flynn Construction Ltd in the mid-1970s. When it began, the company's primary focus was on the private residential market. Now, nearly a half-century later, our company is also a leading figure in educational, commercial and fit-out sectors nationwide," she commented.

**"At the recent CIF Annual Conference in Croke Park, one of the speakers, Mark Farmer of the UK's Cast Consultancy, did a presentation on how the construction industry must change and modernise to progress. This struck a chord with me, as I believe our industry has huge potential to adapt and innovate. We are constantly evolving and even though we are still in a very challenging and competitive market, we are making progress."**

Construction in the west, however, has seen a recent pick up, which Tara notes. "Planning has recently been applied for on behalf of BACD for a factory on the IDA site, with the support of the Ballinasloe Credit Union Social Fund. I would be hopeful that this could attract investment from a major company, which in turn would create employment for the area. It could be a big project for the region."

**"It's very encouraging to see there are a number of major projects coming on board to boost the Western region: NUIG are planning to build a 2nd phase of student accommodation and Knock Airport is to spend approximately €15 million between 2017-2019." The potential Apple data-centre in Athenry is another key player that Tara is hopeful for. "It was regrettable that they had objections, as they have invested heavily in this project. It would be a major game changer for the west of Ireland," she added.**

Having recently attended the opening of the Gort-Tuam motorway, Tara is glad to see the continued linking of the west. "It's a major infrastructural spend for the area. I feel there is a need now to move on from this and try to connect Cork-

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Limerick-Galway-the North West. The more we can increase our connectivity, the more benefits-social and economic-we will see for the region. Ballinasloe has seen a number of benefits on the Dublin-Galway motorway, for example."

**Moving closer to home, Tara has continued to be active with the Padraig Pearses GAA Club. The Senior Hurling side recently ended their 30 year championship drought. "It was absolutely amazing, and one of the most historic days in the recent history of the club. To win our first Senior Hurling title in thirty years brought such excitement to the club, its members, supporters and sponsors. It was a joy that we could finally bring home the Micky Cuniffe Cup to Woodmount."**

As well as her role as Chairperson for CIF Galway, Tara is also a member of the newly-formed CIF diversity and inclusion working group "Building Equality." "Through this group, we hope throughout 2018 and beyond to promote careers in construction to all, and to change the common perception that our industry is male only. As the industry recovers and we have an increase in activity, we need more young people taking up trades and other careers in construction. The industry must respond to the increased demand for these skills. It's wonderful to see initiatives like those by Seamus Brady of Castle Ceilings who has created a traineeship programme that attracts people back into the industry" Tara added.

**Technological advances as a key instrument in how the industry can improve, Tara feels, explaining "I believe very strongly that we need to take full advantage of technology such as Nzeb, Lean Construction and BIM as this is the way forward. This will become a major focus throughout 2018, and as such, the CIF Western region will host a seminar on nZEB in January to highlight the relevant information to its members."**



**Tara Flynn,**  
**the new Chairperson of CIF West.**

**Tara with the outgoing Chairperson,**  
**Paul Stewart.**

Tara is a current member of the Town Team committee, which was started in 2014. The team is made up of local business people, retired professionals, and local community groups whose aim to enhance the town. The team focuses on the positive aspects of the town, engaging with the community to project a more positive view of Ballinasloe.

**"We have undertaken various initiatives such as building our European Wishing Christmas tree, upgrading our Christmas Lights, organising the People of the Year Awards, the Zombie Walk and our Sports Hub," Tara commented, making specific note of the Sports Hub. "The idea behind the Sports Hub is to try and attract sporting teams to our town for a bonding training weekend where we can offer the entire package from hotel accommodation, pre-season training, a range of pitch facilities and can also offer facilities such as astro turf, karting, and so on."**

You can learn more about the Construction Industry Federation at [www.cif.ie](http://www.cif.ie), and you can read testimonials for Paul Flynn Construction Ltd at [www.paulflynn.ie](http://www.paulflynn.ie)

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Chief celebrant, Bishop John Kirby, with priests from the surrounding parishes, offering mass at the Re-opening and Dedication of St. Catherine's Church in Aughrim. J & S Photos

It was a red letter for the parish of Aughrim, in East Galway, when their 150-year-old St. Catherine's Church was re-opened after fifteen months of renovation works, which resulted in a complete transformation of both the inside and outside, thanks to a huge input by local craftsmen, artists and the Pastoral Council.

At the Dedication ceremony by the Bishop of Clonfert, Dr. John Kirby, pride of place was given to members of the local Church of Ireland and their Rector, Rev. John Godfrey, who had kindly given their Holy Trinity Church to their neighbours for the Saturday evening mass and other religious ceremonies while works were carried out on St. Catherine's. Bishop Kirby said "The presence of Rev. John Godfrey along with some members of the Church of Ireland, and the exchange of plaques, is a noteworthy feature."

The Parish Priest, Fr. Gerry Geraghty, told the congregation "As we, the people of Aughrim, celebrate the re-opening of St. Catherine's Church, I hope and pray that this momentous occasion may be

one of great joy and sincere renewal in the parish community. As we re-open this Church today, we celebrate once more the joys and hopes of this community. We give thanks for the outstanding commitment shown by so many in the restoration project. Thanks to the many members of the Pastoral Council, past and present, whose vision and toil has brought us to this great day. St. Catherine's Church will proudly stand as a true sign of the faith and dedication of the people of Aughrim parish. I hope it will be a place of comfort and encouragement in our moments of grief and anguish and a place where we find a true home in all our joys and hopes."

He concluded by thanking the Church of Ireland community for their generosity in placing their church at their disposal, for the past fifteen months, while renovation works were ongoing. "It was a real ecumenical gesture and one we, hopefully, can reciprocate at some stage" said Fr. Geraghty. And at the end of the celebratory Mass, Fr.

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Geraghty and Rev. John Godfrey exchanged engraved plaques which marked the appreciation and cooperation that marked the historic event.



**Tom Hannon, chairman of the Pastoral Council, welcomed chief celebrant, Bishop Kirby, priests from the neighbouring parishes and especially Rev. John Godfrey and members of the Church of Ireland community. He gave a brief description of the works carried out, paying special tribute to "a cohort of local talented artisans, volunteers and staff from the Community Involvement Scheme, too numerous to mention" He also**

**thanked contractors Paul Flynn Construction and Architect Gerry Dolan for their professionalism in executing the works.**

The first project was the construction of an extension, on the northern side of the building, consisting of a boiler house, toilet with disability access and a new entrance porch. A new altar, ambo, chair and tabernacle, in Italian marble, which were created by Tony Dolphin, adorn the new sanctuary while the interior of the building is totally redecorated. There is a new lighting and sound system, gas central heating, while the stations of the cross were restored by Seamus Feerick and original seats have all been reinstated, looking like new.

**The roof and interior walls are insulated while the stained glass window, featuring St. Catherine, looks down on a new redesigned and carpeted gallery that includes seats which were originally in the chapel at St. Brigid's Hospital in Ballinasloe. Outside trees were removed while paths and walkways were tarmacadamed. Mr. Hannon said there are still some works outstanding but these would be done "in due course, budget allowing."**

Concluding, Mr. Hannon said a "huge thanks to the parishioners, who contributed so generously to the second collection over a long period, which helped to provide finance for this extension and renovations as well as the continuous commitment and encouragement provided by our wonderful parish priest, Fr. Gerry Geraghty, which made all of this possible. We are eternally grateful to Rev. John Godfrey and his parishioners from the Church of Ireland for offering us the use of Holy Trinity Church while the works were being carried out. It has been a mutually enriching spiritual experience for everyone."

**The works were financed by the parishoners through a second collection taken up at weekend masses, which started ten years ago, and the sale of Church land.**

Afterwards Rev. John Godfrey told me how the Church of Ireland became involved, saying it was back in 2015 that Fr. Geraghty told him of the proposed renovation works in St. Catherine's. "I discussed the possibility of helping out with the Select Vestry of the Aughrim Parish Union, by offering the use of our church when works got under way and they were delighted to oblige. It was a milestone in ecumenical co-operation" he said.

**When Fr. Geraghty decided to celebrate the first mass in Holy Trinity Church on Saturday evening, 6th August 2016, it was a historical event. Rev. Godfrey told the congregation "On behalf of everyone in Holy Trinity Church, the Aughrim and Ballinasloe Unions and the Bishop of Limerick, I'd like to offer you the warmest of welcomes here tonight. It's great to know that after years of planning and waiting that work is now under way on your Church."**



**On behalf of everyone in Holy Trinity Church, the Aughrim and Ballinasloe Unions and the Bishop of Limerick, I'd like to offer you the warmest of welcomes here tonight. It's great to know that after years of planning and waiting that work is now under way on your Church."**

The Rector said "Whether it's in your own home or in your parish church, getting the builders in is never an easy business-whatever way you look at it, there's a lot of upheaval. That's why I was delighted when Fr. Gerry suggested a way of keeping

that upheaval to a minimum by celebrating your Masses here in Holy Trinity, whilst the builders are in. It's great that you will be able to maintain your routine of prayer, here in the village, over the coming months. But more than that, I want you to know that you are doing a wonderful thing for the Church of Ireland community here, by allowing us to offer you this gesture of hospitality. It does our hearts a power of good to know that you are happy to come to us here. I wish you every blessing here over the coming months-but please know that it is we who are blessed by your presence."

**Speaking at the Re-dedication ceremony, Rev. Godfrey quoted Bishop Kirby's words at the start of Mass, "May all our worship here be gathered into unity in the heavenly Jerusalem." He said "With those words in mind, I am deeply grateful to Fr. Gerry for his invitation to representatives of Holy Trinity Church and I to worship here with you today. It's great to see St. Catherine's Church looking so well, and to share in the excitement in coming home to your own church.**

One of the wonderful by-products of this renovation project has been the simple gesture of hospitality offered and received, as you have been saying mass in Holy Trinity Church for over a year. That simple gesture done us all good: it has been a sign of Christian unity here. That's why we are delighted to be able to worship with you here in St. Catherine's, as a further sign of our unity for which we have all prayed today. I can't tell you how much good it did us to know that you, the living stones of St. Catherine's, were lighting up Holy Trinity with your prayers over the last while. It has been like having two churches beside the rectory here. Thank you for lighting up our church with the life of your church" concluded Rev. John Godfrey.

*The Battle of Aughrim in 1691 was a fierce duel between the Williamites and the Jacobites but the last two years have seen an ecumenical movement in the locality that has cemented a greater friendship and understanding between the Catholic and Church of Ireland communities, which to say the least, is unique in rural Ireland.*



PP, Fr. Gerry Geraghty and C of I Rector, Rev. John Godfrey, exchange souvenir commemorative plaques following the re-opening of St. Catherine's.

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# MONSIGNOR McHUGH CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD

BY KEN KELLY

A Taughmaconnell-born priest returned to his roots when he celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. For Monsignor Canon J. Daniel McHugh it was a nostalgic occasion as he celebrated masses in Curraghboy Church and St. Ronan's Church, Taughmaconnell which were attended by his sister Geraldine as well as cousins, friends and childhood acquaintances.

Monsignor McHugh hailed from Curraghboy, Taughmaconnell but went with his parents, James (Babe) and Geraldine, to live in England in the late 40's. He grew up in Coventry where he attended St. Osburg's Primary School in Keresley and then Bishop Ullathorne Grammar School. Having been ordained to the priesthood in the Holy Family Catholic Church in 1967, Fr. McHugh was later engaged by Mercia Sound Radio Station as a commentator for the Papal visit and Mass at Coventry Airport in 1982.

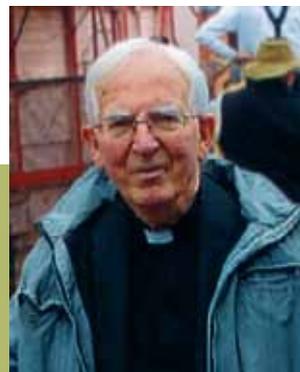
On 24th September last, parishioners, friends and family members joined 35 priests and Deacons to celebrate Monsignor McHugh's 50th Anniversary of his Ordination to the priesthood at a packed St. George and St. Theresa's Church in Dorridge, Coventry, where he had ministered for the past sixteen years. Right Rev. Robert Byrne, Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham, was the chief celebrant of a Mass of Thanksgiving, assisted by Bishop Philip Pargeter as well as other clergy, many of whom had travelled from the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The Mayor of Solihull, Cllr. Stuart Davis and the Mayoress attended as well as the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre and the Order of St. Gregory while children from St.

George and St. Theresa's Primary School played a special part in the singing of the Mass.

The chairman of the Parish Council, Tony Taylor, thanked Monsignor McHugh for his sixteen years of service to the parish. Included in his achievements were he said "the erection of the Calvary Cross next to the Presbytery, the Parish Mission, Annual Pilgrimages, Support for the Parish School and a planned Baptistery." Afterwards the congregation joined in celebratory refreshments in the parish centre.

But Monsignor McHugh never forgot his roots. He always loved coming back to the Taughmaconnell area on holidays and had a strong bond with so many of his childhood friends. As well he was a frequent visitor to Our Lady's Shrine in Knock, to which he had a special devotion. Following the celebrations in Coventry, Monsignor McHugh decided to offer special masses in both Curraghboy Church and St. Ronan's Church, Taughmaconnell to celebrate his Golden Jubilee. His sister, Geraldine, travelled over for the festivities and was joined by cousins, friends and parishioners at the masses before retiring to McHugh's Tavern for refreshments and a big family reunion.

Then in the company of friends, Monsignor McHugh attended the opening of the October Fair in Ballinasloe-an event he first witnessed over seventy years ago-before returning to resume his ministerial duties in Coventry.



Monsignor McHugh with relations and friends in McHugh's of Taughmaconnell following his Golden Jubilee Mass.

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# JUMPER DAY RAISES OVER €12,000

BY IAN O'BOYLE

Over 26 schools, playschools, shops and businesses in the Ballinasloe community came together during the month of December to host a Christmas Jumper Day and create awareness for those experiencing homelessness in the local community.

The campaign was initiated by local woman, Geraldine Deane, who came up with the idea to get schools involved in the Christmas Jumper Day initiative for Galway Simon Community's Bridge Resource Centre in Ballinasloe. Overall the campaign raised an astonishing €12,093.38 after setting a target of €10,000 at the start of the fundraiser.

Organiser of the event, Geraldine Deane, said it was a huge success overall and thanked all of the participants who raised so much needed funds and awareness for The Bridge Resource Centre.

"I would like to thank all the staff of the schools and playschools for their help in organising the fundraisers, and to all students who took part. Thanks to all for your enthusiasm and support for the Jumper Day. I would also like to thank the management and staff of all the shops and businesses that took part on the day" stated Geraldine.

The Christmas Jumper Day brought a great buzz of excitement and festive atmosphere to the town. "I am so grateful to each person

for their contribution towards this fundraiser. The community spirit for this worthy cause has been amazing. The funds raised will make a great difference to those struggling with homelessness in our community" continued Geraldine.

Speaking about the impact of the Christmas Day initiative, Sinead Molloy, Fundraising Manager of Galway Simon said it will make a huge difference for those facing homelessness locally. "The support from the local community in Ballinasloe has been absolutely amazing and the funds raised from Christmas Jumper Day will allow our Bridge Resource Centre to meet the needs of those who present to the service daily".

"We would like to extend our sincere thanks to each and every school, business and individual who participated in the initiative. We are so appreciative of the continued support we receive from the local community in Ballinasloe, without which we would

not be able to continue providing services to those who need it the most" explained Sinead.

All of the funds raised during the event will go to Ballinasloe Bridge Resource Centre, which plays a vital role in preventing homelessness in the local community. The centre operates a drop-in service that offers people advice and practical support with a variety of issues including personal challenges, addiction and health issues.



The handing over of the cheque by Geraldine Deane to the Bridge Resource Centre.



Kilglass N.S taking part on Jumper Day

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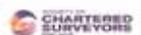
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# SOCIAL SERVICES BOUTIQUE POP-UP FUNDRAISER RETURNS

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Visit by Day Centre to Aras an Uachtarain



2015 Boutique Pop-Up Event



Christmas Setting in Day Centre

As part of the annual drive behind Ballinasloe Social Services to fundraise practically 50% of their care programmes running costs, they are hosting their bi-annual Boutique Pop-Up event on Saturday, February 24th from 10.00am to 5.00pm in the Emerald Ballroom. Items such as new clothes and unwanted gifts, which have been donated by the community, will be available for purchase.

Over 500 people attended the Boutique Pop-Up held in 2015 with over 50 volunteers also in attendance to stage and run the monster event. With thousands of donations from the community, the event raised over €6,000. All proceeds went to the "Meals on Wheels" service which delivers over 15,000 hot meals annually to recipients within the Ballinasloe and Hinterland area.

Social Services manager, Teresa Coughlan, said "The volunteers are the backbone of the organisation and they always help us fundraise much income." Teresa also expressed her thanks to the community as they received so many donations that many of them were donated to other local needy charities after the event.

According to the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Nursing Home Support Scheme the average weekly costs of care for an elderly person over the age of 65 is €1,354. Over 140 people within this bracket avail of the Ballinasloe Social Services with an average weekly budget of only €55 without taking into consideration that 40 children who also rely

on the service. The government through the HSE chiefly supplements 50% of the service's annual budget requirements of €400,000, with the rest of the money coming solely from fundraising. With an aging population in Ireland, these figures stress the significance of the service's volunteers and the impact that fundraising and community involvement must have on saving the tax payer considerable sums folks being able to live independent healthy lives with community support and focused intervention – provided by the Staff and Volunteers at the Social Services.

The Boutique Pop-Up event is one of the many fundraising events held throughout the year and Teresa is urging people to participate, stating "We rely so heavily each year on the confidence that we will fundraise enough money to accommodate for everyone that really needs our services. Most people are not aware of the amount of time and commitment that our volunteers devote to this cause and our numbers are truly significant for just one community."

At this year's event proceeds will primarily go towards renovating the day and dining rooms to accommodate for increasing users. These improved facilities will provide services in which the Town's older citizens can avail of a home away from home environment daily, giving carers a well-earned break.

Ballinasloe Social Services are now appealing for new/nearly new clothing, branded goods and unwanted gifts for this event. Donations can be dropped into its premises in Upper Brackernagh. For further details call the Centre on 090 9643217.

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**BALLINASLOE CHOIRS** raised over €9,200 during their carol singing session on Christmas Eve in Ballinasloe. The money will be divided between the Ballinasloe Social Services and the Samaritans.

**CECILIA McCAFFERTY**, Kilgarve, who passed away, was for over 25 years assistant manager of the Employment Office in Ballinasloe. She was predeceased by her husband, Commdt. Gary McCafferty, a native of Derry, who died in 1998.

**DUGGAN PARK** has not staged an inter-county hurling or football league match since 2,005, despite having flood-lighting facilities. Prior to the opening of Pearse Stadium, the Ballinasloe venue was the main pitch in Galway catering for inter-county and Railway Cup hurling games as well as sharing the inter-county football matches with Tuam Stadium.

**SADIE GOODE** of Mountpleasant, who has died, was widow of the late Michael Goode, a former Rate Collector in the town. She was a niece of the late Bishop of Clonfert, Most Rev. Dr. Dignan.

**Cllr. AIDAN DONOHUE**, the current chairman of Ballinasloe Municipal Council, was a member of the Sarsfields 1972 Co. Senior Hurling Champions, who were feted by Galway GAA at the Co. Hurling Final in December.

**TERESA McCARTHY** of Sarsfield Road whose death occurred, was predeceased by her husband Mike, who together with her late brother, Pat Hughes, were deeply involved

in the setting up of Tynagh Mines in the early sixties.

**MATTIE KENNY**, a former employee of Square D in Ballinasloe, is steering Dublin and Leinster hurling champions, Cuala, to an All-Ireland semi-final clash with Liam Mellows of Galway. The Abbey-Duniry native is manager of the Dublin side that won the All-Ireland club title for the first time last year and is assisted by ex-Galway player Greg Kennedy from Loughrea.

**THE LATE GUS COLOHAN** of Harbour Road was a life-long member of the Clonfert PTA. He was an avid member of Comhaltas and won several trophies for traditional Irish step-dancing.

**JOHN LEONARD** from Kilmalaw, had the honour of turning the key for a viewing evening of Aughrim's New National School. The 93-year-old past pupil was joined by former principal, Jo Scannell, to celebrate the historic event. The school will be officially opened later this year.

**DYMPNA DOOLEY**, Ard Mhuire, Ballinasloe, who died in her 100th year, was the last surviving member of the Dooley Family of The Corner House, in Dunlo St., which was a well-known establishment for over one hundred years. She was predeceased by four sisters and five brothers.

**AUGHRIM VILLAGE** had over 10,000 lights illuminating the area for the Festive Season. It was over 2,000 more lights than last year, while the outdoor crib was a major attraction.

**TIM SWEENEY** of Fohenagh, who passed away at the age of 88, was captain of the Galway senior hurlers in 1961 when they defeated Clare in the Munster championship. He played a major part in Fohenagh's county championship victories of 1959 and 1960, being their top scorer. He was regarded as one of Galway's best-ever hurlers in the 1950's and early 60's.

**AGNES HURLEY** from Derrymullen, Ballinasloe is among a group of former schoolteachers that have volunteered for a five week trip to Gambia in West Africa where they will work with local teachers as part of the Catholic Education Secretariate.

**EYRECOURT HALL** is the Thursday night venue for those interested in learning Karate, Sports Karate and Kobobo. Similar classes will be held in Kiltormer Community Complex on Friday nights. Contact John on 086 8621747 or Marie at 087 3082323 for more information.

**BALLINASLOE TIDY TOWNS** Committee are inviting suggestions and ideas from residents and groups, or any interested parties, on the design and locations for the promotion of bio-diversity projects. Call 086 8179580 for more information.

**MEGHAN MARKLE**, the fiancée of Prince Harry of England, believes some of her ancestors may have come from East Galway. Early research revealed a woman, believed to be her great-grandmother, emigrated to the USA in the late 1800's. Any information welcome, please contact Ballinasloe LIFE (not Buckingham Palace!).

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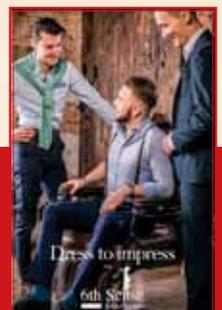
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## TAUGHMACONNELL N.S. TRIP TO CLONMACNOISE BY: ISABEL & RÓISÍN

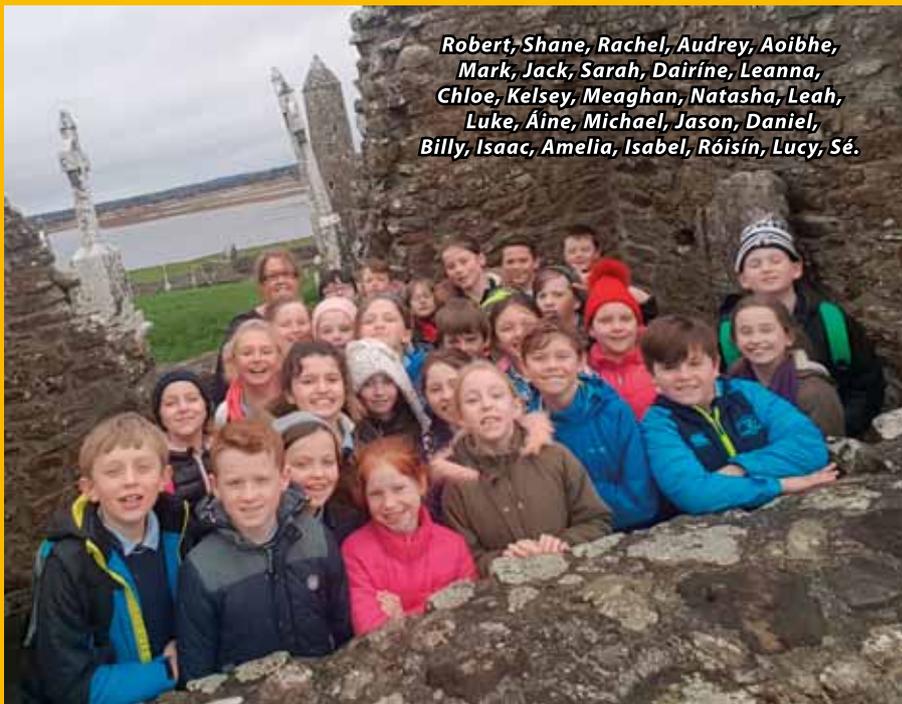
3rd and 4th Classes went to Clonmacnoise. It took us around 25 mins to get there. The bus trip was fun. We played games and sang songs.

When we got there we ate our lunch. We went back inside and watched a 20 minute film about the history of Clonmacnoise.

Afterwards we were showed the High Crosses. We then went into a room and got to look around and read the information.

There were some parts of old crosses there. They were very cool to look at.

We then went outside. Our guide showed us a round tower. He said it was used for keeping the Vikings away. After a few minutes we went up to the whispering arch. Everyone had a go, it actually worked. We went to St. Ciaran's Church. The roof came off during the hundreds of years it has been there.



*Robert, Shane, Rachel, Audrey, Aoibhe, Mark, Jack, Sarah, Dairíne, Leanna, Chloe, Kelsey, Meaghan, Natasha, Leah, Luke, Áine, Michael, Jason, Daniel, Billy, Isaac, Amelia, Isabel, Róisín, Lucy, Sé.*

Our Guide said people used to dig up some clay to bring home but it damages the structure of the church there. When he left, our teacher Ms. Cassells, told us that Pope John Paul II visited Clonmacnoise in 1979 during his trip to Ireland.

We went back to the place that we had our lunch and ate the rest of it. We went back to the school and did a little work and went home.

It was a great day!

The children from Junior and Senior Infants in Taughmaconnell N.S. were very lucky to get a visit from two local ambulance drivers before Christmas. They learned about all aspects of the job and had the opportunity to ask lots of questions. There was great excitement when they got a tour inside the ambulance. The kids got to see all the equipment used in the ambulance, and they especially enjoyed getting bandages applied and heart rates checked!

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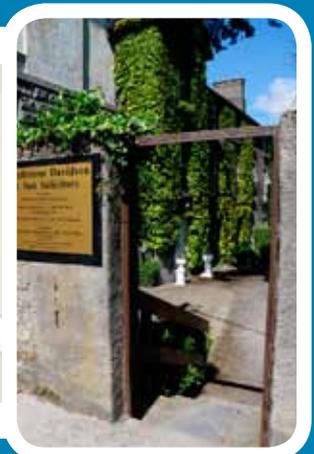
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## ARD SCOIL MHUIRE DEBATING TEAM PROGRESSES



*Maria Coulihan, Grainne Loughnane and Keri Manning.*

TY students Grainne Loughnane, Keri Manning and Maria Colohan of Ard Scoil Mhuire have been making some great progress in this year's Secondary School National Debating Competition.

After a very close debate in the first round, the Senior Gael Linn debating team qualified for the next round which took place in Athlone. After

another fantastic performance the three girls have led themselves onto the next round.

Principal Patrica Kilgannon was delighted with the team for their progress. "A huge congratulations to Maria, Grainne and Keri, who have done so well for the school thus far. I also have to record our thanks to Ms Neylon and Ms Hackett for their tireless work and support of the team throughout the competition" she said.

The Students Union of Ard Scoil Mhuire recently held a phone free day in the school, to allow space for students to chat face to face, take exercise, and read etc. This exercise proved to be a positive initiative to promote wellbeing and balance in student's everyday busy lives.



Ard Scoil Mhuire 2nd year girls' basketball team competing in Athenry.

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## KILGLASS N.S. INCREASES ENROLMENT OVER 30 %

Kilglass National School is situated just outside Ahascragh, 10 minutes north-west of Ballinasloe. This year the school has taken a current total of 83 students, an increase of almost 20 pupils over the past four years.

The school is being extended in the summer of 2018, with a new classroom and special needs toilet being added on to the existing building. The classroom itself has been needed for a long time, with increasing numbers of Junior and Senior infants joining the school every year.

A new play area for the younger students has been added to the school yard, which has gotten an amazing response from all pupils who use it every school day. The school's car park has been upgraded this year, with more room for parking and additional spaces being added to facilitate all types of cars which are used within it.

Principal Vincent Glynn and his 5 staff and 2 special needs assistants are looking forward to an energetic and productive new year ahead.



The Kilglass boys' football team who narrowly lost by just one point in the final of Cuman na mBunscoil.



Kilglass National School Student Conor O'Brien with his Hurley Hanger, which won the Junior Entrepreneur Programme. The money made from JEP went towards a barbecue at the end of the school year, two buddy benches and a poly tunnel.



Kilglass students Nathan Dolan, Conor O'Brien, Ronan Kelly, and Ava Smyth who came 4th in the Tuam Educational Centre Maths Quiz, held by maths quiz master Kami Gallagher.



Kilglass Students representing the school in the Coláiste an Chreagáin 7-A-Side Soccer Tournament  
Top row left to right: Ruth Shaughnessy, Padraig Corcoran, Nathan Dolan, Mikey Corcoran, Rebecca Murray, Conor Colohan, and Eric Quigley.  
Bottom row left to right: Conor O'Brien, Ronan Kelly, Cian Kelly, Ava Smyth, and Margaret Corcoran.



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# OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



A very successful Tractor Charity Run in aid of Cancer Support, Roscommon Hospice was made in conjunction with Pádraig Pearses (Woodmount) GAA. Pictured with the hand over of proceeds are from L to R: Michael Glennon, Tom Grenham (Event Organiser), Ciaran McGreal (Club Treasurer), Vintage Ferguson (unknown model), P.J. O'Brien (Roscommon Hospice), Hubert Darcy (Club Secretary).



Children enjoying the Christmas weather

Pádraig Pearses GAA Club (Woodmount), were delighted to be able to support two worthy charities in their area to the value of €2,000 in total.



L-R: Sean Ward (Tractor Run Organiser), Ciaran McGreal (Pádraig Pearses GAA Club), Jacqueline Daly (East Galway / Midlands Cancer Care), Mike Glennon (Tractor Run Organiser), Tom Grenham (Tractor Run Organiser).



L-R: Sean Ward (Tractor Run Organiser), Ciaran McGreal (Pádraig Pearses GAA Club), Margaret O'Toole (Mayo/Roscommon Hospice), Mike Glennon (Tractor Run Organiser), Tom Grenham (Tractor Run Organiser).



**Pádraig Pearses, (Gurteen-Ballymacward) 1967 Junior Hurling Champions, on the 50th anniversary of their win in Ruane's, Glentane**  
 Back Row (L-R): Paul O'Brien (representing Gerry O'Brien), Kevin Bleahene, Paddy Hillary, Joe Molloy, Tommy Molloy Jr. (representing Thomas Molloy), Tim Burns (also representing MJ Burns RIP), Kevin Raftery, Vin Connor, Lucy Molloy (representing James Molloy RIP), Pádraig Murray (representing Paddy Murray RIP), Noel Treacy.  
 Front Row (L-R): Micheál Finnerty, Pat Joe Murray, Sean McGann, Peter Mulryan, Club President Johnny Murphy, Martin Kilkenny, Martin Scarry, Paul Ryan, Brendan Hardiman.

# FEBRUARY EVENTS GUIDE

Thursday 1st		
Sudanese Art Exh	Church Gallery	First Day
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Library	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Tony Fleming Concert	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Social - Shane Moore	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 2nd		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Social Dancing	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Limelite	Shearwater Hotel	9-11pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Cruiscin	Killeen's Of S'Bridge	10pm
Party Night DJ Johnny F	Downey's Bar	10pm
Liam Mannery & Maria	Shearwater Hotel	11pm-1am
Lounge - John Molloy	Shearwater Hotel	1am-2am
Saturday 3rd		
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm
John Moday	Shearwater Hotel	3pm-5pm
Social Dancing	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Brendan Magee	Shearwater Hotel	9pm-11pm
Pacifica	The Auld Sod	10pm
Favourities DJ Johnny F	Downey's Bar	10pm
Chris Nash	The Pillar House	10pm
Simon Bordy	An Tain	10pm
The Hush	Luker's of S'bridge	10pm
Hickory Wind	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Michael Collins	Shearwater Hotel	11pm-1am
Lounge - Olivia Douglas	Shearwater Hotel	1am-2am
Sunday 4th		
Dance Michael Collins	Shearwater Hotel	3pm-6pm
Stuart Moyles	Shearwater Hotel	3pm-6pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Social Dancing	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Country - Michael English	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Liam's Country Rd Show	The Auld Sod	9.30pm
Lounge - Stuart Moyles	Shearwater Hotel	1am-2am
Monday 5th		
Irish Rural Link	B'sloe Library	5pm-7pm
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Tuesday 6th		
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 7th		
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 8th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Library	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	10pm

Friday 9th		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Trad Session	Dunloe Tavern	10pm
Saturday 10th		
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm
DJ John Finnerty	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Off The Wall	The Auld Sod	10pm
BoJangles	Killeens of S'Bridge	10pm
Music Sabrina Fallon	Downey's Bar	10pm
Lorcan Live	An Tain	10pm
Joe Wynne	Luker's of S'bridge	10pm
Alan Lawlor	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Sunday 11th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Liam Mannery & Maria	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Jerry Guthrie-Michael Regan	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Emerald Dave	The Auld Sod	9.30pm
Monday 12th		
Irish Rural Link	B'sloe Library	5pm-7pm
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Tuesday 13th		
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
Galway 2020 Meeting	Church Gallery	7-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 14th		
Breastfeeding Support Grp	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession F	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 15th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Library	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
TR Dallas	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 16th		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Small Idea's	The Auld Sod	10pm
Ken Solo	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 17th		
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm
NightOwls	The Auld Sod	10pm
Maggie Dunne	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Desi Egan	Downey's Bar	10pm
Take Time	The Pillar House	10pm
Joe Casey & Jack L	An Tain	10pm
Eoin Maher	An Tain	10pm
Jiggers of Erin	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Sunday 18th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Country - John Molloy	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Social- Michael Collins	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Ken Solo	The Auld Sod	9.30pm

Monday 19th		
Sudanese Art Exh	Church Gallery	Last Day
Irish Rural Link	B'sloe Library	5pm-7pm
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Tuesday 20th		
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 21st		
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 22nd		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Library	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Book Club	B'sloe Library	7pm-8pm
Social Steve Reilly	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 23rd		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Cathal Cregg book Launch	Church Gallery	First Day
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Pub Fiction	The Auld Sod	10pm
Five Strung	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Saturday 24th		
Capt & President Drive	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12am
Bagatelle Concert	Shearwater Hotel	8pm
TIM EDEY	Luker's of S'bridge	8pm
Crooked Jacks	The Auld Sod	10pm
Jock & Davy	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Music Olivia Douglas	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm
Average James	An Tain	10pm
Paul Watchorn	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Sunday 25th		
Capt & President Drive	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
Social - Showbands	Shearwater Hotel	5.30-8pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Robert Mizzell/ Andy Feeny	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Shane Moore	The Auld Sod	9.30pm
Monday 26th		
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Tuesday 27th		
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 28th		
Breastfeeding Support	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm

# MARCH EVENTS GUIDE

Thursday 1st		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Library	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Social - Steve Reilly	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 2nd		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Black Shadow	The Auld Sod	10pm
Saturday 3rd		
LUKA BLOOM	Luker's of S'bridge	8pm
Split	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Maggie Dunne	The Pillar House	10pm
Sum Craic	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Finnegan Fury	The Auld Sod	10pm
Jeff Collins	An Tain	10pm
Sunday 4th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Liam Country Rd Show	The Auld Sod	9.30pm
Monday 5th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Tuesday 6th		
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 7th		
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 8th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Libray	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
John Molloy	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 9th		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Small Ideas	The Auld Sod	10pm
Saturday 10th		
Coding Club	B'sloe Libray	11am-12pm
Jiving Weekend	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Derek Ryan/Stuart Moyles	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
BoJangle	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Sabrina Fallon	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm
Live Music	Luker's of S'bridge	10pm
Lorcan Live	An Tain	10pm
NightOwls	The Auld Sod	10pm
Take Two	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm

Sunday 11th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Jiving Weekend	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
M Denver/J Molloy	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Ken Solo	The Auld Sod	9.30pm
Monday 12th		
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Tuesday 13th		
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 14th		
Breastfeeding Support	B'sloe Library	9.45am-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 15th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Libray	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Olivia Douglas	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 16th		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
B'sloe Show Race Night	The Pillar House	8pm
Daithi Rua	Luker's of S'bridge	8pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 17th		
Coding Club	B'sloe Libray	11am-12pm
Trad Session For St.Pat!	Dunlo Tavern	5pm
Off The Wall	The Auld Sod	10pm
Babylon	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Party Night	Downey's Bar	10pm
Joe Casey	Luker's of S'bridge	10pm
Boom Diggity	The Pillar House	10pm
Eoin Maher	An Tain	10pm
The LiveWires	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Sunday 18th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Pacifica	The Auld Sod	10pm
Live LINE	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	Luker's of S'bridge	10pm
J Nugent & D Henshaw	The Pillar House	10pm
The Humble Superstars	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Monday 19th		
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Tuesday 20th		
Cathal Cregg book Launch	Church Gallery	Last Day
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm

Wednesday 21st		
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 22nd		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Libray	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Steve Reilly Dancing	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 23rd		
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Alan Lawlor	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Pub Fiction	The Auld Sod	10pm
Saturday 24th		
Coding Club	B'sloe Library	11am-12pm
Bernadette Blessing Art	Church Gallery	2.30pm-4
DJ Johnny F	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	Luker's of S'bridge	10pm
Small Deal	Killeen's of S'Bridge	10pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm
Laker	The Auld Sod	10pm
Simon Brody	An Tain	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Sunday 25th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Emerald Dave	The Auld Sod	10pm
Monday 26th		
Yoga	Gullanes Hotel	6.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Tuesday 27th		
Age Action	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
GROW	B'sloe Library	6pm-8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 28th		
Cuidiu Breastfeeding Support Grp	B'sloe Library	9.45am-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Club	B'sloe Library	11am-1pm
Age Action	B'sloe Library	2pm-4pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
B.Killkenny/F.Hession	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 29th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Family Support	B'sloe Libray	11.30am-12.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5pm-7pm
Book Club	B'sloe Library	7pm-8pm
John Shannon	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 30th		
Good Friday Bonus Ball	B'sloe Golf Club	All Day
B'sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Comhaltas Trad Session	Burke's Bar	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	9.30pm
Saturday 31st		
Boithrin	Killeen's Of S'Bridge	10pm
DJ Johnny F	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	10pm
Crooked Jacks	The Auld Sod	10pm
An Other	An Tain	10pm
Hickory Wind	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
The High Reel	Luker's of S'bridge	10pm

To advertise your events here contact: [ballinasloelife@hotmail.com](mailto:ballinasloelife@hotmail.com) or Call 090 964 5831 by March 13th.

# CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS



*Celebrating 25 Years in Business at Jorenas, Society Street were; Amy Manning, Nuala Kelly, Helen Haverty, Rena Kilcommins, John Kilcommins.*



## Ballinasloe Journalist Honoured by his Colleagues

*Ken Kelly from Ballinasloe was awarded Lifetime Membership of the NUJ ( National Union of Journalists), an accolade reserved for those who have been members of the union for 40 years or more. Ken reported for national and regional papers, public broadcasters and was the East Galway News Reporter for Galway Bay FM from its launch to recent times.*

*Pictured L-R: Irish Secretary NUJ, Séamus Dooley; Siobhán Holliman, Chairperson of NUJ West of Ireland Branch; Ann Healy, NUJ Irish Executive Council; Ken Kelly, award recipient and member of NUJ West of Ireland Branch; Bernie Ni Fhlathartha, NUJ Irish Executive Council; Judy Murphy, NUJ West of Ireland Branch; Stephen Corrigan, NUJ West of Ireland Branch; Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ General Secretary.*



*Aiden Byrne with one of his mosaic artworks.*



*Musical entertainment for the ladies at Nollaig na mBan festivities in Gullanes Hotel and Conference Centre. €2750 was raised for Grls4Girls education in Africa, which is run by Sr. Annette Farrell – a sister of Pat.*

*Committee member Johnny Johnston thanked all those who supported, entertained and helped out on the day, and of course Tomas and Caroline Gullane and their courteous staff, who have supported the venture over the past five years.*



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**Una Kelly,**  
the Library's new Manager

Una Kelly has taken up the role of Manager for the Ballinasloe Library. The Cavan native has worked in libraries for almost 20 years. Having moved to Kells as a teenager, Una completed her Leaving Certificate in Eureka College. She was an avid reader and often invited friends over to talk about their favourite books. She then studied Business in Trinity College Dublin, but could not resist the draw of libraries.

Una started working in Rathmines Library, moving on to a number of libraries across Dublin before deciding to head

west to Kinvara, looking for a better quality life for her family. "I obtained my professional qualification in librarianship by distance learning from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. When I moved to Galway, I worked as a book-keeper as well as raising four young men," Una detailed.

In Galway, Una began working in the James Hardiman Library in NUIG, though she found herself wanting to work in the public library service. Consequently, she started in Oranmore Library in 2000 and after 7 years she moved to Ballybane Library on the east-side of Galway City.

"From my experience, I can see the difference a local library can make to the quality of someone's daily life. A library is about books, information, culture, creativity, and so much more. It's a warm community place where

everybody, regardless of income, age or social status, is welcome," Una explained.

Having recently taken up residence at the Ballinasloe Library, Una is delighted with the facility. "I am very impressed by the Library space, the Church Gallery and the Europe Direct Information Centre. We have a superb book collection and members have access to computers and free Wifi. Membership is free and you can order books or CDs from anywhere in Ireland. There's a lot on offer here. We also have meeting areas for local groups. The biggest asset to the library are the staff. Anne, Brid and Mark have all welcomed me so warmly and always ensure that our regulars are well served" Una added.

The Church Gallery played host to the first Strings Festival in July, and Una is keen on keeping the space busy. "It's a truly beautiful, calm place. The stained glass windows and original restored ceiling are beautiful. It's perfect for art exhibitions and book launches. It's also suitable for concerts, as shown by the highly successful Christmas Concert and Strings Festival, which attracted over 900 guests. We're also very proud to



**Mark, Brid, and Anne:** Una's team at the Library

## HEALY'S PHARMACY



Society St., Ballinasloe. Tel/Fax 090 9642252

**NUXE PROMOTION FROM FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>**

Pick up your free gift with purchase of any 1 anti-ageing product or any 2 body products from the luxurious NUXE range exclusive to Healy's Pharmacy.

*Available from 1st February while stocks last.*

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

have hosted the Enterprising Town Awards presentation."

**"We'll be rolling out the 'Healthy Ireland at Your Library' campaign, which will provide for a special collection of books on health and wellbeing, online health information and events to promote a healthier lifestyle. We also hope to expand our online resources for members. Currently, members can access free eBooks and audio books, which are great for long car-journeys with kids, online magazines and newspapers, short courses on a variety of topics, and beginners' language courses. We want to provide the area with as whole a collection of learning resources as we can"** Una mentioned.

At present, the Library is a meeting space for different support groups, classes and clubs. "As well as helping children develop their imagination

and empathy, children who attend libraries tend to do better at school and better develop their language abilities. I want to make contact with local clubs, associations and schools. From that, we can develop programmes. In particular, I would like to further develop children's services by rolling out a series of new activities. These will start with a new Lego Club in February" she concluded.

**For further info visit their Facebook page – Europe Direct Ballinasloe Library. You can also email [ballinasloe@galwaylibrary.ie](mailto:ballinasloe@galwaylibrary.ie) to be added to a mailing list. Opening hours from Tuesday-Saturday. Opening hours in the morning are from 11am-1pm, and 2pm-5pm in the afternoon, except for Tuesday, which is open until 8pm.**

## COLM McLOUGHLIN GULF EX PAT RECEIVES ACCOLADES

The Middlesex University of Dubai conferred an Honorary Doctorate of the University (DUniv) to Dubai Duty Free Executive Vice Chairman and CEO, Colm McLoughlin, as part of its celebration of the academic success of its Class of 2017 at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel.

The proud Ballinasloe native was honoured for his contribution to U.A.E. society and outstanding service to the aviation sector as a key player in the region's retail sector for nearly 35 years.

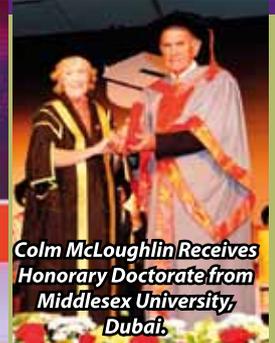
**"I am honoured to be recognised by such a prestigious institution as Middlesex University Dubai for my work and I dedicate this to our Chairman, H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saied Al Maktoum, my wife and family, and to the wonderful team of employees at Dubai Duty Free", stated Colm.**

Colm has never forgotten his Ballinasloe roots and many visitors to the region still wonder to this day why the Post Office in the Irish Village Complex in the centre of Dubai – is named "Beal Atha Na Slua".

**McLoughlin was also honoured on this occasion as one of the recipients of the prestigious Arabian Business Achievement Awards, held to coincide with the ITP Media Group's 30th Anniversary held at JW Marriott Marquis, Dubai before Christmas.**



**Colm McLoughlin Honoured by Arabian Business Achievement Awards.**



**Colm McLoughlin Receives Honorary Doctorate from Middlesex University, Dubai.**

"I can't express how happy I am to receive the Arabian Business Achievement Awards, and am delighted to join such a great line-up of leaders in their respective fields who have made a difference to the lives of others over the past three decades".

**Colm was accompanied on both occasions by his wife, Breeda, his daughters Tyna and Mandy, and his son Niall who came with his wife Shirley.**

Born in Ballinasloe and educated in Garbally College, Colm was instrumental in setting up 'Shannon Duty Free' and frequently returns home.



Huge congratulations to all involved in this year's Christmas Eve Carol Singing collection in aid of Ballinasloe Social Services and Samaritans. St. Michael's Folk Choir raised over €9200 and divided it between the two groups. Thanks to all who supported the collection and contributed their time and energy to make the day a success in less than ideal weather conditions.

# VERONA PARKER R.I.P. – KARIBA'S REAL BOSS!

BY JOAN LARKIN



I had never seen an entire street close down as a funeral passed by, until the saddest day last September when Verona was laid to rest. Kariba's Restaurant, where she worked for 12 years, closed its doors and as the funeral cortege stopped outside, her colleagues gave her a rousing round of applause. Businesses on the rest of Society Street drew their blinds and staff lined the pavement in tears.

I found myself laughing at how much I couldn't say about my aunt Verona, as I compiled this piece - Let's just say she had 'words at will', a 'very colourful' turn of phrase and a filthy laugh that is now legendary. My sisters and I imitate it all the time. Distinctly Verona.

I asked family and friends for just one word each to describe the woman who meant so much to all of us. Hilarious was the first response. Quick-witted. Vivacious. Fearless. Straight-talking. Anyone who knew her would agree. But also, Generous. Kind. Brave. Impatient. (Ah speed it up for F\*ck Sake) was one of her frequently used phrases. Beautiful, memorable and a Legend.

Her colleagues in Kariba's described her as 'The Real Boss' of the restaurant. Owners John and Marian recalled many tales but one in particular of her kindness, and how "when there were still student boarders in Garbally College and they would sneak downtown after class, Verona would hide them from view, making sure they got extra

chips and any scones or Danish's that were left at the end of the day".

They added..."She called a 'spade a spade' and would put us, and sometimes the customers, in our box very quickly! That was Verona's way of doing things and then there was the Kariba's way of doing things, but we never interfered with her way as we loved her so much. She was an absolute treasure" stated John and Marian.

She was just 12 when I was born and she made no secret of the fact that my arrival was not welcome, taking over from her as I did, as the baby of the family and making her a very young auntie. As years went by the small age gap became a positive thing as we shared clothes and make up and had many nights out on the town.

Verona absolutely loved music and singing and spent years as a member of Ballinasloe Musical Society where she always sang louder and longer than everyone else. A party just wasn't a party without Verona. 'Don't cry for me Argentina' was one of her favourite party pieces as was Patsy Clines 'Crazy' and woe betide if you sang it too slow or in the wrong key!!!!

As a young teenager, spending time in her house, I remember her washing the kitchen floor, wearing high heels, using the mop as a microphone and singing loudly to Rod Stewart 'Do ya think I'm sexy'. What a cool auntie I thought she was. She loaned me that Rod album. I have it still.

Kariba's have honoured her years of loyalty and friendship with a framed photograph hanging proudly in the restaurant. So the 'Real Boss' can still keep an eye on things and we can have a coffee and still see her there behind the counter. Our world is a sadder place without Verona but Heaven is having all the craic.

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## NEW CREW WELCOMED AT LIFE



Ballinasloe LIFE welcomes **Ian O'Boyle**, a third year Political and International Relations student at the University of Limerick, from Fedamore, Co. Limerick; as our 15th Trainee Chief Reporter.

With family roots spread all over County Mayo, Ian is no stranger to the mid-western rural parts of Ireland.

Ian aspires to working in the media post graduation, focusing on many of Ireland's political matters and their ongoing relations with other countries across the globe. He is a keen athlete with an avid interest in middle distance running and the gym. We hope that his time as Press and Communications Assistant with IFEA Europe will be a productive and memorable one.

He will be working on the next 4 editions till early September.



**Florian Bec** joins our team as the Multi Media Marketing Assistant, he takes over the camera and the editing suite from the Killarney based Darragh Lynch, who left us to head back to his studies in U.L. Darragh's work on the LIFE Project was inspirational and he brought our online communications feed to new audiences and new levels of professionalism.

Florian is a proud young International Marketing Student from ECE Bayonne, in the heart of the Basque country, which similar to Kerry does not follow the small ball at all. We might see Florian enjoying a rugby match or two however!

This team will be joined by skills from some Italian colleagues in Design and Photography over the coming weeks.

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# PASSING OF NOEL FINNERAN



BY KEN KELLY



Noel Finneran of Chapel Park, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe, who passed away after a long illness, was in the initial class set up in the Templemore Garda College, to train as a garda. He would later return there as an instructor in the driving school, having been

stationed in Kilmainham, Dublin, for two years.

A native of Taughmaconnell, Noel spent two years in London after completing his studies in Garbally College. He then embarked on a career in the gardai, where he was held in the highest esteem by both his peers and the many hundreds of recruits he taught in the motoring school. Following his retirement he set up his own business as a driving instructor. He also spent many happy years with the VEC in the Canal House training centre.

A former President of the Ballinasloe Golf Club in 1997, Noel was committed to the game, winning the Captain's Prize in 2008 and featuring on a number of club teams. His contribution to the Seniors' Club was immense while his popularity and character on the course was the envy of many of his colleagues. But he will be fondly remembered for his wit, his humour and his never-ending repertoire of "yarns" capturing the interests of young and old. It was fitting that his colleagues in the club formed a guard of honour as his remains made their final journey to Clontuskert Cemetery.

The chief celebrant of the funeral mass was Fr. Benny Flanagan, a former classmate of Noel's in Garbally Collerge. He reminisced on their years together while Noel's son, Fergus, said his father was very fortunate to have his "loving and devoted wife, Adeline, by his side through thick

and thin." Fergus also thanked all the family and relatives for the support during Noel's illness as well as the visits by good neighbours—something that was very much appreciated.

The late Noel Finneran is survived by his wife Adeline (nee Coen), sons Darragh, Barry and Fergus; daughters-in-law Chiara and Carol, grandchildren, brothers, sisters and many other relatives and friends. He is predeceased by his brother Frank and sister Marian.

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# BLOSSOM HILLS HARP SCHOOL

BY IAN O'BOYLE



Anyone looking to learn to play the Harp instrument, now's your opportunity to get your fingers between the strings with Blossom Hills Harp School. They provide lessons, every Wednesday and Thursday

school days, to anyone above the age of eight who might be interested.

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Students who sign up for lessons with Blossom Harp get the benefits of playing at many events. Last year the class performed at the Strings Festival in the town Library which had some great feedback from attendees. This year students are preparing themselves for their biggest performance yet, after being invited to play in the Stars Concert in France. Fundraising for travel expenses are now under way.

"Strings Made of Angels Wings" is the new CD made by Blossom Harp with their students playing. The CD was launched to support Ballinasloe Social Services, with numerous copies being sold already. CDs are available for

purchase at Ballinasloe Social service, or at the Moore Community Centre for €10 each.

Instructor Elisabeth Affolter has plans for a new CD launch with more new tracks produced by all of her class members. Details on the release will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

For more information on the Blossom Hill Harp School, please contact Elisabeth at 0863751869, or by email blossomharpschool@gmail.com.



L-R. Front row: Maria Dolan, Mary Cuddy, Nadine O'Sullivan, Ailbhe Dobson, Eva Ryan, Leah Naughten, Jennifer Quinn. Behind: Grace Byrne, Up: Mara Van Aelst, Katy Cuddy, Olivia Bliss, Mara Van Aelst. Standing behind: Jean O'Connor, Holly Cafferky. On the right up: Clodagh O'Brien, Alannah Downey. Pic: Jon Bliss

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# PEARSE'S CLUB IS PART OF NATIONWIDE LAUNCH OF OPERATION TRANSFORMATION

BY IAN O'BOYLE



Senator Maura Hopkins with Cllr John Dolan at the launch of Moore Operation Transformation in Padraig Pearse's GAA Club.

Over 120 people attended the launch of the programme of Moore Operation Transformation 2018 in Padraig Pearse's GAA Club, Woodmount.

Fine Gael Cllr. John Dolan from Ballinahown, Co. Westmeath who launched Moore Operation Transformation, spoke passionately about the importance of keeping fit and healthy in light of his recent health struggle. He suffered a very serious heart attack last July, therefore, he

emphasised the need for regular medical check-ups and the value of CPR training.

"It is great to see so many of our local communities in this region involved with the Operation Transformation programme on RTE" stated Senator Maura Hopkins.

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar launched the Healthy Ireland 2018 campaign recently, which encourages people to make positive choices to improve their mental and physical health while also providing support and information to help people make healthier choices.

Senator Hopkins commented on Tusk native David Cryan, one of the leaders on this year's RTE Operation Transformation. "He is a great ambassador for Roscommon and showing real leadership in his desire to make positive lifestyle changes for him and all of us" stated the Roscommon based Senator.

## NEW COMEDY AT THE MOORE HALL

Moore & Clonfad Drama Society are back in rehearsals for their upcoming production of the three-act comedy "Cupid Wore Skirts" by Sam Cree in 1965. This production sees many familiar faces back on stage with some returning stalwarts and two members making their debut with the Group.

The action takes place in the living room at the rear of Andrew Coulter's antique shop in Belfast. The story centres on the character Andy Coulter, played by the inimitable Tom Costello, an unwitting Casanova trying to fend off the advances of three different women played by Maura O'Brien, Carmel Scott and Finola O'Brien in her first appearance with the group. Adding some comic confusion to the mix is Grandad played by Niall Flynn.

Trying to keep everything in order is Andy's daughter, played by another debutante with the group Bernie Greene. Ivan Colleran brings some light relief in his portrayal of Andy's son while his Aunt Harriet attempts to keep everyone on the straight and narrow is played by Chrissie Kelly.

Group Secretary and actor, Chrissie Kelly, commented "To add to the fun and confuse matters even further just when Andy thinks he has no way out of

his dilemma along comes veteran of the group, Patrick Whelan, like you've never seen him before to help." Chrissie noted that Comedy is synonymous with this group, but they put their success in this genre down to their long-standing association with Liam Curley, who is the producer of the play.

The play follows the success of their previous performances such as "Mathers of Falty" written by Roscommon Historian and playwright Xandra Kilduff and their renowned rendition of "A Wake in the West," by Michael Ginnelly with all proceeds being donated to Join Our Boys Trust.

Performances are scheduled for Friday 9th, Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th of March in Moore Hall. Curtain 8pm. For further information, contact Chrissie on 087 686 0092.



Cupid Wore Skirts Cast: Maura O'Brien, Bernie Greene, Chrissie Kelly, Carmel Scott, Finola O'Brien. Standing: Ivan Colleran, Liam Curley (Producer), Tom Costello, Niall Flynn, Patrick Whelan.

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FINE GAEL

Plans are certainly in full swing for Ballinasloe Musical Society forthcoming production of "9 to 5 The Musical," with music and lyrics by Dolly Parton and book by Patricia Resnick, is based on the 1980 hit movie. Set in the late 1970s, this hilarious story of friendship and revenge in the Rolodex era is outrageous, thought-provoking and even a little romantic. It is the first time the Society is staging this particular show in its history.

Pushed to the boiling point, three female coworkers concoct a plan to get even with the sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot they call their boss. In a hilarious turn of events, Violet, Judy and Doralee live out their wildest fantasy – giving their boss the boot! While their 'Hart' remains "otherwise engaged," the women give their workplace a dream makeover, taking control of the company that had always kept them down. The three unlikely friends take control of their office and learn there is nothing they can't do, even in a man's world.

The society is delighted to welcome back the production team from 2017 – Director Paul Norton, Choreographer Aoife McClafferty & Musical Director Shane Farrell. The cast are busy rehearsing in Gullanes Hotel – where the lyrics of Dolly Parton's well known song 'working 9 to 5' amongst others can be heard on a regular basis. With a cast of over 40 people, audiences will be treated to a great

night's entertainment with a mixture of comedy, revenge, great music and energetic dance numbers.

The egotistical 'Hart' will be played by Tomás Glynn. The 3 female coworkers, Violet, played by Róisín Jackman, Doralee-Hannah Wright, Judy-Karen Martin. Roz played by Joanne Sexton, Joe-Chris Corroon, Josh-Joshua Naughton, Tinsworthy-Seamus Feerick, Dick-Mike O'Reilly, Missy-Lisa Whyte, Maria -Emma Greally, Kathy-Nessa McLoughlin, Margaret-Rachel Walker, Detective-Brian Derrane, Candy Stripper-Katie Bebbington.

The society continues to rely on its many Patrons and Sponsors who continue to support the members in to stage a production on an annual basis – now looking forward to its 95th show. "We remain extremely grateful to our patrons and sponsors who dig deep every year to help us defray the large costs associated with staging a live show of this kind and we will be out of the coming weeks for our annual ask" stated Frances Leahy, Committee Member.

'9 to 5' takes place in the Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre from Tuesday March 20th to Saturday March 24th Nightly at 8pm. Tickets can be purchased on [www.ballinasloetowhall.com](http://www.ballinasloetowhall.com) or Tel. 083 1085544.

They will also be available in Ballinasloe Credit Union & Gerry Stronge Photography, Main St.



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Lily Kelly's Art Studio enjoyed a busy end to 2017 and the artists of the group are all excited about their prospects for the year ahead.

Most recently, the studio ran two projects – 'Faces from Different Places' for Culture Night, which saw 28 artists contribute, and the 'Winterfest' Exhibition, which took place in the Church Gallery.

The focus of the studio is to develop the artists in their style and confidence.



### Lily Kelly

Lily started the studio in October 2014, opening classes for adults and children alike. The studio, based in the Enterprise Centre, is not just restricted to hours and classes, but is open for the artists in the group.

Lily finds inspiration in the amount of creativity and charm in Ballinasloe, using her acrylic paints to capture the town's spirit. Though specialising in portraits, she



### Nicola Bowes

Nicola, originally from Athlone, now lives in Cappataggle. She joined the studio in January 2015 and has seen her style developed over the last three years.

"I mostly use acrylic paint and focus on light" Nicola described her work, "I've painted on wood, slate and canvas." For the 'Winterfest' Exhibition, she painted the landscapes 'Night in Paris' and 'Shannonbridge Power Station'.

Nicola has twice been picked for the Vintage Exhibition in Birr, selected by David Rooney (of the BBC) who is the curator for the exhibition. Two of her paintings will be in the exhibition this year.

"For this year, I'm really looking forward to completing my serial piece, which I have done two out of three for. I'm excited for the Gort Exhibition in August, and I'm hoping to be chosen for the Royal Hibernian Academy Exhibition and the Hennessy Exhibition in the National Art Gallery."

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### Emel Osman

Emel's work focuses on her Cypriot heritage. Born in the UK, Emel now lives in Shannonbridge and works in the NCBI Charity Shop in Ballinasloe.

"I paint to thoughts and emotions" she explained, "I mix Celtic imagery with my Cypriot influence using watercolours, ink and mixed mediums."

Emel is an advocate for sustainable displays of art, using clipboards for some displays. "I feel like art should be created on recyclable products and everyday things. For this year, I'm looking forward to continue using watercolours and inks to express myself. I believe artists need to find their medium to express themselves, so I'm happy to have found mine."



### Mary Barber

Mary, of Cleaghmore, Ballinasloe, works primarily on landscapes. She has been with the studio for just one year, since moving back to Ballinasloe from Galway.

"Learning to express yourself on canvas, the companionship and the constant shared-learning is the best thing in the group" Mary detailed, "Lily helps you think and learn to express yourself. She encourages we find our own influence."

"I'm excited to continue improving and focusing more on rustic, sea landscapes. I've made so many friends in Ballinasloe since joining Lily, so I'm sure this year will be even better than my first."



### Rosemary Carthy

Rosemary was Lily's first pupil, joining when the studio started. She has lived in Kilconnell for 34 years and uses her natural surroundings for inspiration.

"A lot of my landscape work focuses on country remoteness, peace in nature and different landmarks," Rosemary explained. "I typically use acrylic paints with canvas, and I tend to do a lot of impressionist paintings." For the year ahead, Rosemary is looking forward to exploring more of the abstract and impressionist styles.



Nuala Murphy



Fatima Ali Bakoush

### For Further Info

If you're interested in joining Lily's Art Studio, you can contact her at 087 204 2979. You can keep up to date with the group on their Facebook page, Lily Kelly's Art Studio.



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The Oat Gallery Bookstore on Bridge Street is a gateway to many worlds of fantasy and adventure. However, there are also links to Ballinasloe's past in the form of photo albums with photos of the Gallery Players, a former theatre group in the previous building, are a reminder of the shop's history.

Micheál Breathnach, the long-term owner of the store, was involved with the Gallery Players and maintains many photo albums, highlighting their productions and performances. The theatre in the upstairs of the store had long been used by different theatre groups.

"We started in 1992, in the theatre upstairs" Micheál explained, "Our first play in August that year was the Irish Hebrew Lesson." Michael's involvement came by accident-Barry Lally and Declan Kelly were looking to put on a play and asked if Michael would be interested. "I asked them where would they stage it, and they said 'well that's why we asked if you'd be interested!'"

Their plays were directed and performed by Ballinasloe locals. Thomas Kilduff (RIP), Barry Lally, Paul Hughes, Mary Fahy and Micheál himself all got chances to direct performances over the five years the group were active.

The Gallery Players got to travel across Ireland with their productions, bringing their plays to a larger audience. "In 1994, we brought 'The Pot of Broth' by WB Yeats, to the Aran Islands. We performed in Irish, after Barry Lally translated the script. It was 'An Pota Anraith' when we staged it," Micheál commented. "We were invited by the County Arts Officer at the time to Inisbofin for an Arts Festival. We all had a fantastic time."

In 1994, the Gallery Players performed their "Gaol Gate" weekend. They produced three plays for the weekend - "The Gaol Gate", "Home Burial"





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and "Riders to the Sea". The three shows, each directed by a different person, over such a short amount of time illustrated the talent in the group. While performing "Riders of the Sea", the cast realised the issue of using seaweed. "By the end of the run, the seaweed we used as a prop smelled like a corpse! It added some realism to the play, by God it was awful" Micheál recounted.

The Players' production of Tarry Flynn was especially memorable for Micheál. "We ran that play for a month" he commented, "and every night, the audience would be from all parts of Ireland. People from all over came to see it." During the run of Tarry Flynn, Garth Brooks played in Ireland for the first time, performing at the Point. "After the first five nights, we decided to do the next weekend, and we joked that people were swapping Gareth Brooks tickets for Tarry Flynn tickets!"

A special part of the memories, Micheál regarded, was how enjoyable their performances were. "There were times where we broke from the script and had to improvise our way back, sometimes when we couldn't help but laugh with the audience, we were just having so much fun.

When we produced "Anybody Can Rob a Bank", we must have staged a different show every night! It was brilliant to be a part of."

Looking through the photographs, Micheál remembers each face fondly. Though not everybody involved is still with us, their stories are immortalised in the album. He is happy to recount his experiences and memories of the Gallery Players and the laughs they had over their active years.

A key occasion, he mentioned, was one of their outdoor productions – the "Queen of the Fair Bullogs." In this theatre-meets-reality piece, the Gallery Players usurped the then Queen of the October Fair, thus crowning the late Thomas Kilduff as the new Queen.

Though the theatre group has been dormant for almost 20 years, the memories and photographs sustain it. The group fed into the continuation of the performing arts tradition in the locale. Micheál continues to run the Oat Gallery Bookstore on Bridge Street, where he is always open for a cup of coffee and a chat.



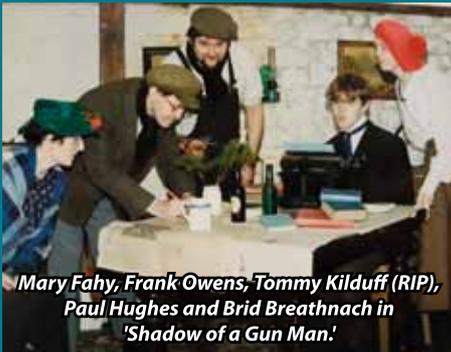
Declan Kenny, Geraldine Owens and Michael Breathnach in 'Tarry Flynn'.



Betty Noone, Paul Hughes, Barry Lally, Frank Kennedy and Brid Breathnach in 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay.'



Geraldine Owens and Tommy Kilduff (RIP) in 'Gaol Gate.'



Mary Fahy, Frank Owens, Tommy Kilduff (RIP), Paul Hughes and Brid Breathnach in 'Shadow of a Gun Man.'



Gerry Sweeney, Michael Breathnach, Mary Fahy, Barry Lally, Gerard Murtagh and Tommy (Tosh) Ryan in 'Anyone Can Rob A Bank.'



Brid Breathnach and Frank Owens in 'Bedtime Story.'



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# RUGBY ALL-WEATHER PITCH CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN



BY IAN O'BOYLE

With Sports Capital Funding secured for the building of a new All-Weather training facility the inclement weather and pitch maintenance problems will hopefully become a thing of the past for the local Rugby Club.

The season is coming into its final half, and despite the weather's best attempts to spoil matters, most of Ballinasloe RFC youth teams are still heavily involved at the top end of the league tables-a tremendous testament to the dedicated coaches, players and parents.

The adverse weather does however put pressure on the playing pitches. With home league quarter-finals and semi-finals coming up, pitches need to be minded for the all important matches. This puts pressure on training schedules whilst trying to protect the pitches, but still trying to find suitable space to train on. With all



Tiarnan O'Halloran (Former Garbally Student) with the Ard Scoil Mhuire students and current Ballinasloe RFC U18 Girls Team.

these issues arising, the club's committee have been emphasising the need for an all-weather surface training area in the clubs grounds, or anywhere nearby.

Having secured Sports Capital Funding recently for this sole purpose, it is hoped that works will commence at the end of this season on the construction of a new 65m x 30m 3G All-weather pitch, which will hopefully be ready for the start on the new 2018 / 2019 season in September. "This new surface won't deteriorate under any condition, so that the late text on a Wednesday evening cancelling training because the pitches are unavailable will be a thing of the past" according to P.R.O. Declan Murphy.

The Sports Capital Funding will only go so far and so the Club has commenced a series of fund-raising events which it hopes will be well supported by both members of the club, supporters and the local people.

Recently, the Connacht Squad visited Ballinasloe and carried out an impromptu training session for the students of Garbally College and Ard Scoil Mhuire. A number of players also visited the three local primary schools which proved a huge hit.



Peter Claffey (Forefront), former Ballinasloe RFC player with Connacht team-mates and the young hopefuls.

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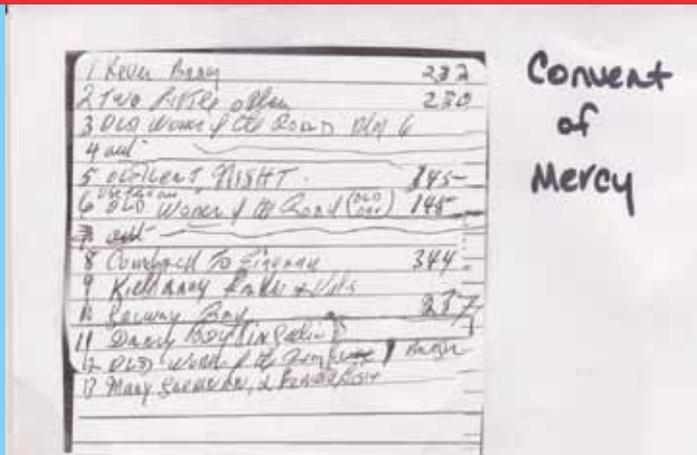
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# SEARCH FOR CONVENT CHOIR PUPILS OF YESTERYEAR

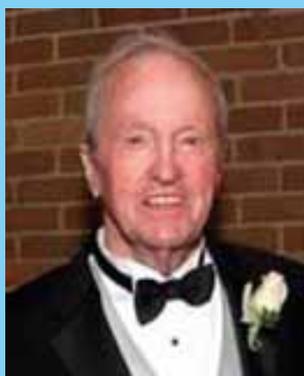
BY KEVIN KAVANAGH



Back to Eireann, By Kilkenny's Lakes and Fells, Galway Bay and Silent Night.

The two people who are accredited on the sleeve notes on the CD are Fionnuala Lyseth and Mary Grenham who recorded a sting for Martin's Radio Programme. Enda is urging anyone who may know these people to contact them as they will help further his music research. He plans to make all information about the CD available through social media. The recordings of the Convent of Mercy Choir are available on the Ballinasloe Life Facebook page and on [www.ballinasloe.ie](http://www.ballinasloe.ie)

Anyone with any information, please email Enda direct at [conventcd@gmail.com](mailto:conventcd@gmail.com).



Past members of the local Convent of Mercy Choir are urged to come forward to discover more information about a CD recorded by the late Martin Costello (pictured).

Martin, originally from Clontuskert but lived in New Jersey, USA, was

an accomplished fiddler and host to his own radio programme "The Irish Roadshow." On his travels, he recorded many CDs, many of which he brought back to America and have never been heard locally.

Martin, who passed away in March 2014, took great pride in his music collection and often referred to it as the greatest library of Irish music and songs in the world. His daughter, Máiread remembered "He spoke of the many trips he took back to Ireland to record the fabulous sessions. My family often listen to the CDs he made over the years and we love to hear his voice when he introduces the songs" she added. "He came a long way from recordings in pubs, from reel to reels to albums to cassettes and ultimately CDs both on the radio and then what would have seemed impossible when he started out."

While researching material for a second recording, featuring material from Martin Costello's vast archive, including material played by local musician the late Pat Corbett, Enda Creavan (Creagh) obtained a number of CDs from Mairead, one of which was a recording of the local Convent of Mercy School Choir. This material is undated and there is no further information other than the track listings.

Enda is hoping to track down the members of the choir to find out more about the recording. "This music has never been heard here before as it was brought to America after recording" stated Enda. "I feel it is very important to archive this music as it is an important part of our local history."

The recording features the songs: Kevin Barry, Two Little Orphans, An Old Woman Of The Road, Come

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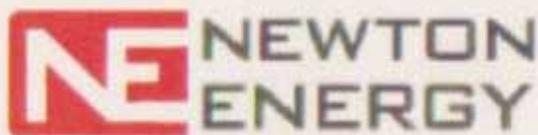
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## CYCLING CLUB DONATION

Ballinasloe Cycling Club are running their couch to 50km this year which starts on Sunday 10am the 18th of February. Newbie's will start off simple and add kilometres every week, and are expected to do their own personal training midweek. The club members will meet together every Sunday morning at 10am to help you reach your goal at couch to 50km.

Members of Ballinasloe Cycling Club handing over a cheque for €420 plus a €50 Salmons gift Voucher to Karen, Manager of St Theresa's paediatric unit, which is going to buy two TVs for kids in the isolation rooms.



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# BALLINASLOE STUDENT COMPETES IN ARCHERY WORLD CUP

BY KEN KELLY

A Ballinasloe archery enthusiast representing NUIG competed in the Archery Indoor World Cup in Nimes, France at the end of January. It was a dream come through for 21-year-old Christopher Riddell, who is a third year chemistry student at NUI, Galway. With a personal best score of 524/600, Christopher was the second best placed Irish senior and is now ranked 120th in the world. His aim now is to make the Irish team next season.

Christopher who is son of Robert and Finola Riddell, got involved in the sport in his first year in the Galway College and is now Vice-captain of the archery club there. His coach Joe Gill studied under one of the top archery coaches in the world, Korean Kim Hyung Tak and has been instrumental in Christopher's achievements to date. Competing in the Irish National Open, the Ballinasloe man qualified 13th in the individual rankings winning his first head-to-head match but lost out eventually to the silver winner.

Together with fellow students Mark Walsh and Josh Coughlan, they defeated Rebel County Archery Club in the team section as well as the Irish team packed Wicklow Club before finally losing out to the Dublin Archers trio. However the Galway side were awarded silver medals in the National Recurve male team event. After this Christopher was part of the student inter-varsities team that won 2nd place mixed team in the first IV and was 10 points short of contributing to another second place mixed team in the second IV.

"It was a wonderful experience competing at Nimes where the best archers in the world, including the World Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist were taking part. The competition was tough with each archer shooting 60 arrows to qualify for the final 32, battling it out for the medals" said Christopher, who will now be shooting for the rest of the student league and then the student nationals where he hopes to be placed highly in the rankings.



Christopher in action at the Indoor World Cup

## BALLINASLOE CHESS CLUB



Luke Feehily, Fionan Darcy, Jake O'Grady.

Ballinasloe Chess Club were among the prizewinners in the West of Ireland League when the Rooks team finished third behind strongholds Ennis A and The Bish.

After two previous outings which took place in Ennis and Oranmore, the team of Fionan Darcy, Jake O'Grady, Luke Feehily, Aoife Castle and David Cunningham did very well to recover from a poor start in the Shearwater Hotel to finish with a victory which secured their place on the podium, in December.

The Knights and the Bishops youth teams finished in respective mid table positions which was a good conclusion to the two young teams, as many were gaining their first experience of provincial competition.

The Ballinasloe winter league third round saw the biggest ever attendance at a Ballinasloe Senior Club Championship event on the 13th of December. All 32 competitors put in a fantastic effort with some games going right down to the wire.

The third round winners are set to battle it out in the fourth round event which takes place in early Feb.

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# BALLINASLOE GAA GEARS UP FOR NEW SEASON

BY IAN O'BOYLE



The AGM of the Ballinasloe GAA Club marked the end of a very successful year for the club, with the Chairman Seamus Duffy, thanking all those who helped out in any capacity over the year. "I would like to thank the parents who helped out at training, to our executive, without whom, the club would not be in the place it is today" he added.

The meeting re-elected Seamus Duffy as Chairperson, with Gerry Seale as Club Secretary, Mark Ward as Treasurer and Donal Fenton as PRO.

Representing the Football new executive are Mike Tully as Chairman, with Sean Kelly and Aisling Folan. In the Hurling Brendan Kelly remains as Chairman, along with Tom Fenton and Brendan Hayes. The Ladies Football selected Pádraig Fahy as Chairman, alongside Paul Madden and Mark Ward.

Janice O'Grady was re-elected as Child Welfare Officer, with Cormac Casey as the new player's representative. The pitch Committee is represented by Noel Dillon.

Chairperson Duffy also had a special thank you to Mairead Mitchell, who was an integral part of the club's executive for the last number

of years and put in a lot of work.

This year coming there will be approximately 30 teams training on the clubs grounds every week, and with the high level of activity they feel it is imperative to keep developing so that all successful teams remain competitive.

**The invitation is extended to welcome anyone interested in partaking in Hurling, Gaelic Football or Ladies Football to get in touch, including Creagh Urban.**

Please keep an eye out for our upcoming Juvenile Newsletter which will be circulated in the coming weeks and will be distributed to all primary school students in the area. There will be a membership night on Friday February 2nd, at 7pm in the Clubhouse in Brackernagh, for enrolment.

**If you would like to get involved in the town's GAA, please contact (087) 763 3754 or email [Secretary.ballinasloe.galway@gaa.ie](mailto:Secretary.ballinasloe.galway@gaa.ie). More information can also be found on the clubs website, or find them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to keep up to date on all the upcoming events and fixtures.**

## PADRAIG PEARSE'S GAA NEW WALKING TRACK



Padraig Pearse GAA Club have refurbished their walking track surrounding their sports complex in recent weeks. The new and improved track, which is open for public use between 8.00am and 9.00pm from Monday to Sunday, was opened by Councillors John Keogh and John Naughton, along with Senator Maura Hopkins and Club Chairman Michael Feehily.

The club were given grant assistance from the Department of Rural & Community Development, Padraig Pearses Club & Development Committee and Roscommon County Council. Overall the cost of the new track came to around €10,000. "We really owe a huge thanks to Contractor Hugh Daly, Cllr John Naughton and Cllr John Keogh for all their help and work during the refurbishment" stated Chairman Michael Feehily.



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# BALLINASLOE AFC FACE INTO NEW YEAR ON STRONG FOOTING

BY IAN O'BOYLE

There were some very positive achievements for the club in recent weeks, as Conor Lyang (Creagh) who came up through the club's youth system, was signed by League of Ireland club Galway United. This is a tremendous opportunity for Conor who now joins Eoin McCormack (Ruane) in Ireland's second highest division.

The club's underage sides tasted victory when they entered teams in the prestigious A.D.S.L. Futsal tournament in Athlone. The Ballinasloe Jets won the Cup for the first time by beating St. Francis of Athlone by 3 goals to 1 after extra time. The club's remaining Futsal shield teams narrowly missed out by just 1 goal but everyone on the panels played their part and thoroughly enjoyed the tournament.

The club's senior team, who are current holders of the Connacht Cup, will face Renmore from Galway City in the 4th round of this seasons Connacht Cup in Galway on Sunday, 4th February. The team had an excellent run in the national competition

(F.A.I. Junior Cup) when they reached the last 32 only to go out to the tournament favourites St. Michaels of Tipperary on a 4-0 score line.



*Kit Sponsor Norman Sinclair and Team Coach Mickey Walsh presenting the new Half-Zip Tops to the club's under 11s & 12s.*

The team are currently up near the top of the Premier Division and look well placed to secure more honours this season for the club. The Club's second tier team are looking favourites to win the Division 1 League and are also very well positioned to win silverware this season.

One of Ballinasloe Town AFC's most celebrated and respected members of the club, Brian McDonnell, sadly passed away early this year. Formally of Creagh, Brian served the club in an exemplary manner throughout the years, both as a player and an acting youth manager for a short period of time. Club Chairman Joby Kelly stated "All committee members and club players pass on their sincere condolences to Brian's family and friends and give one final thanks for the man who devoted so much of his time to the development of our club".

The club's under 11 and under 12 teams were given new half-zip tops at the beginning of the season. Norman Sinclair Funeral Directors have sponsored the new gear, which is made and produced by Umbro Sports.



*Junior Harte, Josh Bradley, Jamie Coen, Cormac Harrington, Cameron Ceighrey, Charlie Killeen, Ryan Dowd and Joshua Lloyd, with Managers Mickey Walsh and Noel Lyons.*

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# INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS FOR GAVIN

BY IAN O'BOYLE 

Sixteen-year-old Gavin Daly a Transition Year student in Garbally College, son of Elaine and Seamus Daly of Ballyglass, Ahascragh, tasted his first success as a show jumper abroad while representing Ireland last December.

Gavin came out on top of all the other 45 competitors in his group at the Pole European Du Cheval show jumping contest held in Le Mans, France, having previously represented Ireland in Cork at the 2014 European showcase.

Young Gavin has been no stranger to success in the past with show jumping, having won numerous competitions across Ireland. His love for the sport came around the age of six, after watching his father Seamus being involved with horses of all sorts.



Gavin had applied to take part in the contest earlier on in the year not expecting the success which was to come of it. Having won both his qualifying rounds to get into the final, Gavin saw off some of Europe's best show jumpers in his age group to claim his biggest show prize to date.

Needless to say that Gavin himself and the rest of his family have been over the moon with the International win. "I'd like to give a huge thanks to my father Seamus, for all his amazing support and training over past couple of years, and a special thanks to Liam Brennan in County Kilkenny, who lent me the prize-winning pony for the event" stated an ebullient Gavin.

Next on the agenda for Gavin will be moving on from pony show jumping to horses, with the ambition to continue representing Ireland all over the world and bringing back many more trophies.

## NEW RMAAC RALLYING IN KILTORMER

Tynagh driver Cian Robinson came out on top of his class in the Rafferty Motor Sport and Activity Centre rally sprint, held in Kiltormer during last month. It's hoped that there will be more local drivers taking part in the next event which will be run in late March or early April.

Darren Moloney and Frank Rafferty from the RMAAC event organising team want to thank all the locals that came to support the event, and all the marshals that made the event run smoothly.

For details on car specifications contact Frank on 0862516294. For entry forms and regulations contact Darren on 0879656123.



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MD Brendan Kelly said "this is a massive contract for us here in Ballinasloe. We have installed the latest computerised machines that produce outdoor signs up to 8ft x 8ft. "Our biggest order up to this has been for the General Election when we catered for all parties as well as individual candidates. The advantage of these signs are they are weather proof and replace the traditional printed posters" he added. "We have a great working relationship with the Dalata Group and this contract proves we are top quality producers of all printing supplies" stated Brendan.

*He also pointed out that KPW still cater for the small customer printing everything from a Raffle Tickets to Memorial Cards, Calendars and Full Colour Books and Magazines.*

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# BALLINASLOE ATHLETES WIN GOLD, SILVER & BRONZE

BY IAN O'BOYLE

Ballinasloe athletes did their club proud at the Galway Indoor Track and Field Athletic Championships took place at the AIT Indoor Arena in January. The strong contingent of athletes representing the club on Saturday in the U9 to U12 age group and on Sunday in the U13 to senior age category were well rewarded with medals.

In the U9 Girls age group Lisa Herity, took home silverware with a spectacular effort to bring back the bronze medal in the 60-meter sprint. Cillian O Tuairisg was another to win a bronze medal, this time in the 600 meters race.

Sinead Greene had a terrific day in the U11 Girls age group, where she was crowned Galway champion in the 60 meters sprint

and followed this up with a great run in her 600 meters event where she won the bronze medal.

The U13 Girls 600-meter event saw Caoimhe Kilkenny run a superb race to win the gold medal in a time of 1.57.34. Caoimhe put in another strong performance where she secured her second medal of the day winning the silver in the 60 meters.

Cailum Lionel put in an outstanding performance in the U15 Boys 60-meter sprint to win the silver medal in a time 8.16. Shane Fitzpatrick, Conor Harley and Adam McGreal competed in both the 60 meters and the 800-meter races. The boys



Sinead Greene and Eva Ruane

teamed up together to compete in the U15 Boys 4x100 meter relay, in which they ran brilliantly to secure a fantastic silver medal.

Young Tom Fitzpatrick ran a superb 200-meter race to claim the bronze medal in the U16/U17 age group. Tom went onto join Joe Gibbons, Rowan Harley and James Burke to compete in the senior men's 4x200 meter relay where they were placed fourth.

It was a great day all round for the senior athletes, with Mags Kilkenny running a superb 3km race where she was placed second in her category. Veronica Burke went onto claim victory in the senior 1km walk. Last December Veronica put in a superb performance where she was crowned national champion in the longer 20km national event. James Burke did well to secure bronze in the men's senior shot putt. His medal was the only one to come from a field event on the day.

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The only triple gold winner of the day was Ava McKeon, who put in a marvellous display winning the girls under 14s 60-meter sprint and hurdles, which was followed on by another victory in the 4x200 meter relay. Her younger sister Kayla also had a taste of success by placing second in the 60 meter hurdles in her age group.



Ava and Kayla McKeon

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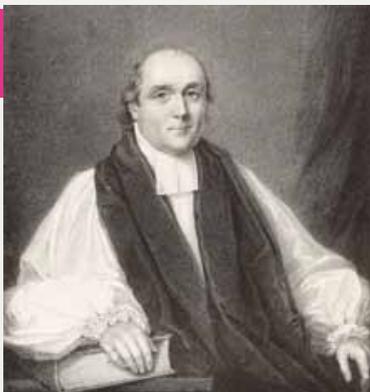
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# ARCHBISHOP TRENCH



BY BARRY LALLY

Power Le Poer Trench was born on 10th June 1770 in Sackville (now O'Connell) Street, Dublin, one of the nineteen children of William Trench of Garbally, later First Earl of Clancarty. He entered Trinity College in 1787

where it was said that he was "more addicted to country amusements and social intercourse than to the acquisition of learning". Nevertheless, despite his apparent lack of application to his studies, he received his B.A. degree in 1791 and took holy orders the following year.

Appointed curate to the parish of Creagh, he took up residence there, acting as his father's agent and as a captain of yeomanry. In the latter capacity he scoured the country day and night for rebels, though many were saved from the gallows by his intervention. He combined in a "remarkable manner the athlete, man of business, and devoted minister", riding, as late as 1820, at the head of detachments of dragoons against Whiteboys and Ribbonmen.

Consecrated bishop of Waterford and Lismore in 1802, two years later Trench was translated to the diocese of Elphin, and in 1819 he advanced to the archiepiscopal see of Tuam.

Towards the close of the 18th century the Methodist principles of John Wesley began to exert a profound influence on many clergy within the ranks of the Church of Ireland, and these became known as Evangelicals. They believed in a literal interpretation of the Bible and advocated a revival of piety and zeal, as well as an active missionary policy directed at people who were not members of the Established Church. What this amounted to in practice was a vigorous campaign of proselytising involving the commissioning of itinerant preachers, the circulating of scriptural texts and engaging the Roman Catholic clergy in polemics.

Initially opposed to Evangelicalism, Trench eventually changed his views and became one of the movement's most enthusiastic exponents. He appointed young clergymen who were burning with fervour to convert Catholics to the Church of Ireland faith,

and, relying largely on donations from English dioceses, managed to increase the number of resident clergy and build new churches in the west of Ireland. Needless to say, all this activity met with a frosty reception in the Catholic community, prompting the folk poet Anthony Raftery to compose a bizarre comment in Gaelic verse.

Trench supported preaching in the Irish language in the hope of communicating better with the local population. He at first declared that after 1832 he would ordain only men who could speak Irish; when that proved impracticable, he proposed unsuccessfully that a college should be set up in Tuam where clergy could learn oral skills in Irish. Having campaigned to have a chair of Irish established in the divinity school at Trinity, his advocacy bore fruit when a professor of Irish was appointed there in 1840.

The Archbishop was an exceptionally charitable man with a social conscience. During the famine of 1822 he toured Mayo and Galway reporting starvation deaths and nettle-eating and urging immediate help "lest thousands die of actual hunger". He obtained relief funds of over £26,000 between June and August which he quickly distributed to the needy. Rising every day at 4.00 a.m., he personally visited poor households to bring food, some of which was provided from his own resources.

Not slow to give expression to their gratitude, the recipients of his benevolence "discovered that it was the purpose of the Archbishop's steward to begin reaping his grace's cornfields, then ready for the sickle, on a particular morning. They resolved to anticipate the appointed reapers. When the steward arrived with his own labourers, he was met with an immense concourse, all supplied with reaping-hooks, marshalled under several overseers elected by themselves, and preceded by a piper, who headed the procession. They instantly set to work, and with hearty goodwill cut down and stooked all the corn in an inconceivably short time, not suffering the steward or the men he had engaged to interfere".

However, Trench's charity and social conscience seemingly did not always apply in his dealings with particular individuals. Henry Stratford Persse, a great-granduncle of Lady Gregory, in a letter dated 7th April 1822 from Galway City to three of his sons who had emigrated to upstate New York, described the pitiful plight of a curate who had been ejected from his parish - for what reason is not known - by the Archbishop: "Doctor Coffey and his family are

continued on next page...

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in great distress. They have pledged all their things and are really at the last stage of want. What are we to expect from relations after this? What, the Archbishop of Tuam, a cousin german with an income of £20,000 a year and livings in his gift of thirty or forty thousand more, lets his cousin german starve in Galway after taking from him his curacy of £300 per year that he enjoyed before his grace got the archbishopric of Tuam! Recollect this always as another proof of the indifference of relatives and also think of the inhumanity that makes poor Coffey now poor and in want because the relation was removed and the stranger filled his place”.

Implacably opposed to non-denominational, secular education, particularly the proposed national school system, Trench declared in 1829 that “no education is better than one not founded upon the sacred

word of God”.

A man endowed with considerable personal charm and one of the foremost figures in the Ireland of his day, Trench never allowed his religious views to colour his relations with individual Catholics, amongst whom he enjoyed popularity to a remarkable degree. His charm, however, availed him nought with King George IV whose enmity he incurred by opposing his majesty’s attempt to divorce Queen Caroline.

Power Le Poer Trench, the last Church of Ireland Archbishop of Tuam, contracted typhoid fever, dying at his residence in Tuam on 26th March 1839. Interment was in the family crypt at Creagh Cemetery. During his final illness he was attended by, amongst others, Dr. Colohan of Ballinasloe, whose consulting rooms were in Main Street.

## COULD BALLINASLOE SHOW BE THE OLDEST OF ITS KIND IN IRELAND?

BY KEN KELLY

*Anthony Grenham from Ballydangan is a collector of vintage and antique items and is always on the lookout for old items, particularly ones of a local interest*

In his search, Anthony has recently come across a real gem linked to the Ballinasloe Show with a prize medal, presented 202 years ago by the Farming Society of Ireland, to a Thomas Going Esq. for the best half-bred heifer exhibited at the Ballinasloe Show in October 1816. The Farming Society of Ireland held its shows both in Garvey’s yard in Ballinasloe and in Smithfield in Dublin and its presence in Ballinasloe is marked by an inscribed door lintel which is still in place on a wall just off Main Street.

What makes this find even more special is that until now the Ballinasloe Show was credited with having a start date of 1839 however this medal now proves that the Ballinasloe Show was in existence in 1816.

In addition the Iverk Show, held every August in the Showgrounds in Piltown, Co. Kilkenny, credited with having a start date of 1826, has long claimed the title of being “Ireland’s Oldest Agricultural Show”- a show that attracts crowds in excess of 20,000.



Could Ballinasloe claim this title and rejuvenate our show to mirror its former self whereby local farmers exhibited animals and livestock of the highest quality, local housewives displayed their delicious baking and splendid needlework, and who could forget the fabulous garden produce grown and displayed by locals such as Tom Quinn and the late Charlie Soden???



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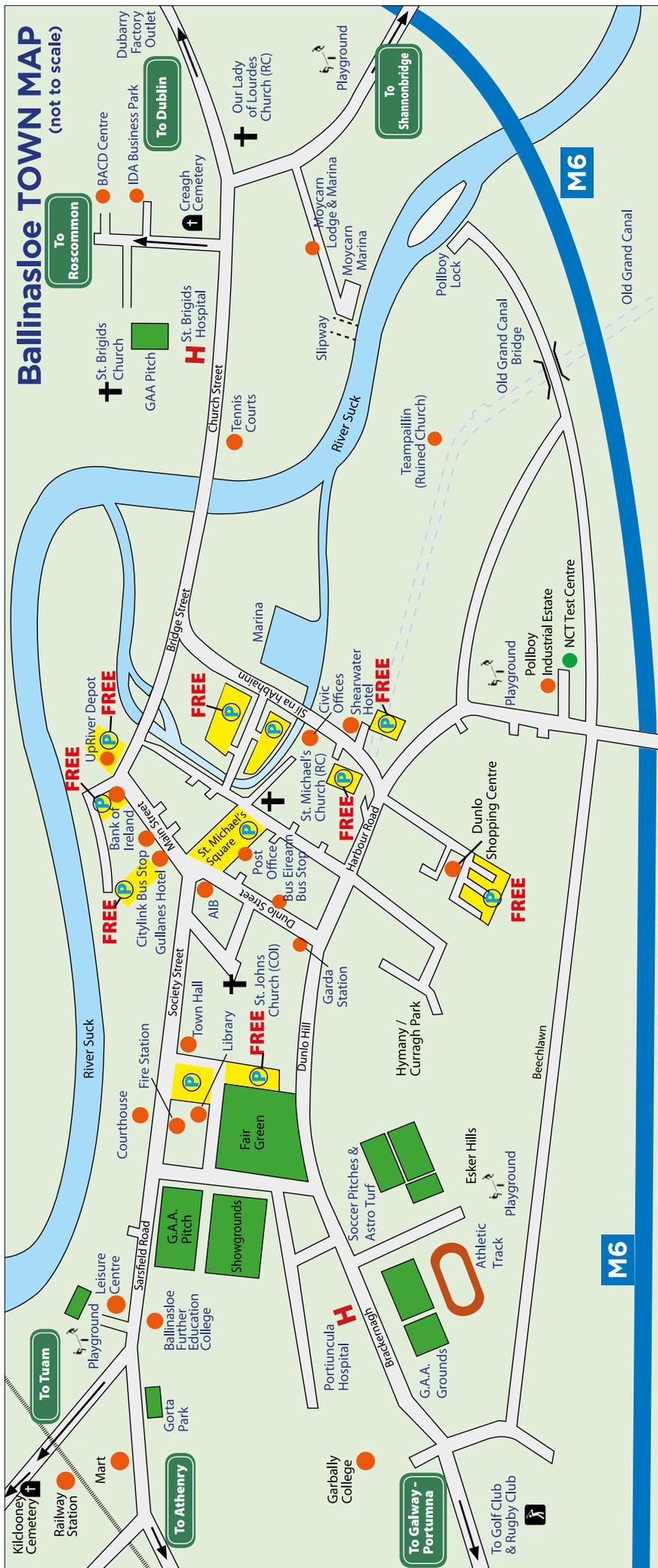
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## Ballinasloe History Walk

**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 windows. 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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