

BALLINASLOELIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 9 Issue 5: Dec '19 - Jan '20

FREE



HISTORIC PADRAIG PEARSES SQUAD



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Welcome to Volume 9 issue five

Articles and Photos Welcome

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On my travels lately I was a welcome visitor to Norway - population 5.4 mil. Our Island is 6.6 mil. Smaller towns and regions are being re-organised in land tranches the average size of Westmeath, Roscommon and East Galway TOGETHER, into new Conurbations / Regional Cantons to get the population to 125-150,000 for services, investment and sustainability for the 21st century.

The officials involved in this acute re-organisation have been charged to invest in every cultural element of town and village life that gave folks a sense of identity and belonging especially festivals; even though the way they undertake public business and interact with the central Government.

We are two decades into the 21st century; still pretending that the processes and agencies that carry out public policy to support community and rural (or non M50, for that is what it is) Ireland are fit for purpose, what evidence since 1995 is there to really support this?

We still cling to the notion that lines drawn on a map by how far a man could travel on a horse in the 18th century; is the best way to administer and allocate scarce resources. We rail at the injustices of being left out of another Government scheme, but I suspect someone in Dublin has already decided that the island must disperse her people and economic resources along Norwegian lines but we are

It was great to acknowledge the contribution of all 45 nominees at the Ballinasloe "People of the Year" awards recently. They were all described as winners by our MC Darren Frehill from RTE.

I wish to give special mention to the Hall of Fame awards winner Billy O'Carroll. He and his family have been synonymous with Ballinasloe for many decades. Even though Hayden's Hotel is now closed it is still associated in a very positive way with the town. Celebrating his 90th Birthday this year, I wish to congratulate Billy on this award.

This event is run on a bi-annual basis by our Town Team which is a subsidiary of BACD. It has proved to be a hugely successful event and just shows the volume of good work going on in the Community. There is a tremendous amount of voluntary work going on under the radar and it is so important to recognise this.

Another big event coming up is on Thursday 5th December in the Shearwater Hotel. It is being organised by the Pulse Club which is another subsidiary of BACD and is entitled VISION FOR GROWTH - BALLINASLOE 2020. This group has brought together self-employed people who meet on a regular basis and help and support each other in Business.



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not being told publicly.

The new future for this island will see people being shrewdly thankful for €3.6 million of an investment in jobs 28 km to the East of us and €1.6 to 28 km the west of us, as those who will come to work around these zones will want accommodation, schooling, culture, sport and recreation - something we can provide in spades. Those decisions could have landed 100 kms in either direction further away. The Government and its messengers need to be honest with the citizenry and explain why we don't fit certain priorities.

The new decade that lies ahead won't have us grumbling into our lattes or beer of the success of a sports team in any code some 5.5 km from our epicentre, because it technically lies in a different Shire. We'll just salute success and honest community endeavour in all its forms and try to cooperate even more!

Beannachtai na Nollaig Uibhse Go Leir and Ath Bhliain Nua go gach dhuine.

Le Gach De Ghui,
COLM CROFFY,
Editor.



Up to 40 exhibitors will be there on the night and we are anticipating up to 500 visitors during the course of the evening. General admission is Free. Guest speakers are Sean Gallagher & Eleanor McEvoy of TV's Dragons Den.

The recent announcement to close the power plant in Shannonbridge was disappointing but inevitable and we aim to liaise closely with the Shannonbridge Action Group who will be working hard over the coming months to bring replacement investment to the region and are confident that Ballinasloe will be part of the next tranche of funding from Central Government.

As we now head into the Festive period I wish all our readers a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year in 2020.

SEAMUS DUFFY,
Chairman Ballinasloe Area
Community Development Limited.



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

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MUNICIPAL BUDGET

This is the approved budget as voted by the majority of area Councillors at their annual Estimate meeting held last month. The increases are due to a small increase in the road funding from the Dept of Environment, Local Government and Climate Change.

	7,791,781				
Description	Indicative Expenditure 2020	Increase	Indicative Expenditure 2019	Total Estimated GMA for 2020	Share of Total County
Maintenance of LA Housing Units	177,450	8%	165,000	845,000	21%
Maintenance of Traveller Accommodation Units	36,928	10%	33,500	115,400	32%
Estate Maintenance	34,739	0%	34,749	182,261	19%
Regional Roads Surface Dressing	322,110	65%	195,258	1,327,604	24%
Reg Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	1,230,970	98%	621,069	5,073,551	24%
Regional Road Winter Maintenance	64,296	34%	47,897	265,000	24%
Regional Road General Maintenance Works	441,691	72%	257,335	1,820,470	24%
Regional Road General Improvement Works Bridges	22,500	-	-	115,000	20%
Local Road Surface Dressing	788,466	45%	542,082	2,879,397	27%
Local Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	2,315,868	16%	1,997,214	10,867,608	21%
Local Roads General Maintenance Works	1,266,312	39%	907,754	5,508,823	23%
Local Roads General Improvement Works	343,906	-9%	378,641	2,091,030	16%
Traffic Management	8,000	-	-	40,000	20%
Maintenance and Management of Car Parks	5,000	0%	5,000	38,500	13%
Operation of Street Parking	25,000	25%	20,000	154,000	16%
Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences	6,000	-50%	12,000	143,000	4%
RAPID Costs	5,500	0%	5,500	11,000	50%
Town Twinings	4,000	0%	4,000	10,000	40%
Economic Development & Promotion	12,200	59%	7,690	58,450	21%
Heritage Services	20,000	0%	20,000	100,000	20%
Recycling Facilities Operation	15,000	0%	15,000	250,000	6%
Bring Centres Operations	41,450	0%	41,450	124,350	33%
Litter Control Initiatives	20,000	0%	20,000	100,000	20%
Environmental Awareness Services	12,800	-9%	14,000	64,000	20%
Operation of Street Cleaning Services	231,520	15%	200,500	930,000	25%
Maintenance of Burial Grounds	110,000	18%	93,000	380,000	29%
Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	95,000	0%	95,000	196,000	48%
Swimming Facilities				5,000	
Community Grants	25,575	0%	25,575	109,000	23%
Recreational Development	12,500	0%	12,500	62,500	20%
Contributions to other Bodies Arts Programme	12,000	0%	12,000	60,000	20%
Heritage/Interpretive Facilities Operations				20,000	
Casual Trading Areas	85,000	0%	85,000	85,000	100%
Relevant Gross Expenditure	7,791,781	33%	5,868,704	34,031,944	23%






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RURAL REGENERATION BID FAILS

BY COLM CROFFY

So it came to pass as Monksland received €2.3 million for a Science Innovation Hub and Loughrea received €1.6 million for a Creative Industries Hub in their Town Hall Theatre – Ballinasloe was third time unlucky in obtaining any of Rural Regeneration Project funding announced by Government in November.

Area Councillors were furious that once again the principal town in the Municipal Area had been overlooked in favour of other locations West and East.

The development of an advanced manufacturing enterprise facility of 15,000 sq ft is a long-standing multi agency ambition and should prevent future moves of successful start-ups out of town. The BACD / Galway County Council and PPN Partners application estimated that the approximate €2.5 million funding request would secure – the creation of 220 new jobs, injecting an additional €11 million per annum into the local economy.

Director of Services Alan Farrell explained to the members at their meeting that based on feedback from the Minister's officials in spring of this year the partners, selected and jointly paid for an independent Consultancy Firm to collate and prepare the bid. "We were encouraged to take a whole town approach and to identify a range of elements that would enhance the investment.

"It's a competitive process and we are hugely disappointed for the team and partners to the application, all we can realistically do is strengthen the next application and we will regroup with the regeneration team and partners when we get official feedback from the Department" he stated.

Cllr. Aisling Dolan was furious that this was the third time an application to a national scheme designed to help towns like Ballinasloe had been rejected: "I am not happy, this plan went to Dublin based on real needs that the community identified have to be addressed, the State Agencies had supported it but for reasons we must identify it failed" she stated.

"There is a gap somewhere, it can't be a resource gap as the all the partners paid for a leading Consultant to be engaged, the national politicians tell us the bid failed the eligibility criteria test and it was not good enough at all that the Councilors of this district or indeed the partners were NOT allowed to see a final draft before submitted. In my view we have a process gap here and it cannot and must not be allowed happen again – we want to see here at this Municipal District all national applications before they are submitted and we all want to see the Departments official feedback" she stated.

Cllr Michael Connolly, as a BACD Board Director, spoke of the sense of injustice and frustration that that voluntary community company directors and members were feeling, having had improved and refined the same core project over three submissions and invested a large sum of their own monies to get the project shovel ready. "Once again we see that monies can be made for those inside the M50 at the drop of a pen while rural Ireland is denied essential investment whether this scheme or water group schemes" stated Michael.

Cllr Dermot Connolly and Cllr Peter Keaveny strongly supported Councilor Dolan's and Connolly's views and approach. Cllr. Keaveny believed that even on the Village renewal scheme the area had fared poorly in the past four years.

Cllr. Declan Geraghty also agreed with his colleagues but was not just interested in complaining among themselves or about officials "I am here six months as a newly elected Councilor and I have yet to see a Government TD or Senator come in here and speak with us as a Municipal Council as to how they in Dublin can really assist us at ground level with lack of core funds and support for these schemes. It's high time we called them in to account for their actions."

Invitations are being sent!

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HIDDEN HEARTLANDS PLANS

Director Paddy Matthews made a detailed presentation to the monthly meeting of the Municipal District Council where he gave some insight into the focus of the new Marketing Brand and how Ballinasloe and East Galway ought to benefit.

He explained how their research showed that the region had 433,000 overseas visitors with an average spend of €290 per visit and some 500,000 domestic visitors with an average spend of €126 per visit. He pointed out that there is significant appetite among the trade and stakeholders locally and that the business meeting they addressed in summer was one of the largest in the Shannon region for their roll out. He reminded the members that they were supporting the development of a new Tourism Business Network led by BACD which had a workshop meeting in late September this year.

He also explained that some 10% of the total Web Development support programme went to four East Galway based firms. The focus for the town and region would lie in the development plans they were leading on a) The Masterplan for the Shannon Navigation

System and b) The Beara Breffni Way.

Cllr Dolan was keen to see the development of the Hymany Way, the biodiversity and Greenways strongly supported by the agency while Cllr Dermot Connolly wished that the Built Heritage of the town itself and ecclesiastical sites of Kilconnell, Clonfert and Clontuskert be promoted. He was also adamant that the exploitation of the Aughrim Battlefield and the running of the Centre along Rathcroughan lines would lead to huge positive results locally.

Chair Timmy Broderick was shocked to learn that the County had promoted Clifden as their Destination town with a €500,000 grant package from Failte Ireland when they had better towns in need of tourism strategic investment in the Hidden Heartlands.

Director of Services Alan Farrell explained that the Clifden promotion was based on some three to four years of a wholistic approach to the Connemara National Park Management Plan and equipping Clifden as the Gateway town to that natural resource.

It was confirmed that The Council (the last one on the Wild Atlantic Way and Hidden Heartlands) had appointed a new Tourism Officer starting towards the end of the year.

BALLINASLOE'S ROLE IN CITY OF CULTURE

At the November Monthly meeting of the Municipal District Area, Director Alan Farrell confirmed to the members that Ballinasloe and indeed most of the towns in Galway's Municipal Districts would have a significant role in the opening ceremonies slated for February 2020.

Members at a previous meeting have raised concerns over the impact that the year round celebration would have for the area especially as the County had invested €4 million into the programme costs.

Chair Timmy Broderick wanted evidence that there would be a meaningful return on that investment and legacy for the arts festivals and cultural activities in the villages of the area.

It was pointed out that the town had two successful projects funded under the Small Towns Big Ideas outreach programme – one entitled Joining the Dots which cost €10,000 and successfully ran and the other would involve comic Breda Larkin and would

happen during the year.

Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association teamed up with the Galway Music Residency (with special involvement of the ConTempo Quartet), artist Finbar McHugh, and the Ballinasloe Library.

Cllr. Declan Geraghty wondered if park and ride type facilities, similar for the Races and Volvo events, would be in place to allow the outlying citizens get into the City for the various spectacles and events planned.

The meeting was assured that the fully independent company set up to manage the €40 million plus project would be marketing and promoting online all the Arts Festivals and Cultural events in the area for season 2020.

To date there is no mention of any of East Galway's growing calendar of cultural events on the Galway 2020 website.

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NEW GADGET TECH BUSINESS

Ahmed Mukhtar came to Ireland with his parents in 2000 as a six-year-old, originally being from Gujrat, Pakistan. They spent the first ten years living in Dublin, and eventually moved to Ballinasloe where his father set up an Indian Restaurant, having worked in the industry since 1996.

Ahmed worked regularly in his father's restaurant after school every day while completing his fifth and sixth year in Garbally College.

Ahmed completed his Leaving Cert in 2013 - having attended many different schools, Garbally was always his favourite due to the friendly students and great staff. He then completed a Bachelor's Degree in the Galway Business School and went on to do an Electronic and Computer Course in NUIG.

He changed business sector due to his father's retirement, saying: "My father was the spine of the business, many customers in town would still miss him. I believe you should never open a business unless you know and understand the work yourself. I was never as good a cook as my father and felt I couldn't continue doing anything close to what he could bring to the plate for customers."

So he saw an opening in the Technology Field, seeing this as the future. His friend, who owns a shop in Loughrea, taught him how to repair phones and laptops over some months, before he opened up his own business, on Main Street, choosing to remain local.

"I have matured here in town, I have gotten to know people over this time to whom I can walk on the street and greet or to be greeted by every day, there is a very welcoming vibe here" states Ahmed.

Gadget Tech (where CH Office Supplies used to trade) now offers many services and products including photocopying and scanning, facing, sending and receiving documents for people without email accounts, as well as repairs (laptops, tables, iPads, mobile phone screen repairs), battery replacements, updates and more. They also sell phone covers for all types of phones, glass protectors, postage boxes and envelopes, stamps, filing cabinets, office chairs, printing paper, laminating machines, and printers. They also have a section for school and office stationery.

Being located on the Main Street, Ahmed doesn't feel that the big dig is affecting him as much as when he was involved in his father's restaurant on Society Street, but he feels for the more vulnerable customers who have to walk all around the street to come for photocopies etc. He tries his best to stay open during lunch hours so



Ahmed Mukhtar

customers do not have to make an extra journey.

He says: "I look at it this way, it has to be done and the outcome will be beautiful and hopefully it would help the town with more business."

What Ahmed loves about running a service firm in the town is that all businesses here are working together, with different shops working together. Even stores offering similar products such as Fletchers, Vodafone, or Salmons would refer customers to him. Business people here refer clients and do work together.

Another big part of his love for the town are the customers. "Most of the customers are very much into shop local and buy local and supporting local businesses. The main thing really for me and my family is friendly customers," states Ahmed.

GROUP MANAGER FOR COMER HOTELS

Meet Jerry Power; Group General Manager for Comer Group Hotels. Jerry has worked with the Comer Group for six years and has extensive experience in the hospitality trade. Hailing from Ballybunion in Co. Kerry Jerry has worked in various locations throughout Ireland and the U.S..



Since acquiring The Shearwater Hotel in July 2018 an extensive refurbishment has taken place. With wellness to the forefront the Hotel opened Shear Fitness & Shear Beauty. The Spa has also had a full facelift and has introduced two new leading brands Yonka & Image to its range.

The main lobby with its dazzling chandelier and opulent velvet furnishing make it the perfect location for both corporate and social meetings.

Phase two of the refurbishment will begin in January 2020 with a new look Bar & Restaurant followed by a section of bedrooms due for completion by June of next year. Comer Group are delighted to be in business in Ballinasloe and look forward to catering for all local needs for many years to come.



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NEW BALLINASLOE STUDY CENTRE

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



Ruth Speaking at official opening.

Study Hall

Ruth Sheridan Clegg is a mother of two and a qualified secondary school teacher in Business, Accountancy and Economics. She has been teaching secondary school age students for approximately 12 years and has a large interest in students who struggle with learning and face adversity and difficulty within the average classroom. Through the years she has worked with both Maynooth University and Marino College on access programmes designed to help students with educational difficulties or from difficult backgrounds access third level education.

The Study Centre (located beside Tony Carroll Butchers), Marina Point, came to life because she felt there was a need for students to have a comfortable, warm and supportive environment to learn and work towards their own success. She also felt there was a need for parents to be able to access study and grinds for their children at an affordable rate. Often, students cannot access night study simply because there is a large term payment needed – Ruth provides a

payment plan to ensure it is affordable for all.

Study Centre Ballinasloe employs only fully qualified teachers registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland and who are fully Garda vetted. These teachers support and guide all students and offer help throughout supervised study. It is a space where students can learn and succeed with help and guidance. Grinds, subject intensive courses, and supervised study are designed to be affordable and accessible to every student who wishes to learn.

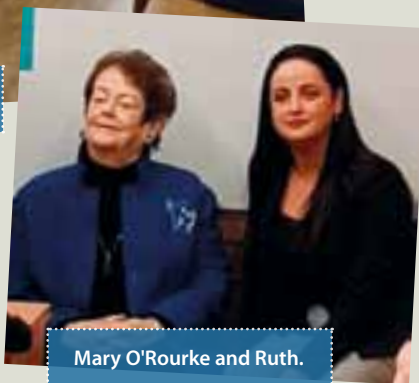
Having a student sitting examinations is also extremely stressful for parents who may not have experience with the state examination, so the support is for parents and students alike.

Within the centre, students have access to a comfortable and professional space to study six days a week. There is a fully equipped kitchen to heat meals and enjoy a tea or coffee before studying or during

breaks. They provide onsite grinds both one to one and in a group setting in many examination subjects, as well as subject intensive courses to help students prepare to sit both Junior and Leaving Certificate courses.

As a teacher, she needs students to be pushed along during the supervised study to ensure they are working and remain on task and are being helped with areas of difficulty and steered toward examinations and their own success. And so, with all of this in mind, she carefully planned and built the Study Centre Ballinasloe.

For more information and to find a full list of their offerings see their website www.studycentreltd.com or contact Ruth on 087 09914059.



Mary O'Rourke and Ruth.

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DECISION EXPECTED IN JAN ON WASTE STATION

The Ballinasloe Says No Campaign group and wider community will have to wait till late January before the statutory planning application process gives a new decision on the waste transfer station permit.

The Campaign team held an information session on the new application to operate a waste transfer station in late summer. Volunteers also opened an information hub in the town centre and provided details to people on the application and how to submit their views and objections for consideration by the Environment Section at Galway County Council.

As a result of this activity and engagement, over 2,239 email and postal observations were submitted by the deadline of 9th Sept. This also included a joint objection from the majority of Councillors in the East Galway/Ballinasloe Municipal District. With over 6,600 people living in the Ballinasloe Urban area as per the 2016 Census, the amount of submissions would correlate for nearly every household in the local area.

Cllr Aisling Dolan noted: "Our community in the Ballinasloe area and environs have taken action and we want a new vision for our town, we want a safe and clean place to live."

It was noted that billions of euro have been spent on the port tunnel to take HGVs out of Dublin City, yet Galway County Council propose to route these waste trucks through the streets of the town, through residential and shopping areas and past primary and secondary schools, and the main entrance to Portiuncula Hospital. In addition to the waste trucks transporting the waste to this facility, there will also be larger five axle trucks taking it away, through the town.

The proposed site is located on the edge of the River Suck Callows and floodplains of the River Shannon waterways. This provides drinking water for Ballinasloe and numerous towns and villages all the way to Limerick. Contamination of this water supply cannot be prevented, especially at times of high rainfall and flooding. River Suck Callows is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under EU law. It is home to numerous native and migratory species, all of which are endangered by this development.

The application to operate a waste transfer station, WFP-G-19-0003-01, is currently under review at Galway County Council. Cllr Dolan clarified that "the applicant is given 25 working days to review all the objections and submit a response by start of December 2019. Then the Director of the Environment section, with their team, have 25 working days to evaluate the objections and applicant's response. A timeline of mid to late January has been given for a decision.

Dr. Vincent Parsons, Chairperson noted "By any assessment this is a totally unsuitable location for this waste facility. It will seriously affect the health and wellbeing of families in our area, and Galway County Council should not grant permission to operate this facility. Our campaign team are prepared to take whatever next steps are necessary depending on the outcome."

The group's nomination for the People of the Year Awards 2019 is also an acknowledgement of the importance of the campaign to everyone who lives in this area.



L-R: Orla Dolan, Úna Ní Bhroin, Maeve Fahy, Vincent Parsons, Evelyn Parsons, Beibhinn Parsons, Sally Parsons, Aisling Dolan, Máiread Burke, Willie Dolan, Eamonn O'Donoghue, Leona Donelan, Caroline Donelan, Nathan Donelan, Tony Dolan, Niall Donelan, Teresa Dolan.
Front Row: Teigan Fahy, Thomás Fahy, Caoimhe Dolan, Conor Dolan.

*Christmas Greetings
and Happy and Prosperous New Year to all*



Eimear Loughnane & Co.
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NEW COMPUTER SKILLS LEARNING COURSE BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

The National Learning Network are now enrolling for a free Home Based Computer Course to be offered at the Enterprise and Technology Centre, Ballinasloe.

Students are provided with a laptop and all necessary course materials and support required to develop the skills and experience needed to secure suitable employment or progress to further training and education. Participants will have the opportunity to achieve QQI Level 5 and ECDL certification.

The National Learning Network provide a range of flexible training programmes and support services for people who need specialist support, including job seekers, the unemployed, people with an illness or disability, in 50 centres around the country.

This course is suitable for anyone interested in improving their computer skills. It combines both centre-based and home-based learning and is designed to cater for learners with no previous IT experience. The blended approach on this programme includes attendance at the centre two days per week, two days home based and one day a week work experience placement. Telephone support and online tutorials are provided to further support the learning carried out at home.

An integral part of the training programme is the opportunity for learners to avail of a work placement and are encouraged to attend a work placement one day a week. The aim of the placement is to give the learners practical hands-on experience in a real work environment over the duration of the programme.

Born in Galway City, Kevin Fitzgerald went to school in St. Joseph's College and studied in NUI Galway before moving abroad for a number of years where he got involved with the National Learning Network and has held a number of roles within the organisation. Currently, he is the Instructor of the Home Based Computer course at the National Learning Network.

"We feel that there are many people who would love to complete a computer course but who would struggle to attend a centre five days of the week. Furthermore, we believe that the distance and associated cost with travelling from locations such as Ballinasloe to Galway has prevented people from taking up the opportunity. With this in mind, we decided to offer the programme from a hub in town to be located at the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre" states Kevin.

Course attendee Noel Nestor says: "Joining the IT & Business Studies course in the National Learning Network was one of the best decisions I have made. Before applying for the course I was worried that I would not be able to keep up with the work, but the way everything is explained and the help and support given is great. Having been sick for a couple of years and feeling quite isolated, the course got me out of the house two days a week."

If you would like to receive more information about the Home Based Computer Course now available in Ballinasloe, call Kevin at the National Learning Network, on 091 773 557 or 086 043 2801.



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FINE GAEL ★

CHRISTMAS ANNUAL EXHIBITION IN J & S.



Photo left to right. Nicola Bowes, Mary Barber, Rosemary Carty and Emel Osman.

The theme of this year's J&S Photos Exhibition is **Winter Wonderland**, featuring a collection of original paintings, framed prints, cushions, Christmas cards, and lots more by local artists such as Nicola Bowes, Emel Osman, Rosemary Carty, at the Society St. Premises.

The theme is in collaboration with their Christmas window in J&S Studio, which is completed from all their own paintings done in mounted prints, Christmas cards, cushions, and mugs to create a Winter wonderland scene. The prints and cards have been used to create the trees of the winter wonderland scene.

Shauna Ward of the studio is also a big part of all the work that has been done to create the window and getting ready for the upcoming exhibition. She has worked very hard in getting products ready. The collection of art is very diverse, including winter scenes, Christmas scenes, vintage, fashion, Irish scenes and lots more.

The exhibition is free and local Poet Cathal Cregg is opening the event – he wrote the poetry book 'Hello in There' in collaboration

with Jackelina Pando Kelly. J&S and the artists really look forward to seeing the reactions of the audience and are hoping to turn this into an annual event – with the inaugural exhibition launch being held on December 5th of this year, from 6.30 pm to 8 pm.

The artists themselves have been part of Lily Kelly's Art Studio for the last five to six years and visit the studio every Wednesday. Meeting up with the other artists at Lily's studio is one of the highlights of their week.

They have taken part in many exhibitions over the years including Birr Vintage Week, Shorelines Art Festival Portumna, Gort, the Ballinasloe Library, and the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre – most recently as part of Lily Kelly's Art Studio alongside Social Services, the Brothers of Charity, and the Syrian Families in the town.

They painted the 27 windows and doors on top of Dunlo Hill for this year's Culture Night Exhibition in September with the theme 'Flowers are Red, Leaves are Green or it May Seam', and have also been a part of the project for the last two years with the theme 'Faces from Different Places'.

Nicola and Emel held their own exhibition in the town library last year titled 'Diversity', which also included a tribute exhibition of the film 'Gone with the Wind' and this year Rosemary and Mary held their exhibition titled 'Four Seasons'.

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

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REVAMP FOR KATHLEEN'S FASHIONS

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



With some 27 years in business, Kathleen Connelly of Kathleen's Fashions decided to revamp the shop, having been at her current premises on Dunlo Street for the past six years.

The layout of the shop was changed completely, making it brighter and more spacious. The leading brands (Joseph Ribkoff, Zeila, Cabotine, Peruzzi, Personal Choice, Kate Cooper, Marble, Kate & Pippa and Castle) in stock are now grouped together, making it easier for customers to navigate the shop. As part of the revamp, Kathleen also added a new label to the mix - Setre, a brand that fits in well with the new look of the store.

The new look of the shop has been created by Roscommon based style Advisor Maria Carton. She said: "Kathleen is one of the warmest people I have ever met, and after giving me a clear insight into her business, wants and needs I set about for the next four days transforming her shop into a desirable, functioning and

commercial boutique."

Kathleen herself is delighted with the new layout of Dunlo Street and the fact that the shop revamp coincides with the opening of the new look Street. Her niece, Kathy Daly, helps her with running the shop on a part-time basis that stocks sizes from 8 to 26. To get a feel for the new design, visit the shop - opening hours are Monday to Saturday, 9.30 am to 6 pm or contact Kathleen at 090 964 2984 for more information.

PULSE NETWORKING EVENING DEC 5TH

Following on from the successful 'Future Business Trends' event held during the summer, The Pulse Club, (an entrepreneurial networking group formed in January 2019, under the umbrella of BACD Limited to provide a networking and mentoring platform for entrepreneurs and developing businesses local ly) is hosting another event, Vision For Growth – Ballinasloe 2020.

Special guest speakers Sean Gallagher and Eleanor McEvoy of TV's Dragons' Den, will share their experience and the importance of the everyday entrepreneurs within communities and the successes that can emerge from small businesses!

An exhibition from local businesses, an opportunity to network, and showcase products and services as well as the ability to step beyond regular networks and create new synergies, collaborations and promising friendships within the community will also be offered.

The event is free but businesses must register to attend as numbers will be limited - it takes place on the evening of December 5th in the Shearwater Hotel & Spa.

For further details, check out the Pulse Club website www.thepulseclub.com and their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ThePulseClubBallinasloe/>.

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NEW HAMPER BUSINESS FOR LOCAL RETURNEE

Born in Portiuncula, daughter of Judy and Michael Naughton, Arlene, studied in University of Limerick graduating with honours in Business Studies and then completed a Masters in Marketing in Dublin City University in 2005. She is constantly upskilling and is in the process of completing a course with City & Guilds on Social Media for Business with Web Design

It was during a marketing and social media project with a business in Athlone that her project with gift hampers came about. She is in the middle of peak season and is busy preparing hampers for Christmas. She offers a nationwide shipping service as well as handling International shipments on request, based in Arcadia, Athlone.

Arlene joined the Pulse Club in January this year. Having grown up around town she was delighted to see new life and energy being brought back "I've such fond memories of Ballinasloe, it was great to be able to avail of the mentoring and networking opportunities presented by The Pulse Club. When myself and my husband Paul moved back to the area this summer after living away for 15 years we were delighted to see the potential and opportunities presented to us" states Arlene.

Hampers are not only for Christmas – also for Birthdays, Congratulations, Baby Showers, Weddings and Valentines and lots more special events throughout the year. To avail of her custom-made facility where she will prepare a hamper for you filled with your request just call or text Arlene 087 376 9858, visit the website www.athlonehampers.ie or follow their social media pages.



CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE RELOCATES

The Ballinasloe Cancer Support Centre have recently moved into their new premises in Cullen's Yard, just behind Main St. The newly fitted premises is now on the ground floor and fully wheelchair accessible, thanks to many local firms and national groups who helped the trojan volunteers – such as Clogher Construction, Taughmaconnell; Credit Union Ballinasloe, Ericssons Athlone, Irish Cancer Society and the HSE.

Chairman Mr Jackie Brien, Ahascragh and the Board of Directors paid tribute to the Volunteers for their trojan work in getting the place ready and open.

"Many thanks are due to the volunteers who do a Church Gate collection that made this new premises possible and indeed to Pat O'Toole, of Golden Island Centre who has kindly offered us a day to promote our new building and services" stated Jackie.

The new Centre's Opening hours are Mondays 9.00. a.m. to 5.00. p.m., Weds. 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m, and Fridays 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Supporters are asked to keep an eye out for their Pop Up Shop in early Dec. and for the major formal launch in early spring.



Pictured at the presentation of the sponsorship cheque from the Ballinasloe Credit Union. were (l-r): John McLoughlin, Maura Fahy McLoughlin, Claire Finn, Teresa Loughrey, Macy Lowton, Lily Brian, Michael Manning, Grainne Murphy, Jackie Brien.



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Local Enterprise Office Galway

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Positive news is always nice to read. The PAY PLAN we launched in August has got a great response. We are very thankful to our clients who took advantage of it. The idea is to allow you, the Customer to select an item & pay it off weekly & by the End of the payment you get 10% off the original cost. It is ongoing and we invite you to call into our shop and you can pay us over the phone while the road works are ongoing. Thank you for your custom To date.

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JEWELLERS



TRAINING is ongoing at Cahalan Jewellers. This week two staff members started their ear piercing training which will last a few more weeks for them. They will also be training in minor repairs going forward which will give our Customers a faster and better service. A NEW WORKSHOP WILL BE COMPLETED SOON FOR MORE CONVENIENCE AND WORKING ROOM FOR STAFF. This will add to our Good Customer Service.

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"From a very early age I was an admirer of my mother's wedding ring. This was a Claddagh ring which was traditionally wore on one's wedding finger. Although from time to time she would let me try it on I was determined to own my own someday."

"The time came like many of my fellow country people I had to leave my home in search of work. It was a sad time leaving Ballymacward. My father put some money in the palm of my hand and both Mom and Dad wished me well." recounted emigrant Bridget O'Neill recently.

On the journey they had a stop in Ballinasloe and she made her way to Cahalan Jewellers.

She spotted it – her Claddagh ring, she went to the lady at the counter

and asked if she could try it on, it fitted, she was as excited as Bridget. With the money her father gave her she purchased it. The price was in the region of £7.

It went on the finger never to come off and it all happened decades ago.

Recently before the Fair she was staying in Ballinasloe, she retraced her footsteps of all those years, together with the ring. She met a staff member and told her story. With great excitement, she was asked to come back later to meet the owner Maureen Cahalan. They came back, met and exchanged details, Maureen said the ring was as good as the day it was bought.

Bridget O'Neill and family have been in touch with Maureen since.

BY MAUREEN CAHALAN



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HOUSING ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

According to the last Census, there are 6,668 accommodation units in Ballinasloe, including apartments and houses, with 158 of them currently being for sale, and three up for rent. The current average home rental in the town is €1,175 for a 4-bed house – a weekly price of about €261 (this does not include houses subsidised by the government etc).

Across Galway county, rents have risen, as can be expected, with an average increase of €28 between 2006 and 2016 (these figures do include accommodations subsidised by voluntary bodies and local authorities) – an increase of 25% across the board.

Rents in Roscommon County have remained steady over the last 8 years, with a drop of almost 7% between 2006 and 2011, while rents in area with a population of less than 2,000 have also slightly increased between 2011 and 2016.

Room Rental in apartments or houses according to current DAFT price averages seem to indicate town centre rooms with ensuite from €300 per month (plus some form of utility charges) to €400 depending on the furnishing, parking, location and u.s.p.

Average sale prices have risen across the board, with Westmeath encountering a huge increase between 2018 and 2019 of €20,000, being the most expensive county to buy.

Galway County, unsurprisingly, is the most expensive County to rent accommodation, though Ballinasloe Urban and Rural remains comparably low-priced with a monthly rental of €594 for a standard 3-bed home – that is €382, almost 40%, less than the Galway County rental price. Town Centre House rentals are north of €1250 for newer type units.

Currently, there are planning permissions in the works for a project by Curlew Construction as they seek more time to complete phase one of their works. Ultimately, 73 houses and 44 apartments are to be built in Kilgarave, Creagh.

Approval was first granted in 2014 with a planning permission until August 2019 having been instated, an application for extension has

now been filed with Galway County Council being due for decision. So far, excavation and archaeological monitoring have taken place; the access roads have been partially completed; and sewers, water mains, and public lighting ducting have been installed.

Limehill Esker Ltd applied for planning permission for 95 homes and a childcare facility at Dunlo. However the developer did not submit the information required within the given timeframe, so the application was deemed withdrawn, but the developer is re-submitting revised plans.

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



The poster features a green border and a background of various organic plants and vegetables like carrots and leafy greens. At the top, it includes the Teagasc logo (Agriculture and Food Development Authority), the Irish Government logo (An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara), and the European Union flag. The main title is 'Organic Horticulture Demonstration Farm Walk' in bold green letters, followed by the subtitle 'Scaling up to meet market demand' in quotes. The event details are listed: Date: Wed, 4th December | 12pm; Venue: Padraig Fahy & Úna Ní Bhroin, Beechlawn Organic Farm, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway; Eircode: H53 K753. A paragraph invites people to see organic farming in practice. A list of topics covered includes organic market gardening, winter cropping, scaling up, and organic conversion. It ends with 'Free admission | www.teagasc.ie/organics' and social media icons.

Teagasc
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Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

**Organic Horticulture
Demonstration Farm Walk**

“Scaling up to meet market demand”

Date: Wed, 4th December | 12pm

Venue: Padraig Fahy & Úna Ní Bhroin,
Beechlawn Organic Farm,
Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
Eircode: H53 K753.

Come see organic farming in practice at this
Organic Demonstration Farm Walk.

Topics covered will include:

- Organic market gardening – opportunities and challenges
- Winter cropping in the West of Ireland
- How to scale-up to meet market demand
- Steps to successful organic conversion

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GALA EVENING SALUTES THE UNSUNG HEROES

Over 450 invited guests comprising of the 45 nominees, their families and representatives of the Clubs and Societies that nominated them, gathered in the sumptuous newly refurbished Ballroom in the Shearwater Hotel for the third running of the Bi Annual People of the Year Awards, organised by the Town Team under the auspices of the B.A.C.D.

This Edition was sponsored by the Ballinasloe Credit Union, The Shearwater Hotel and KPW Print Management.

An additional 9,500 people viewed both the live broadcast of the event evening through the LIFE Facebook Page streaming and post event views of the video interviews with the individual winners.

Seamus Duffy opened proceedings and thanked all the groups who provide the spine to the community and its hinterland, stressing again that the Credit Union Common Bond Area and the villages within were all encouraged to participate. He also again put on the record his thanks to the Town Team group of volunteers and Manager Lyn Donnelly for their efforts in making the occasion such a success. He finally thanked the huge sponsorship and support of the local Credit Union.

Chair of the Credit Union, Adrian Ahearne, welcomed the guest and spoke at how happy the Credit Union were with their longstanding tradition of supporting community based projects down the years and their sponsorship of the Awards to recognise the achievements of so many unsung heroes.

RTE Sports Presenter Darren Frehill was MC for the evening and he took to the task with gusto. All the 45 nominees received their certificates and had their photos taken by the time the refreshment break arrived.

Musical accompaniment for the evening was provided by the Town Band for the Foyer Reception and the talented Sarah Corcoran treated the crowd to some wonderful renditions with Marie Power as accompanist.

Each of the Category Winners was called out and presented with their trophy.

Winner of the Hall of Fame (Life Achievement Accolade) was presented by past winner – Liam Kelly's son Declan and the Queen of the Fair Ashley Walsh to Mr. Billy O'Carroll, former proprietor of Haydens Hotel.

Each winner had a little interview with Darren on stage before outgoing Town Team Co-ordinator Jacinta Divilly wrapped up the night with a huge thanks to all participants and the volunteer helpers.



Management and Players, Padraig Pearces Football Team receive their Award from Adrian Ahearne, president of Ballinasloe Credit Union.

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Arts, Cultural and Heritage Award
Ballinasloe Town Band
Ballinasloe Town Hall CLG Committee
Ballinasloe World War 1 Heritage Group
Feile Cheoil Larry Reynolds
Pat Joe Guinnessy
Lisa Whyte

Sports and Recreation Volunteer Award
Anne Burke
Sonya Coyne Dowd & Shane Fallon
Francis Egan
Kathryn Gibbons
Joby Kelly
Stephen Reilly
Michael Ward
Ruairí O Tuairisg & Kevin Caulfield

Sports and Recreation Team Award
Ballinasloe Mixed U14 Tag Rugby Team
Ballinasloe U12 Hurling Team
Ballinasloe Walks and Trails
Junior Golfers: Ballinasloe Golf Club
Padraig Pearses Senior Football Team

Sports and Recreation Individual Award
Caitriona Cormican
Méabh Deely
Ty Sean Finnerty
Shane Jennings
Oisín McCormack
Tristan McDonagh
Beibhinn Parsons
Aoibheann Reilly
Colm Reilly

Youth Volunteer Award
Joseph Burke
Patrick Duggan
Sara McGreal, Odhán Dooley & Rachel Whyte

Social, Community & Civic Pride Award
Aughrim Village Community Committee
Ballinasloe Says No Group
Michael Burns
Arthur Carr
Jacqueline Daly
Brian Derrane
Helen Harney
Eric Naughton
Loraine Treacy

Full nomination script available online

Business Community Spirit Award
Barrys Cycles
Cahalan Jewellers
Farmyard in your Schoolyard
Millrace Nursing Home
Shearwater Hotel & Spa



Billy O'Carroll with his Hall of Fame Award surrounded by family members.



Members of the Ballinasloe Town Band with the Arts, Cultural and Heritage Award.

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



Joseph Burke, winner of the Youth Volunteer Award with Adrian Aherne.

Maureen Cahalan, winner of the Business Community Spirit Award.

Helen Harney with her Social, Community and Civic Pride Award.



Ann Conlon-Deeley receives the Sports and Recreation Award on behalf of her daughter Méabh.

Michael Ward, captain of Ballinasloe Golf Club receives the Sports Volunteer Award.

Queen of the Fair Aisling Walsh, Adrian Aherne and Billy O'Carroll, winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

RUN365 – RUNNING FOR SOMEONE ELSE’S LIFE

On New Year’s Day this year, Jonathan Glynn, a Lawrencetown local with an aversion to running, decided he was going to attempt to run every day of 2019.

No breaks, no excuses, just get up and run every single day. He started off nice and slow and set himself the target of doing a minimum of three kilometres per day. That went well, so after a few weeks he increased this goal to at least five kilometres a day and then around day 140 he decided that everything was going too smoothly and he challenged himself to increase his daily runs to six kilometres. The overall goal was set, the equivalent of a marathon a week for 52 weeks – leading up to a total of 2200 kilometres by the end of the year.

It hasn’t been easy and the last few weeks in particular have been difficult, with Jonathan being drained both physically and mentally and experiencing aches and pains in places he never even knew existed. He ran through sunshine, rain, sleet, wind, through sickness and hangovers and holidays and he is still going!

Jonathan said: “When I reached the halfway point, I have started to think that I should try and use this once in a lifetime achievement to possibly raise some funds for two very worthwhile causes. The first cause is the Lawrencetown Community Development group who over the last couple of years have done and who continue to do fantastic work for our locality. The second cause is one that is very close to my own heart as well as many other people’s hearts and that is the East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre. This is a truly amazing organisation who help over 200 cancer patients every week.”



They offer a range of services from a bus to bring clients to their appointments, to holistic therapies, counselling, and many more. The centre is run by volunteers and they rely on fundraising initiatives.

As well as the daily runs, Jonathan will be organising a 5k/10k fun run in Lawrencetown on New Year’s Eve to mark the last run of the year. Lawrencetown National School have also offered to donate the proceeds from their upcoming no uniform day towards the run365 fund.

Jonathan would like to thank his family and friends for the support so far, as well as Lawrencetown Community Development Group for their support, the East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre for their continued support, and also for the wonderful work they do on a day to day basis; the students and staff of Lawrencetown National School for their kind donations and his wife for her support, encouragement, advice and patience.

You can support Jonathan under www.gofundme.com/f/running-every-day-of-2019.

BY JEJE BEGROUI



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Ballinasloe Social Services held its Annual General Meeting recently. Chairperson Padraig O Ceithearnaigh stated that in his final year as Chairperson, he looked back over the changes that have occurred over the past three years, commenting that the plethora of changes and increases in law surrounding voluntary organisations is becoming almost unbearable and in many ways, is preventing good, highly qualified people from giving their time as volunteers.

Finance is central to the future of the work and he thanked the state bodies which part fund it i.e. HSE, Pobal, Tusla and the Department of Children but "without the help of generous benefactors and all who support our fundraising activities, we would be unable to continue," he said.

The 48-year-old Social Enterprise employs some 12 local people as well as scheme participants and costs approximately €380,000 a year to run. Some 60% of this figure ie. €228,000 has to be raised by the Centre every year! The expenses for the services are effectively at cost to the state - as it does not factor in the huge amount of voluntary hours given to support the 75 day centre users and the 40 children who enjoy the varied services.

As well as the countless individuals and firms who give generously and privately, the Centre relies heavily on the Annual Golf Classic, Their Annual Card Drive, Their Xmas Sales of Work and the special Auction to assist.

In the Day Centre report, Nurse Claire Tangney and Nurse Nora Callaghy reminded us that it provides a home away from home environment, with the main aim being to facilitate older people to continue living in their own homes, within the wider community. The daily programme includes bingo, quizzes, cards, word search, music, exercises, computers. People are transported to and from the centre by minibus or by family members. She thanked the contribution of the loyal volunteers, without whom the service would not operate.

Teresa Coughlan, Manager, in her report, stated that major capital work was completed in the Centre earlier this year and she thanked

Ballinasloe Credit Union and Galway County Council for their support in this project.

Meals on Wheels Co-Ordinator Kay Cunningham thanked Fr. John Garvey and St. Michael's Parish for the continued use of the Social Centre, free of charge, to provide meals in the community. She also paid tribute to the loyal volunteers, who give of their time freely each week.

The Care and Repair service, which has its office in the Social Services Centre, carries out small jobs and minor repairs for the elderly, they can be contacted at 090 963 0630.

The Pre-School and Therapeutic Learning Centre continue to grow under the stewardship of Childcare Manager Elaine Murphy and her staff. This Childcare facility is the centre for early intervention in childcare in the area and works in close partnership with statutory services. The garden was transformed into an educational sensory garden this year, which caters for all the children's needs. Everyone involved in this project was thanked for their time, input and commitment.

Gavan Duffy, Auditor gave an account of the financial status of the group and stated that the accounts were a true and fair statement of the current state of affairs at 31/12/2018.

The members were encouraged by the recent announcement by Government of a capital of €6,000 towards the part payment of replacement van for the meals on wheels service.

Sr. Alacoque has stepped down from the committee after being involved for nearly 40 years. The Chairperson thanked her for her immense contribution to the organisation and wished her well in the future. Gratitude was expressed to Tess Raftery who has also resigned from the committee.

The committee for the coming year are Chairperson: Regina Power, Vice-Chairperson: Annette Lynagh, Treasurer: Jenny O'Sullivan, Secretary: Michael Lally, Committee: Ann Kenny, Margaret Oliver, Padraig O Ceithearnaigh, Padraig Walsh, Stephen Kerr, Janice O'Grady, Catherine Colleran.

Folks are reminded to support the Social Services by taking place in their Christmas Sale on Thursday, December 5th.

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BRIDGE CLUB STILL DEALING STRONG !

As the winter fully draws in, traditional pastimes of parlour games like cards re-enter our comfort zones. Yuletide favourites like, 25, 45, Gin Rummy, Texas Poker, Whist all get a dusting off but for one group of dedicated deck shufflers "Bridge" is the king of all card games.

With one of the oldest Bridge Clubs in the Western Region – Ballinasloe can proudly boast of a long lineage of tournament players, its own cosy, warm modern premises and around 150 members who regularly play weekly – twice if not thrice. Records verify a Bridge Club in 1937, but the current renaissance in the early 70s with the formation of the 70s Bridge Club comprised of many newcomers to the community of that period who sought to improve their game.

Bridge is a game that can be played from 9 to 99 years of age and the Sarsfield Road based premises has members of all ages. In essence the game is simply that of four players, playing as two partners and all the 52 cards of the deck are in play. A bid system for contract sounds a tad complex but in the hands of many of the venerable masters of table here they can explain the rules succinctly to all novices and newcomer.

Monday nights are dedicated to those who are newer to the art, with Tuesdays and Thursdays games and competitions reserved for the more seasoned. Players need to be registered to table for 7.30 pm there is a little refreshment break but everyone can expect to be heading for home no later than the 10.30 pm mark. It's not an expensive hobby – an annual membership fee of €35 is needed and each evening there is a small table fee of €5 per head – which helps with the heat, light, minor repairs and of course the Tea and Coffee.

A recent concept that has proven quite popular in recent years has been "Social Bridge" played on Wednesdays at 11.00 am for those to whom the evening programmes don't suit anymore. Folks come from a radius of Loughrea, Portumna, Ferbane, Taughmaconnell and Ahascragh.

The most significant Competition of the year is the President's Prize which is run over two nights in April, but the Club have in their trophy case a 1968 "Pairs" Shield. It was a long held ambition of the

club members to own their own premises, so a building fund was set up with a view to someday making that dream happen. Frank (RIP) and Olga Barrett, long time members were renovating their premises and the Bridge Club were facilitated with the purchase of two overhead rooms at a very reasonable price, which they now currently use.

Social activity, a sense of community and belonging steep through the calendar and ethos – The Annual Dinner is a late January affair, as is the Club Charity Week where the proceeds of Club Activity and some raffles are donated to some worthy local charities – decided by the members. Groups to have benefitted from the members efforts in the past include The Social

Club President Patricia Dunne presenting the John McGahon cup to the winners. Fr Michael Finneran & Kathleen Delaney.



Ballinasloe Bridge Club outgoing President Leo Flynn and the in coming President Pat Dunne presenting the Bridge Club player of the Year trophy Sponsored by Mrs Olga Barrett to the winner Willie Dolan.

An advertisement for Venezia Ristorante Italiano. It features a central logo with a silhouette of a gondolier on a yellow circle, with the text "VENEZIA" and "RISTORANTE ITALIANO" below it. Surrounding the logo are images of various Italian dishes: a plate of spaghetti with meat sauce, a pizza with toppings, a plate of pasta with sauce, and a plate of meat and vegetables. The background shows the interior of the restaurant with tables and chairs.

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Bridge Committee



Bridge Club Deignans



Bridge Players

Services Centre, The East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre, Care and Repair, St. Teresa's School.

Some of the Trustees to the Club and Honorary Members are friends from that group of pioneers in the 70s – the four Honorary Members being Mrs. Mary Croffy, Mrs. Olga Barrett, Mrs. Margaret Creaven and Mr. Val Martin. Dedicated to nearly 5 decades of bridge club development would include Angela and Marie Connolly who commenced playing in 1970. Current Trustees are Mrs Meta Cunningham, Mr. Tom McLoughlin, Mr. Martin Loughnane.

The Club have had lots of high ranking payers who achieved distinction in National Tournaments like Tom McLoughlin and Martin Loughnane who won the Laurel Trophy in Portaloise for the Intermediate as also did the partnership of Breege O'Doherty and Mary Muldoon and indeed Meta Cunningham (A Club Stalwart) and Laura Naughton who won a National All-Ireland in Pairs.

The committee for 2020 is as follows: Pres. Ms Patricia Dunne, Vice Pres. Ms Marie Connolly, Sec. Ms Ceila Aylward, Treas. Ms Rosaleen Cahill, PRO Mr. Wille Dolan. Members – Ms Eileen Morissroe, Ms Mary Howley, Ms Angela Connolly, Ms Marie Curran, Ms Deirdre Flynn, Mr. Brian Jennings. Ex Officio Mr. Leo Flynn,

So if you wish to join for a game or learn how to play – contact Angle at 087 6210021.

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REMEMBRANCE BALL FOR LIVES LOST

The Claddagh Watch Remembrance Ball taking place later this month, will be the first of its kind to honour those that have lost their lives to the waters of Galway City, County and beyond. Founder of Claddagh Watch and Ballinasloe native, Arthur Carr, said "This will be an extraordinary evening in a beautiful venue. A night not to be missed."

Whether through a fishing or swimming incident, accident or suicide, all those that have tragically lost their lives to water in recent years will be remembered through a Wall of Remembrance that will feature photos and tributes at the Fundraising Ball which takes place on the 28th December at the Galway Bay Hotel.

The Claddagh Watch Patrol team continue to patrol the river and canals in Galway City in their efforts to prevent accidents and deaths and have set up an event to raise much-needed funds for equipment other very worthy causes.

Anyone that has lost a loved one through a water-based incident is welcome to attend or if they would prefer, they can send in a photo and tribute for the Remembrance Wall. Tickets are €75 each, €140 for 2 with a table for 10 priced at €600.

There will be a 3-course meal, music by The Party Rascals, late DJ and a raffle with many magnificent prizes. Proceeds from the night will be divided between Claddagh Watch Patrol, Pieta House, RNLI and Galway East Life Support Suicide Prevention. For further information see the Claddagh Watch Facebook page or call 083 8999 948 - tickets available under claddaghwatch.clr.events.



Members of Claddagh Watch, Donna Burke, Annmarie Heffernan, Arthur Carr, Jimmy McGovern, Eimear Gullane and Trish Keogh on a recent tour of duty.

SAVE THESE KEY FESTIVAL DATES FOR 2020

2020 sees the return of these three key local festivals:

The Dinny Delaney Festival is back for its second edition-dates being moved to the May bank holiday weekend - 1st to 3rd May 2020.

The Feile Cheoil Larry Reynolds will return for its 8th edition from 10th to 13th September 2020.

The 298th Ballinasloe Horse Fair-October 4th to 11th.

The Halloween Trail of Terror 30/31 October.

For more info, visit the festival websites:

www.dinnydelaney.com www.larryreynoldswweekend.com
www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com www.ballinasloe.ie.com

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THIRD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

This year marks the third edition of the annual Christmas Jumper Day fundraiser. Previous years have been very successful with substantial donations made to The Simon Centre, Ballinasloe and Pieta House.

The East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support Centre is this season's chosen organisation. All businesses and their staff, all schools, teachers and students, and the general public are invited to join in this year!

East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre is a non-profit charitable organisation which provides counselling, support and therapies for people receiving treatment for cancer and their families and friends. The Centre also provides a bus to transport people to Galway for radiotherapy treatments each day and, on return, they are provided with a hot lunch. All services at the centre are provided free of charge. The money raised from the Jumper Day will contribute to the vital work of the Cancer Support Centre.

Everyone is invited to wear a Christmas jumper on Friday 13th



Students from Garbally College taking part in the jumper day

December and make a donation to East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre. There may be difficulties for some sections of the workforce to wear jumpers but these can be substituted with hair bobbins, hats, earrings or broaches. Anything festive will suffice.

The organising team are working hard to make this

year's event the biggest ever. The day has proven to be a great festive community day in the past.

Please check out Ballinasloe Christmas Jumper Day Facebook page where people can see photos of the previous year's event and get details of how to enter the competition with prizes sponsored by The Shearwater Hotel and Dubarry Shoes.

If you would like more information on how you can take part in this event please call Carmel 087 275 3861 Patricia 087 225 9811 or email them at bsloechristmasjumper@gmail.com.

12 PUBS 8th ANNUAL CHARITY DAY

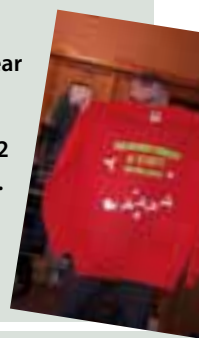
Saturday the 23rd of Dec. is the date of this now traditional fun event. The chosen charity, route and further information will follow. The organisers would be delighted to hear from any local businesses who would be interested in donating a prize for the raffle.

The theme for this year's event is "An Chrinniú" (the Meeting as gaeilge). The event is always a great opportunity to catch up with old

friends, classmates and even family and we hope this year is no different.

The 2018 An Chrinniú Christmas Charity Ballinasloe 12 Pubs raised €3,022 in total - up nearly €1,000 on last year.

Further info can be had from their facebook events page **An Chrinniú - Charity 12 Pubs of Ballinasloe**. Official Charity Jumpers are now on sale online also.





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MINISTER CONFIRMS NEW 50 BED UNIT

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

The Minister of Health, Simon Harris T.D., recently confirmed funding at Portiuncula Hospital, while visiting the hospital himself to meet with representatives, management, staff and patients. This confirms the recently announced HSE Capital Plan 2019-2021 for the construction of a much needed 50 bed replacement Unit.

He outlined the progress to date as the project has moved to tender stage for the Enabling Works (services/utilities/pedestrian & vehicle access) which will prepare the site for follow on construction in Stage 2 - he gave a timeline for the works into 2020.

The senior clinical team gave the Minister a tour of some of the more challenging 6-8 bed wards in the hospital and the dire lack of toilet and shower facilities in these areas.

This visit is a follow-on from the meeting secured by Cllr Aisling Dolan with a delegation of the clinical team in Leinster House where the Minister outlined his commitment to Portiuncula University Hospital and the construction of the 50 bed unit which is anticipated to be finished in 2022.

Cllr Aisling Dolan commented: "This visit is significant for our region and it is a testament to great healthcare teams who work in our hospital and who have driven this project. This investment will tackle the huge challenges facing healthcare teams such as overcrowding of patients in 6-8 bed wards with lack of appropriate facilities and it is an investment in the future of our hospital in for our catchment area."

Dr. Vincent Parsons, Consultant Radiologist and member of PUH management team commented: "This is a major advance for Portiuncula Hospital. Multi bed wards will be replaced with a 50 bed unit of single en-suite rooms of the highest modern standard for patient care. This will improve patient recovery from serious illness and following surgery. Single rooms have a major role in infection control and prevention of hospital acquired infections such as MRSA and the Winter vomiting bug. It will also facilitate patient confidentiality and dignity- especially at the end of life."

Good news on the Hospital front however was matched with a fresh horror report of nursing services being reduced.

After the INMO warned that Public Health Nurse services were facing emergency closure due to HSE refusal to fill vacant positions (with four out of six nursing positions not being filled), the HSE granted permission to fill two of those vacancies.

As the staff deficit persists, INMO have advised that some services will be curtailed, with a detrimental effect on cancer patients and new mothers amongst others.

Local TD Denis Naughten has asked Health Minister, to directly intervene to ensure vacant public health nursing posts are filled in the Ballinasloe and Portumna areas urgently. He said: "The lack of public local health nurses in the areas concerned means that patients on chemotherapy are forced to return to hospital to have IV lines removed rather than having this done in the comfort of their own homes. Patients are going through enough without having to make avoidable trips back to hospital, especially when they are not feeling well after chemotherapy."

As we go to print there has been progress in securing some posts tune in to Life's facebook page to find out more.



Councillor Aisling Dolan and Minister Simon Harris.

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NEW WEEKEND MASS TIMES FOR CHURCHES

Ballinasloe Parish Pastoral Council has continued to meet each month to actively look at issues affecting the wider parish community and ways in which it can assist in the future spread of the Gospel. Over the past several months we have continued to address the topics which were raised in the parish survey and ongoing issues surrounding the church in the community.

The weekend schedule of Masses has been reviewed and from 30th Nov/1st Dec. the following will be the times: Our Lady of Lourdes, Creagh: Sat- 6.00pm and Sunday - 10.30am. St. Michael's Church: Sat - 7.00pm and Sunday - 9.15am and 12.00 midday. Portiuncula Sun - 9.45am. Ongoing issues surrounding the development of a parish web site, congregational singing and altar servers are being discussed as we go forward.

We would like to thank the students from Ard Scoil Mhuire and Garbally College who took part in the youth survey. Encouraging young people to become involved in their church is still a challenge as mass attendance among the youth continues to decline. As a parish we will endeavour to encourage and support our young people growing up in this ever changing and demanding world, and to let them know that there is always a place of welcome here.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Bishop John Kirby for his many years of service to the people of Ballinasloe and beyond, and to wish him well as he takes up his role as parish priest of Cappataggle/Kilrickle. We also welcome our new Bishop Michael Duignan to the diocese, and assure him of our prayers and support.

"On behalf of the Council we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a peaceful and holy Christmas. May Christ be born again in our hearts this Christmas"

Séamus McGuinness,
Chairperson, Ballinasloe Parish
Pastoral Council



CREAGH NEW FOOTPATHS

€100,000 has been allocated in funding for new footpaths and public lighting under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The footpath will lead along Glentaun and Suckfield, from Creagh Church to the Beagh Roundabout, as well as from the church to the Ardarn Roundabout. This 3.5 kilometre project will make it a much safer place to walk and will hopefully encourage more citizens to pick up walking.

Effectively the project is making the "Circle" walk, known locally for years, as a far safer, pedestrian friendly with dedicated footpath and lighting on the gaps.

Some need funding from Roscommon County Council, with the total cost of the project in excess €125,000, so while €100,000 has come in through funding from the Dept of Community and Rural Affairs Scheme, further additional amount may have to be covered by the community.

Michael Fitzmaurice T.D said: "This funding will be a great boost to these towns and villages. Vital projects to enhance these communities can now get underway. These projects will make rural towns and villages more sustainable and enjoyable places to live and work – while also aiding tourism in the respective areas. The benefits of this scheme are there for all to see and further projects must be funded under the scheme moving forward. There is a huge appetite within communities to continuously strive to improve the services, facilities and amenities open to the public."

Denis Naughten T.D. commented: "This is going to be a huge amenity to provide a safe walking route in the town of Ballinasloe, and also for the local residents here. It makes the roads here far safer and will hopefully encourage more people to walk and jog in the town."

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

What do you need to achieve in 2020?



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THREE LOCAL LADIES COMBINE FOR FESTIVE CONCERT

Heart & Soul, a concert showcasing the talents of three of Ballinasloe's finest female singers, takes place in the Shearwater Hotel & Spa this winter season. Patrons can look forward to a most entertaining, high class evening of various musical genres through the voices of Rachel Goode, Michelle Lally and Emma O'Reilly, all local women who are paving successful musical careers both at home and abroad.

Rachel is a seasoned performer who sings actively across genres from Opera to pop at home and abroad. Her fundraiser concert for East Galway Cancer Support Centre sold out St. Michael's Church and brought both international opera and local music making together.

Michelle has worked with the best of the best, from Frankie Gavin to legendary songwriter Jimmy McCarthy on her first album, among many others, garnering acclaim for her smooth, classic vocal. Michelle has recently released a new album "A Moment in Time", which leans into the beautiful jazzy tones of her voice.



Emma O'Reilly



Rachel Goode



Michelle Lally

An independent songwriter with several EPs under her belt, Emma has toured internationally with her music (part pop, part folk, part theatre) but maintains strong links to home.

The town is fortunate to welcome these talented artists home for the Christmas season, with the concert taking place on December 19th at 8.00 pm. They will be joined on the night by more local resident talent. Tickets for the concert are €20, with concessions available. See the concert's Facebook Event page Heart & Soul at The Shearwater Hotel for further updates.

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

ÓGRA FF ELECTS BALLINASLOE MAN AS PRESIDENT

Cheered on by over 500 Ógra members and supporters, Ballinasloe native Tom Cahill was elected to the position of President of Ógra Fianna Fáil at the party's National Youth Conference in Portlaoise.

Cahill, who was the outgoing National Policy Director, defeated Leinster Organiser and Laois man, Thomas Foy, securing over 60% of the vote. A 23 year old geography teacher, he is the youngest person ever elected to the role of Uachtarán Ógra and is the first Galway man to take up the role.

"I have fought hard on behalf of Ógra members and young people across the country to ensure that their voices were represented

within Fianna Fáil and on the national stage, and will continue to do so during my term as President", stated Tom.

"I'm urging any young person with an interest in politics, or any young person that wants to make a difference, to join Ógra Fianna Fáil today, and become part of network of friends who are working to build An Ireland for All", concluded Cahill.



Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin (R) congratulates Tom Cahill (L) on his election as President of Ógra.



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CLASS OF 79 REGROUP FOR REUNION



The 40th reunion of the Leaving Class of Scoilmhúire 1979 heralded a celebration of fun, memories, chat, music and craic at Gullane's Hotel recently.

35 of the original 70 plus arrived from all across the country, from California, Germany and Scotland to mark the occasion, catch up with each other, remembering schooldays, sports, teachers and a few lessons as well as making new memories.

Welcomed by Jennifer from Gullane's, Marie Lyons with



Seated 1 to r: Catherine Burke, Marie Lyons, Colette Ward, Mary Fallon, Marie Hughes, Patricia Kelly, Pauline Dolan, Ann Murray, Ann Marie Pryal, Mags Cusack. Middle row: Nuala Payne, Teresa Egan, Moira Whyte, Betty Lyons, Teresa Roche, Josie Finn, Valerie Finnerty, Mags O'Gorman, Ronnie Tumulty, Claire Donoghue, Patty Downey, Anna Hardiman, Anne Gilligan, Pauline Sweeney, Patricia Galvin, Phil Tumulty, Anne Dwyer, Mary Barrett, Ger Moran.

Standing back row 1 to r: Mary Galvin, Helen Salmon, Chrissie Connelly, Mary Madden, Maureen Greene.



Seated 1 to r: Claire Donoghue, Patricia Kelly, Patty Downey, Catherine Burke. Standing 1 to r: Patricia Galvin, Ann Murray, Mary Fallon, Teresa Roche, Mary Madden, Betty Lyons, Chrissie Connelly, Pauline Dolan, Anne Dwyer, Teresa Egan.

the cúpla focal talked about meeting each other for the first time in 1974, the shared experiences during their formative years, the friendships made and the fun had. They acknowledged those lost along the way and raised a glass.

They even managed a mini recreation of the Sound of Music, the 5th year musical back in the day! A great night of fun and memories with the one and only John Finnerty providing the soundtrack of their younger days!

The ladies were looked after in style by Gullane's Hotel and Conference team as always and are already looking forward to the next reunion.

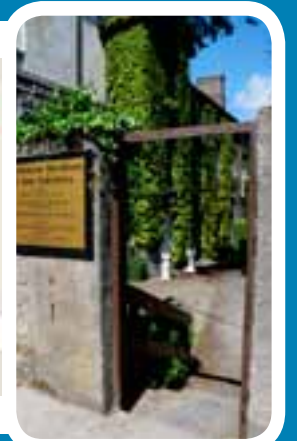
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GARBALLY CLASS OF 2019 - GRADUATION BALL



Garbally recently held a small award ceremony for the Junior Certs who achieved high grades in this years Junior Cert Exam. Adam McGreal was the outstanding Student of the Year and he received his award from Mr. Colm Colohan of Ollie Colohan & Sons, Hardware Ballinasloe. **By Joan Maddden**



Full Junior Cert class after they received their results with (L) Mr. Stephen Reilly, Principal and (R) Mr. Michael Tully, Year Head



L-r: Colm Colohan, Mrs Claire McGreal, Adam McGreal & Stephen Reilly (Principal).



L-R: Mr. Colm Colohan, Mr. Michael Tully (Year Head), Abdullah Shahid (Academic Performance Award), Adam McGreal (Junior Cert Student of the Year), Cathal Ó hAnluain (Academic Performance Award) & Mr. Stephen Reilly (Principal)

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Almost 100 men from Ballinasloe and its surrounding areas who died in World War One are not recorded on the original Roll Of Honour which hangs in Ballinasloe Library.

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GARBALLY CLASS OF 1969 - GOLDEN JUBILEE REUNION

By Pádraig Ó Ceithearnaigh

A group of 28 past pupils of the 1969 Leaving Cert Class met in Garbally College this Autumn. Unfortunately in the preparatory work it was found that 9 of the classmates have passed away. May they rest in peace.

When the group assembled in Garbally at 2pm on the 18th of Oct. some time was spent on who could recognise who! The current President Fr. Colm Allman, who co-incidentally departed Garbally for Maynooth College in 1964, the year this class first entered the College, gave a warm welcome.

He celebrated mass and afterwards a number of past pupils said that he gave the crew a lot to chew on. He also gave a brief history of the Clancarty Mansion and of the wonderful art work in the house made by renowned Irish Sculptor, Albert Power. After receiving refreshments, kindly provided by Fr. Colm, the past students got the opportunity to see where most of them had spent 5 years and former dayboys got to see places they had never seen during their

time at secondary school. It was a 50 plus years flashback.

The past pupils then motored to Gullane's Hotel for an evening meal. Just prior to dinner they were met by Bishop Kirby, who started teaching in Garbally in 1963. The "students" were amazed at his memory and very much appreciated his effort to meet them.

During and after a first class meal the rest of the evening was spent "ar bhóithrín na smaointe" going back over the years at school and of course what people did since. Occupations undertaken were as varied as the personalities present. Most are now retired but they had solicitors, nurses, printers, tax and business consultants, bankers, teachers, computer experts, Gardaí, financial controllers, General Managers, Arts promoters, farmers and business owners among the troop.

The excitement of the day left most wishing to meet up again - ach beidh le feiceáil!



Front row, l-r: Sean Silke, Hugh Joyce, Eoin Ward, Mike Hynes, Hugh Griffin, Pat Burke, Patrick Ward, John O'Callaghan, Patrick McQualter, Aidan O'Riordan.

2nd row, l-r: Michael S. Kelly, Sean Mahon, George Candler, Martin Jennings, Laurence Queeney, Padraic Mulryan, Padraic O Ceithearnaigh, Conor McDevitt, Ollie Jennings.

Back row, l-r: Michael Jennings, Frank Hogan, Tony Joyce, Brendan Kelly, Seamus Doorley, Paul Clarke, Anthony Sinclair, Paddy Goode.

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OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



Social Services Volunteers at Volunteer Appreciation Morning
L – R: Tess Raftery, Sr. Alacoque, Louise Campbell, Rosaleen Curley, Brendan Kelly.



L - R: Annette Lynagh, Jenny O'Sullivan and Sr. Alacoque at the Social Services Christmas Sale 2018.



At a special presentation to mark the visit of Ballycastle to Ballinasloe,
l-r Mike Kelly (Chairman Ballinasloe Town Twinning), Lyle Mullan (Secretary Ballycastle Twinning Committee), Nancy Cregg (Treasurer Ballinasloe Town Twinning) and Willie Graham (Chairperson Ballycastle Twinning Committee).



Caltra and District AC Marathon group 2019
L-R: Michael Donoghue, Larry McDermott, Rita Loughrey, Mary Noone, James Murphy and Damien Oates relaxing after completing the KBC Dublin City Marathon.
(Missing from this photo is Pat Mongan).



Sean Fletcher and Glen Matlock of the Sex Pistols at the Sell Out Clem Burke's Bootleg Blondie show in Dingwalls in London; where Sean was the promoter.

IN NOVEMBER, WE REMEMBER



In November We Remember Musicians
Flautists: Claire White, Lorna Derrane.
Blossom Harpists: Maria Dolan, Grace Byrne, Leah Naughton.



In November We Remember 2019 Committee
L-R: Brian Derrane, Maura Hughes, Aiden Lonergan, John McDevitt, Annette McDevitt, Christy Smyth.

OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



The Couch to 5km 2019 participants gathered before the final run of 5km.



Ballinasloe Golf Club, Junior Golf Prizewinners (l-r) Conor Rice (Junior Captain), Ben Bleahen (1st), Niall Conneely (Order of Merit), Michael Tully (4th), Tom Cafferkey (2nd) and Holly Cafferkey (Girls Order of Merit).



A special presentation to Marie Annick Cebron, President Chalonnnes sur Loire Twinning Committee to mark their visit to Ballinasloe made by Geraldine Kelly (Secretary) and Mike Kelly (Chairperson) Ballinasloe Town Twinning.



Christy Costello from Kiltormer with his wife Katie at the 4th Annual Saolta Staff Recognition Awards. He won an award for 'Outstanding Employee', having worked in Portiuncula Hospital almost 20 years ago in the Maintenance Department.



Ashley Walsh, with her parents Johnny Walsh, Diana Walsh and sister Francesca Hogan after she graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Primary School Teaching from Mary Immaculate College Limerick.



Members of the Gables Art Group preparing for their forthcoming annual exhibition in Ballinasloe Library
Back: Marie Quinlan, Eamon Cregg, Chris Kelleher, Mary Lyons, Margaret MacDonnell, Rose Hillary.
Front: Jane Devine, Rita D'Arcy, Maria Egan, Sr Tony Traynor, Gemma Cox and Geraldine Kelly (Chairperson).

DECEMBER EVENTS GUIDE

Sunday 1st		
Jimmy Hynes & Crusaders	Shearwater Hotel	5-8pm
R.Mizell support B. Jermyn	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Thunderslap acoustic duo	Brewery Lane	10pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Brendan Jermyn	Canal Bar	10pm
Monday 2nd		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 3rd		
Gables Art Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Social dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Lego Club	B'sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Wednesday 4th		
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5-8pm
Gables Art Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Parent Child+ Story Time	B'sloe Library	10-11am
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Pop Up Shop	B'Sloe Cancer Sup Cntr	10-3pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Card Game	Downeys	9.30pm
Thursday 5th		
S. Services Sales of Work	S. Services Day Centre	10-3pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Dance & Movement Wshop	B'sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
Gables Art Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Pop Up Shop	B'Sloe Cancer Sup Cntr	10-3pm
Horizon	Shearwater	6.30pm
Progressive 25 Games	Clonturkest NS	9pm
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 6th		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Gables Art Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Pop Up Shop	B'Sloe Cancer Sup Cntr	10-3pm
Toxic twins	Brewery Lane	10pm
Pop Up Steak House	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Cards Christmas	Valerie's of Aughrim	9pm
Dollar Daly	Canal Bar	10pm
Find the joker	An Tain	9pm
Texas Holdem Poker	Joe Kellys Bar	9.30pm
Saturday 7th		
Gables Art Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Movie Club	B'Sloe Library	2.30pm
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
The codiene kids	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ John Finnerty	Downey's Bar	10pm
Chris Nash	The Pillar House	10pm
The Legends	An Tain	10pm
Santa in Aughrim	Valerie's of Aughrim	5pm
Des Egan	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Joe Glynn	Canal Bar	10pm
Sunday 8th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
P McKenna & Glensane Cty	Shearwater Hotel	5-8pm
Ahascragh C'mas Concert	St Catherine's Church Ahascragh	7.30pm
M.Denver sup S. Moyle	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
The Noshowband	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Lights & Tree Aughrim	Valerie's of Aughrim	6pm
Sessions Front Bar	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Stuart Moyle	Canal Bar	10pm
Monday 9th		
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 10th		
Gables Art Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Active Retirement Book C	B'sloe Library	4-5pm
Lego Club	B'sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 11th		
Bumps & Babies Group	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
Blood Bank	Gullanes Hotel	5-8.30pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5-8pm
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Card Game	Downeys Bar	10pm

Thursday 12th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Dance & Movement Workshop	B'sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Blood Bank	Gullanes Hotel	5-8.30pm
Rachel Goode C'mas Concert	Church Gallery	7.30pm
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Progressive 25 Games	Clonturkest NS	9pm
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
John Molloy	Downey's Bar	10pm
Friday 13th		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Acoustic ninjas	Brewery Lane	10pm
Pop Up Steak House	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Find the joker	An Tain	9pm
Pillar Charity Concert	Pillar House	9pm
Texas Holdem Poker	Joe Kellys Bar	9.30pm
Alex Roe	Canal Bar	10pm
Aughrim Active Retirement Dinner Dance	Valerie's of Aughrim	7pm
The Junkyard Geordies	Lukers of S' Bridge	10pm
Saturday 14th		
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	2.00pm
Movie Club	B'Sloe Library	2.30pm
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Red Tape	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ John Finnerty	Downey's Bar	10pm
M.Keane & Colm Naughton	The Pillar House	10pm
Choons	An Tain	10pm
Steve Reilly	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Emerald	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
T. B. C.	Canal Bar	10pm
Evoke	Lukers of S' Bridge	10pm
Sunday 15th		
Brenda Mcgee	Shearwater Hotel	5-8pm
P. Feeney sup John Malloy	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	2.00pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Panto Rapunzel	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Brego	Brewery Lane	10pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
John Molloy	Canal Bar	10pm
Double up	Joe Kellys Bar	9.30pm
Monday 16th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
X-Mass Parish Confessions	St Michael's Church	7pm
Tuesday 17th		
Lego Club	B'sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing Christmas Dinner Dance	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 18th		
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5-8pm
Parent & Child C'mas Party	B'sloe Library	10.30am
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Card Game	Downey's Bar	10pm
Thursday 19th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Dance & Movement Workshop	B'sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
Progressive 25 Games	Clonturkest NS	9pm
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Steve Reilly	Downey's Bar	10pm
Joel Xmas Draw	Joe Kellys Bar	9pm
Friday 20th		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Ardrahan Carol Service	Ardrahan Church	7.30pm
Beggars velvet	Brewery Lane	10pm
Xmas Party Night	Downey's Bar	10pm
Find the joker	An Tain	9.00pm
Dollar Daly	Canal Bar	10pm
Shane Moore	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Abba Tribute Night	Luker's of S' Bridge	10pm

Saturday 21st		
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
The willy jumpers	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ John Finnerty	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	The Pillar House	6pm
Na Riadoiri	An Tain	10pm
Joe Newman	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Small Deal	Canal Bar	10pm
Sunday 22nd		
Ballinasloe Carol Service	St John's Church	11am
Glan Carol Service	St Matthew's, Clonturkest	3pm
Liam Mannering	Shearwater Hotel	5-8pm
J.Buckley sup M.Regan	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Kevin Corry	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
The Goodlife	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ Crazy Chris	Downey's Bar	10pm
Kevin Corry	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Michael Regan	Canal Bar	10pm
Double Trouble	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Monday 23rd		
12-DJ John Finnerty	Downey's Bar	10pm
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Small Deal	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Sessions in Lounge	Valeries of Aughrim	9-10.30pm
Acoustic ninjas	Brewery Lane	10pm
Tuesday 24th		
St Michaels Folk Choir	Outside Gullanes Hotel	11-5pm
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Christmas Eve Eucharist	Holy Trinity Church,	6pm
Christmas Eve Mass	Portiuncula Chapel	6pm
Christmas Eve Mass Family	St Michael's Church	6.30pm
John Wynne	The Pillar House	7pm
Christmas Eve Mass	Creagh Church	10pm
Christmas Eve Mass	St. Michaels Church	11pm
Wednesday 25th		
Christmas Day Mass	St. Michaels Church	9.15am
Christmas Day Mass	Creagh Church	10.30am
Christmas Day Eucharist	St John's Church B'sloe	11am
Christmas Day Mass	St. Michaels Church	12pm
Thursday 26th		
Live Acoustic Session	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ	The Pillar House	10pm
DJ Eoin Galvin	An Tain	10pm
DJ John F	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Country Comfort	Valeries of Aughrim	10pm
Friday 27th		
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Find the Joker	An Tain	9.00pm
Adrian Rabbitte	The Pillar House	10pm
Hoppy Bar Stars	Brewery Lane	10pm
Dollar Daly	Canal Bar	10pm
Saturday 28th		
German Photos Exhibition		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Red Tape	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ John Finnerty 80's Night	The Pillar House	10pm
Lorcan Live	An Tain	10pm
Music With the CEO's	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
T.B.C	Canal Bar	10pm
Paul Byrnes	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
The Dubliners (Tribute Band)	Luker's of S' Bridge	10pm
Sunday 29th		
1st Sund of C'mas (united service)	St Catherine's, Ahascragh	11am
T. B. C	Shearwater Hotel	5-8PM
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Brego	Brewery Lane	10pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Derek Ryan	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Andy Feery	Canal Bar	10pm
Back to Basics	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Monday 30th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
The Noshowband	Brewery Lane	10pm
Tuesday 31st		
German Photos Exhibition	Church Gallery	Lib Hours
Candle Lit Steak Night	Luker's of S' Bridge	6-9pm
Dancing-the Midnight Melodies	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
New Years Eve Party	An Tain	10pm
T.B.C	Canal Bar	10pm
New Years Eve-DJ John F	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
DJ Crazy Chris	Downey's Bar	10pm
C. Sheannon & the Breakaway's	Valeries of Aughrim	10pm
Pacifica	The Pillar House	10pm

JANUARY EVENTS GUIDE

Wednesday 1st		
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Ken Live	Canal Bar	10pm
Thursday 2nd		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Dance & Movement W'shop	B'Sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	9.30pm
Friday 3rd		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Find the Joker	An Tain	9pm
Pop Up Steak House	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Small Deal	Canal Bar	10pm
Live Music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Saturday 4th		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Live Music	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ	Downey's Bar	10pm
Happy Birthday John	An Tain	10pm
Happy Bar Stars	Canal Bar	10pm
Sunday 5th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Nollaig na mBan	Gullanes Hotel	3-6pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Live Music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Monday 6th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 7th		
Social dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Lego Club	B'sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Bumps & Babes Group	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Wednesday 8th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Card Game	Downey's Bar	9.30pm
Thursday 9th		
Dance & Movement W'shop	B'Sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	9.30pm
Friday 10th		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Robert Mizzel	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Patrick Feeny	Shearwater Hotel	11.30pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Pop Up Steak House	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Find the joker	An Tain	9pm
Ken Live	Canal Bar	10pm

Saturday 11th		
Movie Club	B'sloe Library	2.30pm
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Kieran Rosney	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
DJ John Finnerty	Downey's Bar	10pm
Patrick Feeny	Shearwater Hotel	11.30pm
live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
January Blues	An Tain	10pm
T.B.C	Canal Bar	10pm
Sunday 12th		
Patrick Feeny	Shearwater Hotel	3-5PM
Lisdoonvama Reunion Dance	Shearwater Hotel	6.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Monday 13th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 14th		
Lego Club	B'sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
First Fortnight Art Workshop	Church Gallery	11am
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 15th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
God's Own Country	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Card Game	Downey's Bar	9.30pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 16th		
Dance & Movement W'shop	B'Sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	9.30pm
Friday 17th		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Pop Up Steak House	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Find the joker	An Tain	9pm
Dollar Daly	Canal Bar	10pm
Saturday 18th		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ	Downey's Bar	10pm
Dinner Dance	An Tain	10pm
T.B.C	Canal Bar	10pm
Sunday 19th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Live Music	Brewery Lane	10pm

Monday 20th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 21st		
Lego Club	B'sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 22nd		
Bumps & Babes Group	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Card Game	Downey's Bar	9.30pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 23rd		
Dance & Movement W'shop	B'Sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Social Dancing	Downey's Bar	9.30pm
Three Amigos	Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Friday 24th		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Find the joker	An Tain	9pm
Live Music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Pop Up Steak House	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Small Deal	Canal Bar	10pm
Saturday 25th		
Movie Club	B'Sloe Library	2.30pm
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live DJ	Downey's Bar	10pm
Cold Porter	An Tain	10pm
Ger Long	Canal Bar	10pm
Sunday 26th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Monday 27th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 28th		
Lego Club	B'sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 29th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Active Retirement	Gullanes Hotel	3pm
Card Game	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 30th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullanes Hotel	11am
Live Acoustic Session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 31st		
B'Sloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Find the joker	An Tain	9pm
live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Pop Up Steak House	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Dollar Daly	Canal Bar	10pm

To advertise your events here contact: ballinasloelife@hotmail.com or Call **090 964 5831** by January 10th.

CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS



Nancy Kelly Castlepark who recently celebrated her 90th birthday. Pictured with her children. Back L-R: Anne Flaherty, Pat Kelly, Colette Lynch, Fionnuala Monahan. Front L-R: Brenda Kelly, Nancy Kelly, Maureen Fleming.



Gerry Croffey of Gerry Croffey Garden Machinery, Cathal O'Grady - lucky winner of the Berg Go-Kart, and Dermot Byrnes, who had East Galway residents in a stir over the past few weeks by raffling a Berg Go-Kart worth €549 to raise much-needed funds for new facilities at his club Pádraig Pearses GAA in Ballymacward.



Caitlin Duane celebrating her 100th birthday, surrounded by her family.

Back Row: Angela Duane, Rita Duane, Eimear Cunningham, Fiona Greaney, Ashling Wall, David Duane, Justin Wall.

Middle Row: David Cunningham, Leah Cunningham, Sarah Cunningham, Ryan Wall, Donnachadh Duane, Nora Duane, Gerard Duane, Myra Duane Reilly, John Reilly.

Front Row: Aoi bhe Greaney, Thomas Greaney, Caitlin Duane, Caoimhe Duane, William Wall, Sean Greaney, Des Duane.



St Cuans United Victorious in u11's RDYSL competition.

Front Row (L-R):

Matthew Mulloy, Fabian Carroll, Patrick Mongan (cpt) James Gerard, Ben Fitzgerald.

Back Row (L-R):

Ryan Glynn, Stephen Raftery, Jack Muldowney, Conor Fitzgerald, Oisín Devine, Alex Smith.



Ivan Smyth from Ahascragh pictured after receiving the President's Volunteer Award (PVA) at the University of Limerick recently. Also in the photo are his parents Christy and Deirdre. Ivan is a 3rd year journalism student at UL.



The recent Culture Night Project of Lily Kelly's Art Studio
Left to right: Alan Carr, Peter McDonagh, Pascal Murray, Charlie Cooley, Clement Moylan, Nicola Bowes, Mary Barber, Jacinta Divilly Sweeney, Nuala Murray and Lily Kelly.

NUN TRAINED NURSES FROM EVERY CONTINENT BY KEN KELLY

One of the best-known nuns in Portiuncula Hospital, Sr. Seraphina Weston, FMDM, has passed away in her 93rd year. For 29 years she was Principal of the Madonna College of Nursing Training School, in Portiuncula, where her graduates came from every continent.

On 24th May 1953 Mother M. Margaret, who initiated the project, lectured at the opening of new College of Nursing where the first students were all FMDM sisters but permission was given by the Irish Nursing Board to begin training lay student nurses also. Sr. Seraphina was appointed principal and large numbers of students trained there until the cessation of the education system, which was replaced by a Bachelor of Nursing Degree awarded by Universities in September 2002. The Sisters had transferred ownership of Portiuncula to the Western Health Board in 2001.



Sr. Seraphina was born in Castlebar on 5th April 1927 and was baptised Annie Teresa. She was the second eldest in a family of three sisters and two brothers. A Mayo woman, through and through, she became a member of the Congregation in August 1945 and did her nursing studies in St. Luke's Hospital, Guilford, Surrey. It was there she met her life-long friend and esteemed colleague, Sr. Madeleine, who had come from Penang, Malaysia, to peruse her nurse studies. Little did they know they were destined to work together for very many years in the Madonna School of Nursing attached to Portiuncula Hospital.

A hospital official told the "Surrey Advertiser" in an article that appeared 67 years ago that Sr. Seraphina was "one of the most brilliant trainees to pass through the Training School in Guilford." She was described in Portiuncula as "a conscientious and exacting teacher and she demanded the best from her students. She had the ability to clarify difficult information in simple, intelligible language. She saw the greatest potential in every student, she had their welfare at heart and was always aware that she was preparing them for the sacred duty of caring for the sick."

Sr. Seraphina had a great yearning to go to Africa to work for the poor and sick, so after 29 years as Principal of the Nurse Training School she left for Zimbabwe in 1983, where she worked for six years. On

her return to Ireland she pursued a Diploma in Religious Studies in Dundalk and after a year came back to Portiuncula to do some part-time teaching.

Many of her past students at the College came from all over Ireland and abroad, as did representatives of Portiuncula Hospital, to bid farewell to a nun that will be remembered for "a good life lived in a spirit of compassion, generosity, kindness and love."

THE HAIR GALLERY

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PASSING OF FORMER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

BY KEN KELLY

The sudden passing of Albie Flanagan, Upper Brackernagh, Ballinasloe came as a great shock, not alone in his adopted town but also in South Roscommon where he was born, the eldest of three children. A widely respected gentleman and a true sportsman, he endeared himself to many with his ever friendly positive disposition and courteous attitude to all and sundry.



by both his colleagues and the hundreds of boys under his supervision, always approachable and understanding.

Walking and golfing were two of Albie's most favourite pastimes and he enjoyed both right up until his untimely death. He was never happier than when organizing a game with his many golfing buddies, his son and sons in law and was delighted when some of his grandchildren also showed an interest in the game. He held the honour of Club President in Ballinasloe Golf Club in 1989. This was a great recognition for a man that always captured an audience when relating his own experiences be they to do with travel, teaching or sporting pursuits.

Albie Flanagan was born in Knockcroghery, Roscommon on 4th January 1935 and as a youngster played both hurling and football and wore the county minor jersey in hurling. After completing his secondary education, Albie trained as a teacher in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and after qualifying started his teaching career for a brief sojourn in Co. Monaghan before making his way back to Co. Roscommon where he taught in a number of schools and even spent some time teaching in Clashaganny National School, the same school that both his grandparents and his uncle had taught at years previously.

Following his marriage to Eileen Duffy in 1961, they both moved to Ontario, Canada where Albie worked as a teacher and Eileen as a midwife. They returned to Ireland after five years. Both their daughters Maureen and Adrienne were born in Canada followed by their three sons John, Brendan and Alfred once they had settled back in Ireland. Albie taught in Tiaquin NS near Athenry before becoming Principal of St. Grellan's Boy's National School in Ballinasloe in 1970 where he spent many happy days until his retirement in 1998. There he was held in the highest esteem

Eleven years ago the late Mr. Flanagan lost his eldest son John after a short illness. A few years later his wife Eileen became ill and the family witnessed their Dad's enduring love as he became her carer, right up to her passing just five months ago. A year ago he had to cope with the horrific death of his daughter Maureen in a traffic accident. His faith remained strong and he displayed amazing strength and support for his family during the saddest of times.

Former pupils, teachers and sporting rivals were among the large numbers that came to pay their respects at Albie's reposal, mass and burial. Present and former teachers as well as officers and members of the local golf club formed guards of honour in a final farewell to a true gentleman, an exceptionally-loved family man and a true "Rossie."

The late Mr. Flanagan is survived by his daughter Adrienne, sons Brendan and Alfred, sister Maimie, brother Val and many more relatives and friends.

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AUGHRIM RADIO OFFICER WORKED IN 44 COUNTRIES IN 8 YEARS

BY KEN KELLY

The experience of being winched onto a 1,200 feet long ship by a helicopter, in the middle of the night, in the Indian Ocean, was not what an Aughrim man envisaged when he joined the Merchant Navy as a 21-year-old.

Mike Hanley, a native of Clonmoylan, Portumna spent eight years as a Marine Radio Officer with the Navy, visiting at least 44 countries, during his career between 1974 and 1982. But when the Iran-Iraq War broke out in 1980, things on the high seas were getting dangerous and Mike felt it was safer to bail out and return home.

Now living in Aughrim, the 65-year-old recounted training as a Radio Officer in Tivoli, in Cork, before joining a Shipping Company in London as a Marine Radio Officer. "It is said that the three most important people on a ship are the Captain, a Cook and a Radio Officer. I worked on different cargo ships all over the world and I had some unusual experiences.

"I was asleep in a hotel in Capetown, South Africa-a place I first experienced apartheid-when I got a phone call I would be collected inside the hour. I was brought on a Sirkosky 16 helicopter to the Indian Ocean and winched onto a 1,200 feet long oil tanker that was carrying \$13 million worth of crude oil to Rotterdam. It was a hair-raising experience but when I saw a member of the crew cycling on

the deck of the tanker, the following morning, I said 'I've seen it all now.' I later discovered he was one of the maintenance crew and needed the bicycle to bring tools from one end of the ship to the other (approximately 400 yards). "Just imagine 68 feet of that ship was under water when fully laden. It was gigantic" said Mike.

Returning home, Mike went into the Agri business in Portumna and later joined the staff at Portiuncula Hospital where he became Household Services Manager before retiring five years ago. Now a widower with two children, he loves to relate his experiences to his friends and neighbours, particularly setting off as a 21-year-old on the high seas.



GABLES' CHRISTMAS GIFTS

This year's annual exhibition of Gables Art Group features around 100 artworks and highlights the talents of the locals, providing an ideal opportunity for members to show and sell their work.

So if you're looking for a Christmas gift for someone special or a little treat for yourself then why not pop along - it is on display in the Church Gallery of the Ballinasloe Library and running until 1pm on Saturday, 7th December. The exhibition has a wide range of acrylic, watercolour and oil paintings on show all by local artists.

The 29 years old Art Group continues to encourage and support over 40 artists in all mediums in the classes run by Jackie Eastwood and Maura Warde. The classes, which are very social and fun, provide a friendly and welcoming environment to develop the creative flair whether as a beginner or more experienced painter.

Chairperson and long-time member of Gables, Geraldine Kelly said: "This year's Gables exhibition is no exception in highlighting the fantastic work of our artists. We hope as many people will take the time to come along and see the artwork which is very encouraging for our members. We look forward to a busy and creative 2020".



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SCOIL MUIRE MUSICAL CAST AND CREW

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

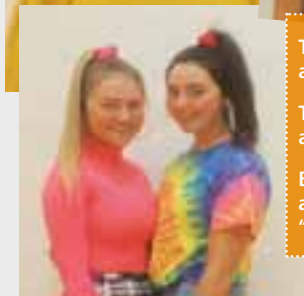
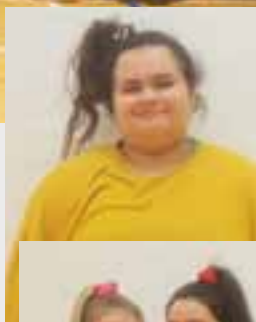


Front: Cathal O'Hanlon

Front Row (Left to Right): Richard Moore, Jack Finn, Daithi Ward, Declan Kenny, Emer Fahy, Ella Connolly, Nicole O'Carroll, Paddy McDonagh, Lisa Naessens, Mia Costello, Tasha Tully, Aislinn Clifford, Catherine Gately, Martyna Florek.

Middle Row: Ronan Chin, Luke Galvin, Gavin McManus, Luke Walsh, Daithi Blackweir, Holly Crosby, Cian Poland, Paula Mickel Luis, Andrea Lopez Garcia, Luke Feehily, Luna Marquez Pareja, Caragh Kelly, Arrieta Saldana Escudero, Caitlin Cunningham, Rachel Hayes, Sophie Cunningham, Aideen Monahan, Isabella Barajas, Ciara Holohan, Emily Devlin Murray, Athia Mohdzairi.

Back Row: Ava Kilduff, Katie Malone, Ruth McDonnell, Sarah Hendrick, Tara McKeon, Roberta Kazlovaite, Martha Tarrus, Aoife Burnell, Aoife Garvey, Lauren Doherty, Jo-Ann Curley, Aliyah Ryan, Katie Galvin, Lucy Fahy, Rosa Monaghan, Sarah Lyons.



Top Right: Nicole O'Carroll as "Ariel Moore".

Top Left: Tasha Tully as "Rusty"

Bottom Left: Ella Connolly and Emer Fahy as "Urleen and Wendy Jo".

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BALLYDANGAN AUTHOR'S NEW NOVEL

Originally born and reared in Strokestown, author Eoghan Egan worked in Athlone while his wife worked in Portluncula. They both love the countryside, so they decided to move to Ballydangan, half-way between both towns. Over the years they've changed jobs, but Ballydangan still remains home.

His new novel, "Hiding in Plain Sight" is being published this January. High art and low morals collide when graduate Sharona Waters discovers a multi-million euro art scam in play. She delves in, unwittingly putting herself on a direct trajectory with danger as the killer accelerates his murder spree. When Sharona gets drawn into the killer's orbit, she peels away his public persona and exposes the psychopath underneath. Suddenly, the small town has no hiding place.

Eoghan's work has previously been shortlisted for the 2018 Bridport Short Story Prize and Listowel's 2019 Bryan McMahon Short Story Award Competition. In March 2019, Eoghan won the Litopia's prestigious Pop-Up Submission.

He graduated as a computer programmer but quickly found his way into sales. His forte is managing field-based sales teams and customer service - listening gives him lots of ideas for writing plot lines, and he uses driving time to think out storylines and airports to sometimes observe human behaviour. He is also a graduate of Maynooth University's Creative Writing Curriculum, and Curtis Brown's Edit & Pitch Your Novel Course, Eoghan divides his time between Roscommon, Dublin and Southern Italy.

While he hasn't transitioned into the author role on a full time basis yet, Eoghan's aim is to become a full-time writer. "As lifestyles change, so do people's careers. The days of acquiring a permanent and pensionable position and staying until retirement, are long gone. As we live and work longer, many people are having success in two, three or more different careers throughout their working life."

He has always written short stories and began writing novels ten years ago. "Once my writing garnered attention and won some awards, I knew it was a journey I had to take and complete. (The journey took seven years... much longer than I'd expected)" he muses.

About his writing, he said: "Wherever I am, I write. Every day. Usually early mornings, but frequently late at night. It might be a hundred words or a thousand, or just the bare bones of an idea... sometimes a casual conversation can trigger inspiration. I'll make a note and write up a rough draft later" states Eoghan.

"The real writing begins in Ballydangan. All my notes / ideas are taken back there each weekend and turned into a readable format. My library is there. My study... my quiet time. Ballydangan is the only place I can really concentrate, focus and write, surrounded by my books", explains Eoghan.

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



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WEATHER HITS TRAIL OF TERROR

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



Despite all the best a paid plans of mice and men the new look, Trail of Terror got off to a rollicking good evening one with patrons and families expressing themselves happy with the new look spooky walk through the Garbally Woods.

The weather turned quite nasty for the 20 hours between the first evening and afternoon of the second, so much so that it became for the first time in its five year history a JOE DOLAN GIG – "For one night only." A safety inspection around 15.00 hours on Sat by the Town Team Production Crew meant there was really no choice and the messy business of having disappoint fans with cancellation notices and the torture of returning admission money to accounts online began.

None were as much disappointed as the members of the Musical Society, the Vintage Club, Sports Clubs and volunteers of drama, music and other community activities who make the 120 plus volunteer zombies, ghosts, witches and helpers over the two nights.

Given the high cost of running the event and the investment in new props, production and overheads the fundraising target for the Town's Xmas Lights was not met and had adverse knock on implications.

Chair Seamus Duffy thanked all the volunteers and crew who had rehearsed and laid out and built the trail for their loyalty and energy and praised the visitors to the Trail who were in the main most accommodating. He also again thanked Fr. Colm Allman and the Trust Authorities for their support. Plans are afoot for a two nightery next year.

INCOME	
Description	Zombie Walk
ZOMBIE WALK SALES FRIDAY	7,800
ZOMBIE WALK SALES SATURDAY	10,700
ZOMBIE WALK REFUND (SATURDAY)	-10,700
Total	7,800
EXPENSES	
Description	Zombie Walk
INSURANCE/INDEMNITIES & SECURITY	1,300
MARKETING/SIGNAGE/FLYERS	750
SNACKS/WATER/FOOD	850
PRODUCTION/PROPS/LANTERNS/MAKEUP	1,100
STAGING EQUIPMENT/LIGHTING	6,000
CIVIL DEFENCE/FIRST AID COVER	300
MADDEN TRUST SCOIL MHUIRE/SOCIETIES	950
Total	9,950
Deficit	-2,150

NEW INN MUMMERS FESTIVAL 2020

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



Aidan Donohue of the Festival Committee presenting the Sean Dolan Perpetual Trophy to the Most Outstanding Entertainers at Festival 2019 - Vera Barrett & Pat Ward from the Ballymacward Mummies.



Festival Chairman, Michael Mullins presenting the Joe Monaghan Memorial Award for Best King to John Rafferty of Ballymacward Mummies. Also in photo on right is Sean O'Roarke - New York - A Festival Sponsor.

Planning is well advanced for the staging of the New Inn Mummies Festival 2020, and in this special year for County Galway, the organisers hope to attract large crowds to the East Galway Village for a feast of Traditional Music, Song, Dance and Storytelling.

This will be the 42nd Annual Festival, and it will be staged in the local Leisure Centre on the weekend of 11th and 12th January 2020.

The New Inn Mummies is one of the longest running festivals in the country and attracts competitors and patrons from the West and Midlands. Thanks

to loyal and generous sponsors, there are prizes for winning groups, and for the best musician, singer, dancer, storyteller and most outstanding entertainer in both the junior and senior competition.

Festival Chairman Michael Mullins stated some groups have

confirmed for Festival 2020, and he is optimistic that there will be a number of new groups participating on this occasion. Visitors to New Inn can be assured of a warm welcome, and a feast of traditional entertainment in a comfortable venue.

Entries are now open for the event, and intending participants should contact Festival Secretary Michael Finnerty at 087 3828281 to secure a place.

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Look for energy efficient appliances: Look for an EU energy label and choose an energy efficient model.

Fill up your washing machine: Don't do a wash if you only have a few items of clothing. Wait until you have a full load. Less washes = less cost!

Don't overheat your water: A boiler at a maximum temperature of 60°C is both the most efficient and hygienic.

Buy rechargeable batteries and don't forget to recycle your batteries once they reach their end of life!



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PANTO "RAPUNZEL" COMING THIS DECEMBER

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

B'sloe Panto are busy putting their own twist on another classic fairy tale, with their 11th annual production of "Rapunzel" set to run in the Town Hall Theatre.

This year's cast features an assortment of Panto staples along with a number of new faces. Following her brilliant performance as Princess Jasmine in last year's show, Zara Campbell, a 6th year student in Ardscoil Mhuire, is taking on the role of the lass with the luscious locks - Rapunzel. Emma Greally plays the wicked Gothel. She is assisted in her shenanigans by Buboe, played by Panto first timer Tom Cahill.

Mike O'Reilly and Kayleigh Holohan take on the roles of Rapunzel's parents. This is Kayleigh's first time taking on a principal role in the Panto having been a member of the chorus for a number of previous productions.

Other members of the royal court include Harold, the court jester; and Dame Trott, the King's cook, played by Panto regulars Pat Vaughan and Louise McEvoy respectively. Gothel enlists the help of two thieves, Quinn and Doyle, played by Ciarán Smyth and Enda McGrath, in her evil quest to take over the kingdom.

Aiden Shortall, another Panto newbie, takes on the role of Crevise, the leader of a group of ruffians, who make Rapunzel's life very difficult. The rest of the rowdy bunch is made up of kids who have taken part in the Panto chorus groups for many years including Koby Campbell, Donal Byrnes, Patrick Hanrahan, Clodagh Dooley, Poppy Farrell, Lily Kearns and Aoife Shortall. Narrating the entire tale, and trying her best to help when she can, is the Fairy, played by 1st year Ardscoil Mhuire student Abaigh Hardiman. Abaigh is no stranger to the Panto stage having taken part since she was six years old and who filled in as So-Shy in a number of last year's shows.

This year's production team is made up of some very talented individuals. Ria Purcell, who has been involved with Panto for a number of years now will be choreographing the entire cast of "Rapunzel". Ria is a very experienced performer and choreographer having worked as a professional singer and dancer in Greece for 10 years before moving home in 2016 to set up her own dance academy,

Milkshake Dance & Performance Academy. She has been very busy since the end of September rehearsing several dances with over 180 kids and young people.

The accomplished Louise McEvoy, who has directed numerous plays, musicals and pantomimes all over the midlands, takes the helm as director for this year's show. And last but not least the production crew is rounded off by the extremely talented musical direction of John Roe who is delighted to be working with the Panto cast and crew once again.

The show runs from December 9th to 15th, nightly at 7.30pm with two fancy dress matinees on Saturday and Sunday (December 14th and 15th respectively) at 2.30pm, where both children and adults alike are invited to come in outfits, fit for the Panto stage with prizes for the best dressed!

Tickets are available online (www.ballinasloepanto.com) and from the Panto booking office at J&S Photos on Society Street, drop in or call 090 963 1566 to get yours. They will also be available on the door; however pre-booking is advised.



Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas



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Since 2012, a new roof has been installed, along with stage lighting and fittings, gauzes and a film screen, and other improvements have been made to the building such as refurbished dressing rooms, balcony seats, a security system, an office presence and the development of an online presence.

The attendance were reminded of two big jobs are still outstanding: new seating for the auditorium and the cleaning of the exterior of the building – the society has already sought advice about this, and a detailed schedule is being drawn up.

Maire thanked the user groups, the C.E. and G.R.D TUS people who help with a most generous spirit, Tanya Joyce in the office, volunteers, and all members of the hardworking committee. She also thanked those who helped with the first Mid-Summer Festival and the volunteers for the October Fair Café. She thanked Dermot Salmon, Regina Divilly (Off-licence), Dolan's and Harriet Bruce of Wonderland for sponsorship. She thanked Niamh Cavanagh, Eva Burgoyne and Pat Joe Guinnessy who were stepping down from the committee and welcomed the new elected members Aoife Vaughan and Mary Barber.

Mary O'Connell, Secretary, outlined the performance and fundraising events of the past year. She also discussed capital works and improvements to the building which have been assisted by grant aid from various sources such as the Community Enhancement Programme Scheme to assist with the refurbishment of two of the dressing rooms and adjacent toilets, and from the LEADER fund for the refurbishment of the toilets and kitchenette and the upgrading of the heating system with the installation of the gas boilers, the overall cost being €70K. Community Finance



Members of the Town Hall Committee recently elected at their AGM were
Front L-R: Ruth Vaughn, Frances Leahy, Maura Hughes, Mary O'Connell
Back L-R: Gerry Sweeney, Elaine O'Hanlon, Sheilea Sweeney, Pat McGovern, John Lyons.

Ireland have agreed a bridging loan of €46,213.50 and a term loan of €30,000 to assist with the project, which was completed in the last few weeks.

Town Hall Theatre has become a much more expensive place to run and maintain. Monthly bills requiring payment include insurance, electricity, water, telephone, gas,

waste disposal, box office maintenance, etc. The rate card is very competitive and has remained unchanged since 2016.

The committee has been fortunate to date with grant aid received, which has allowed for improvements throughout the building, but there is also a need to develop audiences and to attract touring acts and new shows in order to enhance the economic situation in the theatre, as the current rentals are not sufficient to meet the costs.

The team plan to focus on developing the calendar of events through 2020 with more touring groups visiting the theatre, with the first of these on Wednesday 15th January with Donal Courtney's "God has no Country."

New Volunteers to assist with the annual programme are encouraged to come forward and can make contact through facebook or website.

*Wishing all our readers
a Happy Christmas*



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STAGING OF "FINDING JULIA"

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

St. Brigid's Hospital Heritage Group and Club Damhsa Beal Atha na Sluaigh, as well as Miserearl Productions recently performed in Pat Johnston's play "Finding Julia", in the Town Hall Theatre. Directed by Declan Kelly, this new play reflected on the life of Julia Mary Morrissey (just 24-years-old when she commanded 50 women during the Galway Rising of 1916) against a background of the changes in Irish society from 1916 to 1974. Based on the faint traces of her life, the play is set in East Galway (from Athenry to Ballinasloe) including song, poetry, and dance and challenges in the centenary of commemorations – that "For most of history, Anonymous was a woman."

The Cast and Crew were - Rachel Walker (Julia Morrissey - as a younger woman), Marie Gunning (Julia Morrissey - as an older woman), Ciaran Smyth (Liam Mellows), Barra O Maolalaigh (Peter), Lisa Whyte (Nurse 1), Frances Leahy (Nurse 2), Deirdre O Murchadha (Dr Ada English), Frances Leahy (Brigid), Gretell Sullivan (Aggie, Shawlie 1), Aishling Sheehy (Shawlie 2), Emily Lohan (Ballad Singer), Enda McGrath (Accordianist/Bagpiper), Tom Costello (Black & Tan), Gerry Sweeney (The Irregular), Noel Lohan (Visiting Priest), Caitlin Cormican

('Young wan'), Johnny Johnston (Ministering priest), young Sean Nos dancers of Club Damhsa and their teachers Martina Flanagan and Bridie Ruane, Declan Kelly (Director), Karen Hurley (Stage Manager), Pat McGovern (Lighting), Dave Hardiman (Sound), Denise Boland (Programme/Poster Design).



BALLINASLOE MUSICAL SOCIETY SEEKS CREW

The Ballinasloe Musical Society makes their annual return to the Town Hall Theatre from March 24th to 28th 2020 with their take with their soon-to-be-announced new show. Auditions have been held and the cast is being confirmed in the early days of December. However it is still not too late to take part in this lively comedy - if you would like to get involved either on stage or otherwise, contact Lisa on 086-8782529 or email ballinasloems@gmail.com. Rehearsals are due to begin in early January so don't delay!



Ballinasloe Musical Society Committee 2019/2020:

Back Row L to R:
Gerard Sweeney,
Ellen Egan, Robin Newton,
Eithne Blackwell,
Gregory Blackwell,
Jacinta Keane.

Front Row L to R:
Fiona Flaherty,
President Maureen Donaghue,
Lisa Whyte, Frances Leahy.

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LEADER GRANT FOR TOWN BAND HALL



Galway Rural Development has sanctioned a welcome grant of €41,995 for the renovation works on the Town Band's new hall. This grant aid, coupled with the Town Bands' own fundraising efforts, will enable the Band to begin the refurbishment of the Town Band Hall immediately.

The heritage officer of Galway Co. Co. has visited the premises and has expressed the council's support for the renovations plan.

The title to the Parochial Hall was transferred on 31.07.2019 and the Town Band is now fully responsible for the hall. The Band has mortgaged the property and so like many of you it is now committed to monthly repayments on the mortgage.

Speaking at the Town Band October meeting the Chair, Damien O'Neachtain, expressed "thanks in particular to individuals in the community who have signed up for a monthly contribution to the band – these will help to defray the monthly mortgage repayment."

The overall aim is to raise €180,000 for the purchase and renovation of the Hall. €40,000 has been raised since the

campaign started.

The Band has a very busy Christmas schedule with recitals on 5th Dec (Junior Band in the Shearwater Hotel), 12th December in the Ballinasloe Library, Dec 21st Christmas Carols for all in the Ballinasloe Library featuring Rachel Goode and an open air recital to "Ring in the New Year" Dec 31st. at St. Michael's Square. They will also provide the music for the Children's Christmas Eve mass at 6.00 pm in St. Michael's.

An appeal for your support is ongoing, they require the long-term commitment of individuals, businesses and supporters to maintain and develop the band in the years ahead.

The Town Band is an organisation dedicated to having a community based band in our town. Since its reformation in 2014 by a small group of wind players, the band members – all volunteers; a core group now numbers 22 – seniors and juniors alike – and provides music for community events and is available as required by local community organisations. There are up to 14 young musicians in the Junior Band and the 28 in the Beginner Band under the tutelage of Keith Kelly (a Ballyforan native) who rehearse twice weekly.

If anyone gets a musical instrument for Xmas or wishes to learn a musical instrument then please make contact with any of the below.

Current Committee are - Damien O'Neachtain (Chair), Katja Conneely (Sec), Joe Duane (Treas), Martina Doherty (Band Manager), JJ Smyth, John Flynn, Malachy Reynolds, Evan Rafter, Bobby Finn, Noel Madden (Bandmaster).

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



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THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER...

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

CAROL SINGING on Christmas Eve, in Main St., between 1 and 4 pm is expected to raise money for local charities. To date, St. Michael's Folk Choir as well as members of Creagh and St. Michael's Church choirs have joined up and have raised over €73,000 for various charities. Collectors, donned in Santa suits, will be around the town from early morning.

PADDY DELANEY, the Brackernagh-based businessman who passed away in his 88th year, was a native of Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh. He was one of a family of thirteen and set up business in Ballinasloe 56 years ago.

SR. HILARY (Rita Shiel) spent 38 years of her religious life teaching in Mercy Convent schools in East Galway. A native of Tynagh, the late Sr. Hilary taught in Ballinasloe (1959-1963), Loughrea (1963-1969), Eyrecourt (1969-1973) and Ballinasloe (1973-1997) before retiring.

RACHEL ALLEN will be the special guest at the annual Christmas Festive Cookery Demonstration in Caltra Community Centre on Wednesday, 4th December at 8 pm. The MC for the night is Galway Bay FM's Ollie Turner.

THE LATE MRS. PHILOMENA CASEY (nee Garvey), Perssepark, taught in both the old and new Killure National Schools before joining the staff of the Convent of Mercy National School in Ballinasloe in the early '40's. A native of Milltown, she later married the late Johnny Casey who went on to be a county Chairman of Macra na Feirme.

GALWAY SPCA have urged people to think twice about giving kittens or pups as gifts for Christmas. They suggest not buying a pet but adopting one from their Killimor Centre, adding "You are not just saving one life but two...as the next stray or abandoned soul is waiting and relying on the kennel space your dog has now vacated."

MICHAEL McCULLAGH, the well-known auctioneer, has purchased an Electric Car because he is "conscious of the current climate problems and wants to contribute to reducing emissions." He says he gets 445km from a charge costing €6.50.

FINE GAEL are to run an East Galway candidate alongside Senator Maura Hopkins in the next General Election in the Roscommon/Galway East Constituency. The Party will announce the name of the candidate shortly.



Dubarry Soccer Team 1970s

Back Row, L-R:
Tony Coyne,
Michael McDonnell RIP,
Joe Kelly,
Michael Mee,
Seamus Cassidy,
Chris Touhy,
Timmy Casey.

Front Row, L-R:
Des Finnerty,
Paul Maloney,
Martin McNally,
Jacko Keighrey,
Johnny Curley RIP,
Christy Griffin.

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LOCALS COMPLETE DUBLIN MARATHON

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

Almost 30 locals travelled up to Dublin to take part in the Dublin City Marathon recently, joining runners from all over the country for a 26 mile race. They returned in high spirits, having received a lot of support, after putting in months and months of training for the occasion.

Martina Larkin-Keighery said: "What an amazing weekend taking part in the Dublin City Marathon with the Ballinasloe Road Runners (BRR). A wonderful supportive group that helped me realise this dream. The training runs, the chats, the laughs we had were as good as the marathon day. The support continued on the day as many travelled to cheer us on and giving us that much needed lift when we were struggling."



Back Row: L-R: Mark Dunne, Brian Dolan, Ciara Mulkerns, Margaret Connaughton, Clare Madden, Antoinette Beegan-Gallagher, Breda Arru, Gerry Blake, Vicky Costello.
Front Row: L-R: Sorina Nutu, Gerry Bruen, Carol Pender, Richard Bruen, Noel Kenny, Fionnuala Mulryan.



Husband and wife team, Aidan & Gabrielle Fallon.



Sisters Phyllis Moran & Martina Keighery.



L-R: Éilis Treacy, Tracey Moore, Kim Connaughton, Karol Fitzgerald, Ollie Grenham, Marion Ruane, Eric Naughton, Pearse Keller, Paul Flynn.

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PADRAIG PEARSES HISTORIC SEASON OF FIRSTS

Since Oct 13th when the final whistle blew on the Roscommon Senior County Final and our local boys stepped into the annals of Roscommon GAA history with their first ever Club win at Senior Level – beating Roscommon Gaels 2-10 to 1- 10, the squad, the club and their joyous supporters have given us six weeks of an emotional roller coaster.

Defeating Tourlestrane in Sligo put them into their first ever Connacht Semi-final which saw the red and white Army descent on Ruislip Park in London to roar their heroes to a historic Connacht Final pairing with the three in a row title seeking Goliaths, Corofin.

As we go to print the onward march to glory has been stopped decisively with Corofin's Victory but it can in no way diminish the wonderful achievements of the players, mentors, supports and officials of Padraig Pearses.

Here is brief look back in their own words:

"No matter where we go in life after we finish up playing for this great club, we will always have a unique special bond that comes with being on a historic journey like the one we were on. One of the things that makes me happiest about knowing what we have done so far is that it has brought such joy to so many people in Moore, Taughmaconnell and Creagh. All of the current panel fully realise that we are only continuing on the great work that other players and volunteers have been doing in the club for the last 57 years. We see it as an honour to wear the jersey and we hope to hand it onto the younger lads coming through in as good, if not better condition than we received it" - Niall Finneran.

"The scenes on the pitch in Hyde Park after the final whistle were something that will live long in my memory. What it meant to so many people just made all the sacrifices worthwhile. The journey has since continued and took us all to Sligo and a memorable trip for the club to London. We will relish our participation in the

Connacht Final" - Emmett Kelly.

"The journey to our first county title has been phenomenal but not an easy one. There are no bad teams left in the country once you get into playing provincial teams so you are really up against it with every team but to have the support in such large numbers at every game, it has definitely helped us play at our best. It's been a long momentous year" - Paul Carey.

"The experience so far has been incredible. Getting so close so many times before has made winning the county title even more special. Meeting supporters on the pitch after the county final and seeing their excitement makes you realise what it really means for the people in the area" - Tom Butler.

"As we at Padraig Pearses are still absorbed in that wonderful euphoria of having achieved the final piece of the jigsaw and winning our first county final, after a wait of 57 years, making us now the complete club. It has uplifted the community and beyond and is a treasure to behold. The great positivity that exists among our membership is refreshing and



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exhilarating. This bunch of young men have given a huge commitment to their club and chosen sport and deserve great credit for their endeavours.

"On our journey, we had a magnanimous trip to London where the Red and White Army brought great support and colour to Ruislip. I want to sincerely pay tribute to our great and loyal supporters who travel in numbers to shout our Lads on. I would also like to sincerely thank all our sponsors and those who made contributions to our trip to London making it all possible - go raibh maith agaibh go léir. We won the Best Sports Team category for the Ballinasloe People of the Year Awards, which is a great honour to be bestowed on the team and the club. The whole experience to date has been so surreal and exhilarating.

"We also look forward to celebrating our 2019 success across the club on January 18, 2020 when we will hold our annual dinner dance in the Shearwater Hotel. Tickets will be available from the Pdraig Pearses clubhouse and executive members. We look forward to a very enjoyable night where everyone is welcome" John McLoughlin Chairman.

 **BY JEJE BEGRAOUI**



TENNIS CLUB WELCOMES SPORTS GRANT

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

Ballinasloe Tennis Club has just received a Sports Capital Grant of €29,000 (out of €50,000 applied for) which, along with funds already held by the club from fundraising and membership over the last few years, will be used for essential ground works including drainage, access road and gates, fencing off the site from the running track, and building of two new courts beside the track in Brackernagh.

The Club have had a busy year, despite leaving their long-term home to allow the Rugby Club to develop their new all-weather pitch. With activities all throughout the summer, the club also participated in the Midland League men's competition and held a Halloween Camp over the recent mid-term break. Further fundraising may be required to complete this first phase, which the club plans to have completed by Spring 2020. Any contractor interested in quoting for the preliminary works

should contact the club at the email address below.

This will be the first phase of an ambitious development proposed for the site in the Sports Hub in Brackernagh - a multi-purpose indoor Sports and Community Centre that, in addition to tennis, will cater for handball, basketball, netball, futsal, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, bowls, yoga, pilates and other sports and activities not already catered for in the town.

The club sees the facility providing a safe and welcoming environment with a range of activities for everyone, including teenagers, special needs, minority and disadvantaged groups and local residents, who all currently have very limited places to go to. A leading firm of sports architects, Cummins & Voortman Ltd. has been commissioned to prepare plans for the building and site. The club and architect Robert Cummings recently presented their vision for the development to local councillors, TDs and other interested parties. They will shortly be meeting the council for further discussions.

In the meantime, the club is continuing with fundraising and have just launched their new EuroMillionsPlus Syndicate - if you'd like to have four entries in both draws every week for a whole year and support the Tennis Club for only €30, please contact any of the committee members.

The club would also be delighted to hear from anyone interested in playing tennis, or anyone who is interested or can help with the new development or fundraising in any way.

For more details of club activities please see: <https://www.facebook.com/bsloetennisclub> or email bsloetennis@gmail.com or call: Sarah 087 680 0598 (Junior and Coaching queries), Garry 085 112 4197, Joe 087 252 1424, Louise 087 135 3751, Ellie 087 411 5599, Kevin 087 621 9905 or Declan 087 915 9771.



Architects Impression of New Courts and Multi Purpose Indoor Sports Arena Building



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SOCCER SCORE WITH CAPITAL GRANT

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

Good news for Ballinasloe AFC this season, who have received a grant of €27,000 for upgrading of floodlighting and the AstroTurf pitch at their grounds at Curragh, Brackernagh. This allocation was one of 31 successful applications from the Dept of Sports Capital totalling €930,000 in Roscommon/Galway.

The club's first team (adults) have reached the closing stages of the FAI Junior Cup, the largest Junior soccer competition in Europe, after beating top Junior club MCR of Sligo. In the open draw stage the town have been drawn away to Waterford Premier League side Villa FC - the match is being held on December first.

A previous encounter in the latter stages of this competition in the 2016/17 season saw Villa knock the town out on penalties, but with the management team of Petie Keighrey and Mark Duffy this year things might look up for the club in the closing stages of this most prestigious of tournaments.

The first team are also currently placed second in the Roscommon and District Soccer League Premier Division after a very good run of form over the last number of weeks.

More good news is coming from the U13 team managed by Sonya Dowd and Shane Fallon - they have reached the last 64 of the national competition in the Schoolboys FAI Cup



Francis Egan his Son Michael and Club Sec Johnny Walsh at the People of the Year Awards where he was nominated for the Sports and Recreation Volunteer Award.



Ballinasloe Town, L to R: Simon Price, Billy Ward, Johnny Walsh, Denis Naughten, Ellen Egan, Brendan McNally, Pat Campbell, Mickey Burke.



Back L-R: Joe Woods, Gilly, Lucas Matheus, Padraig Maloney, Gary Egan.
Front L-R: Shane Duffy, Ryan Burke, Cormac Clogher, Conor Kenny, Tommy Lee Burke and Aidan Dooney.

where they will meet Westport United of Mayo in the Curragh Grounds in their hometown.

Club Chairperson Jobe Kelly stated that the club are extremely proud that Ashley Walsh, as the club's representative, had won the Queen of the Fair and on behalf of everyone at the club wished her all the very best in the Galway Rose competition and in carrying out her various official functions for the remaining 11 months.

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RUGBY YEAR DRAWS TO SUCCESSFUL CLOSE

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

As the Rugby season gets into full swing, 2019 draws to a close. It's been an eventful year at the club with everything from a Ministerial visit to a rip-roaring Barn Dance. The 2018/19 season ended with success across the board that resulted in a huge haul of silverware including league and cup doubles in both boys and girls sections. Credit must go to the players, coaches and parents for their work and support throughout the year.

Connacht Rugby President Mossy Moran officially opened the AstroTurf at their end of season night. The facilities in the club are as good if not better than you'll find in Connacht and beyond and are often complimented by visiting teams.

2019 saw another addition to the club facilities, the 3G floodlit AstroTurf pitch. It was the brainchild of previous committees down through the years but this year saw the fruits of their labour. With rugby being a winter sport, training sessions often fall foul inclement weather but not any longer. It will also be available for hire to other local sports groups who wish to use it.

The AGM was well attended and saw the election of a new committee and the selection of the new Club President. Tom Waters took up the mantle from Tom Horkan who served the club as President for the previous two seasons. Summer brought the sunshine thankfully and of course the Summer Camp. Over 100 children enjoyed a week of rugby and fun under the guidance of the coaches which culminated in the visit of new Connacht signing John Porch, having coached the kids in various sports.

Summer also brought success with the mixed tag rugby side representing Ballinasloe and winning the All-Ireland Community Games Final. The success within the club was reflected on the Provincial and International scene with players being called up to represent the Province and Country in all grades. These successes are due in no small part to the high standard and dedicated coaches within the club.

It also had the pleasure of hosting Minister of State Mr. Brendan Griffin and Senator Maura Hopkins who paid a visit to the club grounds to view the new AstroTurf which was part funded by his department as part of the Sports Capital Grant Scheme. They also toured the facilities and were well satisfied that the money was put to good use.

The club had a sombre time over the summer with the sad and sudden passing of two club stalwarts, Sean Brookes and Tom Purcell. Both men were long time members of the club from playing, coaching, committee members and club Presidents. They will be sorely missed within the club, the wider community and their families.

Fundraising is an integral part of the club and is needed on an ongoing basis to fund club activities. This year was no exception with a table quiz, Last Person Standing, Golf Classic, bag packing, fashion show. This year had the addition of a monster Barn Dance which was held in September in partnership with the Musical Society and it was a fantastic night.

This Christmastime the Club will hopefully host the annual Sean Flynn Cup Challenge at 2.00 pm on Stephen's Day and there will be revelry till late for locals and exiles alike.

For further updates on Club Activities see their Facebook Page – Ballinasloe Rugby Club



Year-end trophies from the 2018/2019 season.

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DERRYMULLEN HANDBALL CLUB REGROUP

After some four years of closure of the Handball Club, an AGM took place in Gullanes Hotel in late November to try and resolve the relevant issues and move forward.

There were three trustees present on the night, Peter Mulryan, Vincent Earls and Sean Tully and a small number of local people also turned up. It was decided on the night that a committee would be again formed to tackle the issues of extensive repairs to the alley and to reopen the facility sometime in the future when it was fully repaired and safe to play with.

The Alley and Club were resituated in 1985, but the sport of handball is recorded in town since the 1920s.

The new committee are:

Chairman – Denis Larkin, Secretary / Club PRO – Willie Martin, Vice Chairman – Benny Donnellan, Treasurer – Geraldine Ward, Assistant Treasurer – Matt Kenny, Club County Delegates – Peter Mulryan & Denis Larkin, Committee Members: Edward Ward, Pat Mongan (Galway Traveller Movement), Dermot Connolly.

Anyone interested in helping out or participating in the sport is asked to contact Denis at 087 2776237.

Top: Local Club Stalwart Peter Mulryan and Aaron Connaughton after an other Eircom All-Ireland Masters League Victory.

Bottom: Local Derrymullen son and local electrician Matt Kenny after winning his Silver All-Ireland Hanball Medal representing Galway against Wexford in Semple Stadium.



BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

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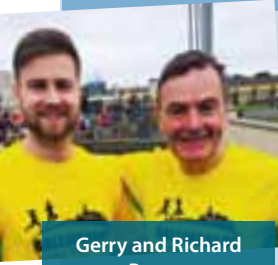
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COUCH TO 5K RETURNS FOR FIFTH YEAR BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



Gerry and Richard Bruen.

Ballinasloe Road Runners will host their extremely successful Couch to 5km programme again in January 2020.

It is the 5th year of this popular event and is a great way for people of all ages who have never run before to give it a try but it's also suitable for those who want to get back into running or simply want to get to know more people locally.

With the guidance of the Ballinasloe Road Runner volunteers, the participants will gradually work up to a 5km run over the 6 weeks.

Local Businessman Gerry Bruen is a successful alumni and participant "September 2nd 2014 marked a watershed moment for me. Following some health tests, I was shocked to hear the dreaded words 'I'm sorry to tell you that you have Prostate cancer'. My world as I had known it suddenly changed, I no longer was immortal and impervious to illness" stated Gerry.

His treatment followed and he found himself tired most of the time. The wonderful people in East Galway cancer care helped him through the following months and suggested he take part in a fitness programme which had been especially designed for cancer survivors. This program clearly showed that physical fitness and proper nutrition could prevent or minimise the possibility of the re occurrence of the illness. "I was all for that. Initially I took part in the 5k fun run and I thought I'd never get to end of it" muses Gerry.

"When I turned up at the Running track, I discovered I actually knew very few of the people there. There were all sorts of people and all ages. I did notice that everybody was very welcoming and very encouraging. I completed the initial training and was delighted to complete the 5k target distance and found it much easier this time. So much so, after very little persuasion I signed up for a 10k run in Portumna.....I was hooked." enthuses Gerry.

"Since then I'm glad to say that those strangers that I met on the first night of training no longer are strangers but very good and supportive friends. My health has never been better and my social interaction is at an all time high. Its seems a long time since that first couch to 5k but I'm happy to report that since then I have completed my second marathon. If I can do it, anybody can!" smiles Gerry.

So if you want to improve your health, meet loads of friendly

supportive people and actually carry out that new year resolution, get your walking/ running gear on and come join them at the running track - it could change your life!

The Couch to 5km will commence at 7.45pm on Tuesday 21st January at the Dunlo Recreational Running Track, in Brackernagh. It consists of 3 sessions a week: Tuesday and Thursday evenings as well as Sunday morning, for 6 weeks. This is a free event and there is no need to register. Anyone over the age of 16 is welcome, just come along with suitable footwear and a positive attitude! Any queries contact ballinasloeroadrunners@gmail.com

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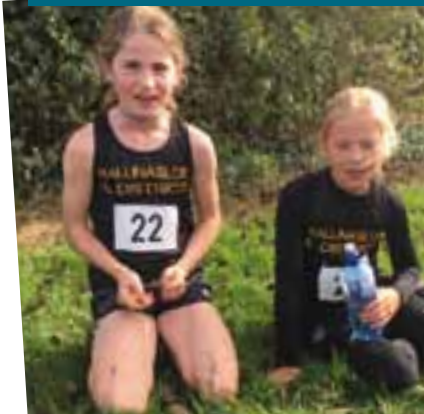
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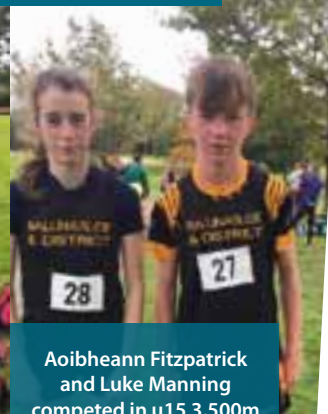
Kate Kilkenny and Aoife Berrigan competed in under 11 girls 1,500m



Adam Murray and Kalum Manning competed in under 11 boys 1,500m



Eva Ruane and Sarah Manning competed in under 13 girls 2,500m



Aoibheann Fitzpatrick and Luke Manning competed in u15 3,500m



Kate Kilkenny winning Silver in the girls u10 1,000m



Jamie Hernandez finishing fourth in the boys u18 6,000m.



Congratulations also to Eva Ruane u13 and Aoibheann Fitzpatrick u15 who competed in the Connaught Cross Country Championships in Ballina recently. Both girls won Silver medals for Galway and qualified for The National Finals on December 15th.

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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS AT SHEARWATER GYM



Ellen Finnerty, Niall Clerkin, Chris Sheridan

The Shearwater Hotel Gym & Spa offers a variety of fitness options for all ages and is looking forward to helping new users achieve their New Year fitness goals.

Membership includes a free assessment and programme with one of their experienced coaches, who are always on hand to assist. So even if the classes are not your thing, the wonderfully refurbished gym has something to individually offer you. For the winter season, they will launch Christmas vouchers which will contain a special discount off memberships as well as various offers on gym and class passes.

Holiday closing times are from 24th December until 6 pm on 27th December - on New Year's Eve they will close at 6 pm and reopen at 1 pm on New Year's Day.

Jay Mulligan, the Fitness Manager, believes that you're never too old to start something new. Joining the gym is just like starting a new hobby, everyone has to start off somewhere. It helps if you start small instead of looking at the big picture. He said: "Sometimes the hardest part is walking in the door and once you're in, one of our instructors will look after you and get you up and running with a membership. Whether you want a personalised programme or join our fitness classes, there's a solution for you."

The Leisure Centre is also a great place to start swimming. Jay commented: "We have many people who were completely unable to swim. They've either taken up private lessons with us or have joined our Shearfitness Swim club which runs every Tuesday and Thursday and is aimed at all levels. Our experienced swim instructors take these classes and we have seen amazing results!"

A variety of classes are offered all day long such as HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training), Core Conditioning, Aqua Aerobics, Body Conditioning and more. Morning classes are available as well - 6.15 am classes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; 10 am classes are available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays; while the very popular morning Aqua Aerobics classes take place at 11 am, every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

The Gym also caters for people recovering from surgery and accidents. One of the gym staff will take you through an initial induction and an assessment to get a background on the surgery / accident after Doctors release. Classes appropriate for your needs or an individual gym programme can be created to supplement recovery.

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI



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Niall Clerkin, Chris Sheridan

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GOVERNOR DOWNEY

BY BARRY LALLY

Friday 15th October 2010 became a red letter day for Taughmaconnell when US Ambassador Dan Rooney unveiled a roadside bronze bust of the parish's most famous son, John Gately Downey, born in the townland of Castlesampson on 24th June 1827, who was one of only two foreign-born governors of California, the other being Arnold Schwarzenegger.

In 1842 Downey emigrated to the American state of Maryland to join his two stepsisters who had settled there ten years previously. Unfortunately, straitened family circumstances obliged him to discontinue his education the following year. He was successful, however, in obtaining a pharmacy apprenticeship in Washington D.C., which enabled him to resume his studies at night. Later he spent some time as a pharmacist on a warship on the Potomac River before moving to Mississippi. The offer of a job in Cincinnati, Ohio, prompted him to travel north again, and after only six months he became a partner in a small business in the city.

A local newspaper brought him tidings in 1848 of the California Gold Rush, and Downey concluded there might be more money in panning for the precious metal than in dispensing medicines. He decided to go West, and had a choice of two routes. Before the transcontinental railroad reached California in 1869, the overland route was challenging in the extreme, the likelihood of attack by marauding Indians being only one of the many hazards facing the traveller. The alternative route was by sea, either by making landfall in Panama and hacking your way through the Central American jungle to embark on a California-bound vessel on the Pacific Coast; or by braving the South Atlantic, rounding Cape Horn and heading up north along the coast of South America. It's unclear whether Downey had opted for the shorter or the longer sea journey when he boarded ship in New Orleans. In any event, nearly three months were to pass before he finally sailed into the Golden Gate harbour of San Francisco.

Downey's efforts at prospecting in the gold fields met with little success, and he soon returned to San Francisco, taking employment as an assistant in a drugstore. An acquaintance persuaded him to



go to Los Angeles where he set himself up in a business that quickly prospered as a supplier of pharmaceutical goods. California achieved statehood in 1850, and the following year Downey became an American citizen. He met and married María Guirado, a girl from the local Mexican community. Branching out into money lending and real estate, by 1856 he was one of the wealthiest men in Los Angeles.

He joined the Democratic Party, and in 1859 Milton Latham invited him to be his running mate in the forthcoming election for the governorship. The Latham-Downey campaign was successful. Events then took an unexpected turn, resulting in Downey becoming governor five days later. Senator David Broderick had been killed in a duel, leaving a US Senate seat vacant. Latham secured the seat, which left the governorship vacant for Downey. Thus, in 1860, at the age of thirty-three John Downey became the youngest governor of the state of California.

Though identified as a Lecompton Democrat, a supporter of the proposed but rejected Kansas constitution which would have made the territory a slave-owning state, Downey pledged his support for the Union on the outbreak of the American Civil War. However, California's contribution to the war effort never amounted to much due to the presence of a substantial minority of Confederate sympathisers in the state.

In California his governorship is probably best remembered for his stance on the Bulkhead Bill, a highly controversial piece of legislation passed by the State Assembly and Senate which would have placed San Francisco's waterfront in the hands of private companies. Local merchants and the public alike were strongly in opposition, and there was widespread rejoicing when Downey vetoed the bill, saying: "Its provisions are not only in conflict with the constitution and the principles of natural justice, but the measure as a whole is calculated to work irreparable injury to our commerce, internal and external, of which San Francisco is and must remain a metropolis." After his term as governor expired

continued on next page...



The Harriers of Old

According to the "East Galway Democrat" nightly road racing was very popular in the 1940's. One of the best known clubs in the area was the "Aughrim Harriers." These were a group of hardy young men, most of them farmers, who often tramped the rural roads, bare-footed, under the watchful eye of coaches Reddy Harney of Aughrim and Michael Kelly from Liscapple, who accompanied the youths on bicycles.

The "Democrat" recorded that many of these young men were known to have cycled to sports meetings in Tuam, Shanaglish (Gort), Laught etc. toggled out by the ditch, competed in their respective events before cycling back home, often laden with trophies. Many of them even featured on the county cross-country teams, competing throughout the provinces.

Michael Kelly was a Linotype operator with the "Democrat" from 1920 before purchasing the business in 1950 and renaming it Kelly's Printing Works. In 1983 he and his sons moved to a purpose-built plant on the Poolboy Industrial Estate where today it is one of the leading print companies in the country and a major local employer.



GOVERNOR DOWNEY

BY BARRY LALLY

in 1862, he returned to Southern California where he later co-founded the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, the first successful bank in Los Angeles.

In 1883 Downey and his wife were involved in an accident when their train plunged into a ravine. Downey, though injured, survived, but his wife's body was never found because of a fire that consumed the wreckage. The event had a traumatic effect on Downey, which would remain with him for the rest of his life. Following the accident, a friend introduced him to Yda Hillis Addis, a beautiful and charming San Francisco-based journalist who was thirty years his junior. To the consternation of Downey's two sisters, the pair became engaged to marry. The reason for their alarm was that, should their brother, who was childless, pass away, his entire wealth would go to Addis, thus excluding his siblings from inheriting a cent of his immense fortune.

They obviously regarded the young woman as a gold-digger, and decided to take drastic action. The sisters "kidnapped" Downey and put him on a boat to Ireland in the hope that he would be cured of his infatuation in the course of the voyage. Apparently the stratagem worked: Miss Addis sued for breach of promise, but left San Francisco before the trial and moved to Mexico City. The ex-governor had a lucky escape: Yda's subsequent history showed her to be a woman of a bizarre and violent disposition, who, having been declared insane, vanished without trace in 1902.

Sometime after returning to America, Downey married a forty-three-year-old music teacher, Rose V. Kelly, on 5th May 1888. He died on 1st March 1894, his wife having predeceased him on 6th December 1892. Downey City near Los Angeles bears his name.

WW1 HERITAGE GROUP REVIEWS BUSY YEAR



Members of Ballinasloe WW1 Heritage Group at the People of the Year Awards ceremony.
Back L-R: Ivan O'Grady, Oliver Donellan, Aidan Darcy, Brendan Donelan, Gerry Devlin.
Front L-R: Douglas Rafter, Margaret Moran, Padraic Moran, Evelyn Donellan.

many people never knew the history of the Great War and its impact on their locality and the families therein. This was borne out on the night of the book launch as people were still approaching with family history of both the men and women who took part in WW1. Ballinasloe WW1 Heritage Group would be delighted to receive information and for people to contact them so they can keep their database updated for future use by the general public. To contact the group, email ballinasloeww1@gmail.com or find them on Facebook under Ballinasloe WW1 Heritage Group.

In the coming year the group will endeavour to add two side panels to the Roll of Honour housed in the History Room at the library. These will display the names of those researched and included in the book along with any names which came to light since the book launch. This will be funded by the sale of the books. Research is ongoing and will continue in the future. As this is the final chance to record this historical period, it is important for the information to be collected and made available for research and reference by future generations.

BY JEJE BEGRAOUI

Ballinasloe World War One Group have had an exciting year since the launch of their book, "Ballinasloe & District Remembers 1914-1918" last November.

They have toured various venues to promote the publication, including a day in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel with Athlone Military History Group, Loughrea with a historical day organised by Loughrea History Group, Oranmore Town Twinning, and Claregalway Castle for their history event.

Many copies of the book have gone world-wide, as far flung as Australia, USA, China, Europe and of course locally. The book was given a great review on Galway Bay FM by Vinnie Brown. It is available from any member of the group or in Salmons Department Store and Karibas Restaurant. With this publication, Salmons are running a special offer whereby if a customer produces a voucher from this edition of Ballinasloe Life Magazine, they can avail of a discount of €5 – making it an ideal Xmas gift.

It is also available at Charlie Byrne's Bookstore, Middle Street, Galway; Kenny's Galway at Liosban Industrial Estate; Alan Hannah's Bookstore, Rathmines, Dublin and the Irish Workhouse Centre in Portumna by calling 090 97 59200.

More recently, the group is delighted to have been nominated for a People of the Year Award at what was a truly spectacular event hosted by the Town Team and sponsored by Ballinasloe Credit Union.

The interest created by the publication has been phenomenal as



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ULICK O'CONNOR'S LOCAL CONNECTIONS

The passing of distinguished Writer, Aosdana Member and former Late Late Show panellist Ulick O'Connor, was lauded by all media in early October. His link to the town is naturally hidden in the terse but fruity odes in the paper of record today. His great-great-grandfather was the Home Leaguer Matt Harris, who lies buried in Creagh Cemetery and during the late seventies and eighties, where Ulick became synonymous with the then outlawed Republican movement, he was quite proud of the lineage.

While his boxing and athletic ability as well as rugby playing are noted - it was his time as a boarder in Garbally College that finely tuned those sporting attributes. A relative of his was the Matron (Applie Annie) of the College during the austere War Years.

Rationing was harsh on the Dublin cubs-perhaps more suited to city than country fare. Hunger got the better of Ulick and his ally in crime and the two were expelled from Garbally. He airbrushed the

involvement out all his official biographies.

Hence all the obits credited St. Mary's College in Rathmines as his place of education. His grandmother was Matron O'Connor, of St Brigid's Hospital. The late Tadhg Mac Lochlainn told our Corinthian Correspondent-Damian Mac Con Uladh that when Ulick came to speak at Harris' grave for a commemoration by Conradh na Gaelge and the Creagh Community Development Council, Tadhg offered him some notes on Matt. Ulick brusquely told him that he needed no notes from anyone on his own great-grandfather. The Connacht Tribune carried news of his address, and the speeches by Tadhg, Kay Keegan Vice-chair of the CDC, a letter from Gen Costelloe (Read by Maura Croffy of CCDC) and prayers led by Rev. John Naughton.

Great annoyance was caused to some of Ulick's former Garbally colleagues who were rather peeved that his airbrushing of his time and sporting prowess there was tolerated by the Media.

Tony "Duck" Sweeny went to visit the great Sports Scribe of the Tribune at the time J.B.Donohue and gave him a treasured team photo to publish.

It showed the 1944 Connacht Senior School Boys All-Ireland Final team in Donnybrook of which there were 14 out of the 15 players Garbally Students.



Back L-R: Joe Cullen (Longford), J.F. McLeary (Sligo G.S.), Tom Connolly (Connemara), Desmond McGann (Ahascragh), Declan Gordon (Tynagh), Jack O'Meara (Athlone), Andrew Foley (Roscommon), Vincent Jahey (Foxford). Front L-R: Ulick O'Connor (Dublin), Francis Brady (Glenamaddy), Noel Heffernan (Connemara), Pat Monaghan (Cappatagle), Anthony Sweeney (Ahascragh), Joe Neary (Belmullet), Milo Cox (Strokestown). Right Side: Fr. J. Flannery. Left Side: Members of the Rugby Board.



Ulick himself was on the team and played in the final - in which the men of the West including the late loved Monsignor Declan Gordon of Tynagh lost. JBD published the famous shot on the week Ulick came to visit and deliver the oration!

The photo is a proud family heirloom of Sean and Gerry Sweeney of Dunlo St.

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ST. CUAN'S CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

BY EAMON DONOGHUE

The years that followed the end of World War Two were difficult years in rural Ireland. The isolation that resulted from neutrality meant that social and economic circumstances stagnated. Emigration was the only option for many. Unemployment and poverty prevailed. These were not the ideal conditions in which to establish a new second level school in the heart of rural East Galway.

However the late Mrs. Maureen Melody made a leap of faith. With the support of fellow teachers, Hilda Fitzgerald, Eileen Naughton and Mona Lally they set up St. Cuan's College in Ahascragh, in a premises that was at one time the local dispensary. This was a bold and visionary step which was to bear fruit in the years that followed enabling hundreds of students to get access to second level education.

Having undergone changes in ownership, location, management and patronage, the school is now a diocesan college of the Diocese of Elphin and is located in Castleblakeney since 1953 where it

has been regularly enhanced with the addition of new buildings and facilities. In recent years, the Dept. of Education and Science has invested almost three million euros. Therefore both students and staff can avail of top of the range of facilities. The provision of an Astroturf surface helps the college to cater more comprehensively for the promotion of health and wellbeing and the schools spacious auditorium facilitates participation in

The original school building in Ahascragh 1950s



School founder Mairin Mellody



All-Ireland football champions with coaches Seamus Meehan and Gerard McDonnell, 2018.

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Music and Drama.

The college now provides a wide range of subjects to higher leaving cert students including the sciences, languages, technology and the arts and students score well above average annually in state examinations, while a significant number have been awarded for academic excellence on entering third level colleges.

Lifelong learning is also catered for on the campus in the East Galway Adult Education Centre which offers an expanding range of courses leading to Q.Q.I qualifications. St. Cuan's also provides access to special education and principal Colette Kennedy Walsh indicates that plans

are in place to expand this sector.

From the beginning, the college has operated a very successful and reliable private transport system in addition to the standard state service. Deputy Principal Cathal Jordan points out that currently an area stretching from New Inn / Kilconnell to Dysart in Co. Roscommon and from Ballinasloe to Mountbellew, Moylough and

Abbeyknockmoy attracts enrolments.

The school has a proud sporting tradition and many Connacht champions have been won across all codes. No doubt the presence of All-Ireland winning staff members like the Mannion brothers Padraic and Cathal and Noreen Coen of the Galway Camogie team provide excellent role models. Many past students have also achieved inter-county statutes including Fergal Flannery, All-Ireland winner 2017 and most

recently Dean Reilly, Sam Bleahen, Jack Barrett and Darragh Glynn have been part of Galway's minor hurling success.

A recent initiative has involved the enrolment of a number of exchange students from Spain and Italy which has been mutually beneficial for both them and their Irish hosts. Distinguished past pupils include milliner Philip Treacy, Brian Glynn, Irish Ambassador to Brazil, and Ciaran Cannon, Junior Minister of State.

Having enrolled close on eighty new students last September, which is the schools highest ever, this is a fitting way to celebrate in St. Cuan's seventieth year.

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Brendan, Ken and Michael Kelly cutting the cake at the 70th Anniversary Celebration of KPW Print Management, in Gullane's Hotel, Ballinasloe.

Long-serving employees Brendan P. Kelly, Brendan Dooley and Larry Rohan, who have worked combined total of 75 years in KPW.

Breda Hennelly, Gregory Dowd, Jessica Hanlon, Mark Kelly, Collette Dolphin, Larry Rohan and Jessica Carr.

Staff members Siobhain Finnerty, Diane Dolan, Aisling Gannon and Jose Maciel.

Brendan P. Kelly with Tracey Grehan, Elaine Gately and Noel Berrigan at the celebrations.

John Coulter, Paul Creaven, Darren Kenny and Amarillo Doprado.

Brendan Dooley, Anthony Gilleran, Edel Moloney-Guinan, Darran Finnerty and Gerry Glynn.

Mark, Geraldine, Michael S. and Alan Kelly-all working in KPW.

All Kellys at the KPW 70th Anniversary: Alan, Brendan, Ken, Michael S. and Mark.





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