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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 11 Issue 4: Oct '21 - Nov '21



Photo by Robert Riddell

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REAMHRA

Welcome to Volume 11 issue 4

Welcome to this, our 9th consecutive edition with no formal events guide, although it is heartening to read about events and activities gurgling up again.

Some moments come to mind – the Culture Night Gathering in the Town Hall Theatre which was very well attended and all the group activities took place in the yard outdoors. The sheer delight on people's faces; being able to connect up for the first time in yonks – not being a guard of honour or a shopping isle. The smiles of sighs and relief of our wonderful artists in being able to have an audience see their work, but also the profound sadness that motivated a lot of creativity – of loss and isolation during the lockdown.

Later that night Ceoltas Ballinasloe had their first interactive indoor session in Gullane's Hotel and it was poignant to watch gleeful musicians greet themselves, instrument in hand, for the first time in over 18 months. Later in the month we filmed a little piece of one of our extraordinary choirs – the BARRA Singers – giving their first recital to the residents of Mill Race Nursing Home and both chorister and audience were gulping at the significance of the moment.

We have reasons to sing, to clap, to entertain, to be engaged with culture but in doing so we are going to be very mindful of the time and opportunities robbed, the people who have left us and those who faced unimaginable burdens of illness, infirmity and fear isolated.

Meeting folks properly is like having been living away in Oz for 18 months and one has a lot of catching up to do and we are nearly all afraid to ask questions. We have got a bit grumpier too as we face into Autumn of budgets, possible power shortages and goodness what else.

When you look at the achievements both academically, culturally and on the field of sport, Ballinasloe and its surrounds is most definitely punching above its weight, given the size of its population. The question has been asked why is this, and I have come to the conclusion that there are several reasons.

Firstly, our educational facilities are second to none and secondly our sports facilities across all codes are well above the average nationwide. Thirdly and more importantly are the Volunteers who put many hours of work into all aspects of life in the Community "free gratis" to ensure our Youth get huge support to develop to their maximum potential.

The proximity to work for most in the locality enables individuals to give up a few hours a week to ensure they do their bit to support the above and make the area a very high achieving community.

As we now emerge from lockdown, various events will now come back on the Calendar across all walks of life and there will be opportunity for you to reinvent yourself and give a few hours to community life and

President Michael D Higgins has been in the cross hairs of media lately but when last in town to formally open the Fair in 2018 he gave a rousing, commanding speech about the Horse, the rural economy, the significance of fairs for the travelling people, respect for animal rights and the forging of friendships.

The wise poet made the suggestion that the events unique importance and significance ought really be a UN designated and protected Cultural Heritage event. His speech is fully available on the Office's Website – well worth a listen but his scholarly analysis took the roots of the Fair to the 15th and 16th century.

Sadly there is no official October Fair for the second year running but an anniversary of sorts appears on the horizon. Might it not be wiser follow the suggestion of the President – and undertake the academically rigorous research needed for the UNESCO process – which might unearth its actual origination – which is much older than 300 years?

The big dig in town has shed much light on a well and medieval burial ground at the bottom of Knockadoon (today's Churchill) – the National Museum is richer and so are we but we have a duty of care in not alone celebrating our past but also to understand it fully.

Enjoy the read.

Le Gach De Ghui,
COLM CROFFY,
Editor.



Articles and Photos Welcome

NEXT ISSUE
Deadline Nov12th

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CREDITS

EDITOR

Colm Croffy

REPORTER/ VIDEOGRAPHER

Jack Treacy/
Domineco Cunico

CONTRIBUTORS

Ken Kelly, Barry Lally, Damian
Mac Con Uladh and various
other contributors

GRAPHIC DESIGN

KPW Ballinasloe

PRINT

KPW Print, Ballinasloe

PHOTOS

Robert Riddell
J&S Photos - jsphotos.ie
Evelyn Donellan
Michael S. Kelly



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BEC
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Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre,
Creagh, Ballinasloe. Co. Galway
T: 090 9646516 F: 090 9646517
E: info@ballinasloeenterprise.ie
www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie

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Senator Aisling Dolan has welcomed work from Galway County Council to clear the overgrowth along the River Suck waterways in the town centre which is starting shortly.

The Senator has worked with the team in Ballinasloe Municipal District to get the Slí na hAbhainn water channel, that goes along the park opposite the marina, dredged and cleaned up.

It is a fantastic green space with walkways along the river and incredible Elizabethan bridge arches – it is a jewel in Ballinasloe, although a dusty jewel at the moment and completely covered in overgrowth.

The Slí na hAbhainn channel forms part of the Suck Drainage District and these works will involve the removal of vegetation, silt, litter and other waste from the channel from Bridge Street to the Marina.

The Fine Gael Senator added: “When works begin in the coming weeks it will transform Slí na hAbhainn Park and it is perfect for a 10-minute walk around town, for people shopping or visiting; it is an ideal place for families to enjoy this park as they stroll around Ballinasloe which is looking so well after the Shopfront Enhancement Scheme.

It is also crucial especially as we are coming into the winter months. This section of the river channel close to St Michael's Square has been prone to flooding and it is essential to keep the waterways clear. Many residents love this park and were in touch with Senator Dolan last year on how to improve the area.

This is also the location of the new bus station in town, and the Senator believes it would be fantastic to develop a playground and skating park in the area.

For many people bypassing the town, around by the Marina and the Shearwater Hotel, this is their first impression of Ballinasloe along by Slí na hAbhainn park.

Aisling Dolan stated: “There is so much potential to highlight the arches of the impressive fifteenth-century Elizabethan bridge and light up this section. Our local engineers have let me know that they plan to conduct a feasibility study of the bridges.

“Ballinasloe is looking its best and everyone can feel the community pride when visitors walk around and complement our town” concluded the Senator.



Aisling Dolan at Slí an hAbhainn

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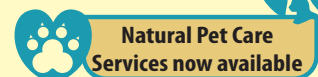
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Cathaoirleach of the Ballinasloe Municipal District, Cllr Dermot Connolly, thanked Council staff for their efforts in securing funding for footpaths at Mackney and Garbally Demesne (Killconnell Road), at the recent August monthly council meeting.

The Sinn Fein Councillor said he had been contacted by constituents from these areas highlighting the need for the works and having made representations to Council, funding was secured, and works were carried out to the highest standards.

He also thanked Council staff for road works carried out at Deerpark Bridge and Ashtree junction. Cllr Connolly was told by the Council engineer that works on footpath construction at a section of Beechlawn road would commence in a number of weeks following Council staff having prepared a design in 2019 and again following further representations from constituents of Cllr Connolly who regularly use the route for walking.

Chairman Connolly also announced that a pedestrian crossing would be placed on Bothar Harris, which would facilitate access to the local national school and also people coming to and from Brackernagh, Ard Mhuire and Garbally Drive, as a result of his campaigning.

As part of the Municipal District meeting, the Local Area Plan was also discussed. With work now well underway it is expected that this plan, running until 2027, will go to public consultation later this month and will be available for public engagement for six weeks before a final plan is drawn up and adopted for use in early 2022.

Cllr Connolly says: "The Local Area Plan is one of the most significant pieces of work that we will do during our term as local representatives. It is crucial that investment is made in infrastructure to realise the potential of the plan."



The plan will run parallel to the wider county development plan and ensure that a template is there for the right developments to take place at the right time.

The Cathaoirleach elaborated: "Employment is key in that as well as housing. We have a great advantage in the sense that we are on the motorway, we have a rail network in the town. We are the county town and we have always had a great local workforce for employers to benefit from. It is to attract new employments into Ballinasloe. Employers in the past were always very well served by the local population and the great work ethic that has been in Ballinasloe down the years. If we can get that right it will benefit us in many ways and will help retail and bring Ballinasloe back to its former glory."

It is encouraged that you have your say on the Local Area Plan and have your say on Ballinasloe's future.

Cllr. Dermot Connolly, Cathaoirleach MDC with Chris McManus MEP (Sinn Fein) inspecting Sheep for sale at Ballinasloe Livestock Mart recently.

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BALLINASLOE OFFICE

Society Street, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.
Tel. 090 96 50000 Fax: 090 96 50050
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Cllr Evelyn Parsons and Litter Warden Seamus Goldrick recently launched a new incentive in the battle against dog fouling, on paths, pavements, and parks.

Painted signage on paths throughout the town will gently remind dog owners of their responsibilities to scoop the poop and to keep paths clean for everybody's safe use.

Cllr Parsons stated: "Thanks to Galway County Council Environmental Litter management team and our local litter warden Seamus, for their help and commitment in launching this Anti Dog Fouling Campaign. They are man's best friend but let us do better!"

The community has been very engaged and rightly enraged by the distressing state of the town's paths due to some irresponsible pet owners. It has been requested that dog owners consider all path users, especially children, the visually impaired, those who have mobility/accessibility issues and those risking accidents by swaying into oncoming traffic to avoid dog excrement.

Cllr Parsons said: "The prevention and removal responsibility of dog fouling is very clear - the owners must remove or expect fines."

Our warden was very proactive previously in securing multiple anti-Dog Fouling stations and signage and mutt mitts for the town. The campaign continues in its struggle as it battles to ensure that Ballinasloe is a healthy and safe environment with clean access for all. These stations can be found in Ashfield Drive, Coral Leisure, The Fairgreen, Brackernagh, Poolboy, Outside St Michael's Square and in Creagh.

Warden Seamus stated: "We have erected many dogs' fouling signs and

doggy stations throughout the town containing bags to enable those to pick it up. It has received a positive response. Fines for failure to pick up dog poop can range from on the spot €150 fines to €3,000."

Ever since Galway City Council set out on their mission to combat dog poop left on paths and green areas they have been met with enormous success, through enlisting the assistance of many volunteers and highlighting and spray painting the areas where the dog foul is left, they are seeing as much as a 55% decrease in soiling over the six-week trial period prior to the project being officially rolled out.

Cllr Evelyn Parsons with a four-legged friend launching Ballinasloe's Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign.



Ann Dolan & Aidan Cunningham Galway County Council Environment Dept with Cllr Evelyn Parsons who launched the Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign in Ballinasloe.



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Sinn Féin TD for Roscommon/Galway, Claire Kerrane, has released a plan to radically reform housing in Ballinasloe.

The plan outlines the current situation regarding renting in the locality, social housing urgency, vacant properties, homelessness, the Housing Assistance Payment, and house prices and puts forward several solutions to each of these challenges.

Currently, in Ballinasloe, 588 households are awaiting social housing, 211 in receipt of the housing assistance payment, some 2,857 renters in the town with the average rent from last year rising 7.9% to rise to €743.72.

TD Kerrane said: "Without doubt, housing is the biggest issue coming through my office every single week. From people struggling to pay sky-high and rising rents to young people and young families in overcrowded accommodation staying with family, to families trying to buy their own home and those languishing on the social housing waiting list."

Of the 588 on the social housing list, 152 of the households have been on the list between 5 to 10 years which she believes is unacceptable. "Solutions need to be brought forward to an issue that has been affecting the town for many years. Action must be taken. Many people living in Ballinasloe are renting, either privately or through the Council. Rents in County Galway have increased by over 14% in just the last year, with average rents in the County now above €1,000" notes the T.D.

There is also a growing issue with supply in Ballinasloe with typically only one or two rental properties available in the town.

Clare added: "We need to introduce a three-year ban on rent increases and an NCT style certification for all rental properties to ensure they meet the minimum standard, including fire safety. We need to set targets for bringing vacant homes back into use with a dedicated vacant homes officer in the Council, we need to double capital investment in housing (our call for this is now backed by the ESRI), we need to build public housing on public lands (to ensure social and affordable housing) and we

need an urgent review of the Housing Assistance Payment."

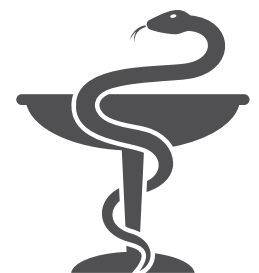
"I am grateful to the many stakeholders who engaged with me on this plan, including Galway County Council, Threshold, the Simon Community, among others" she concluded.



Claire Kerrane TD Launching Housing Plan For Ballinasloe



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Pictured (L-R): Ruth O'Brien
(Shearwater Hotel Operations Manager)
and Shauna Ward (Manager of J&S Photos)

Encouraging local businesses into partnerships with each other for sub supply or marketing is very much the vibe of the present and recently J&S Photos and The Shearwater Hotel teamed up with an exciting collaboration.

The Hotel had obtained some images that they wished to install as part of the refit and re-décor plan for the rooms and assembly areas. Having known J&S photos from previous business, Ruth Groves from the Shearwater Hotel Management reached out to supply 220 canvas prints with two images they had acquired, and Ruth remained involved all throughout the project.

Shauna Ward, J&S Photos Manager commented: "Ruth was a pleasure to work with as always, as I knew her through previous orders. It is brilliant to see local businesses supporting each other."

Ruth had two Images that they had chosen, and J&S printed them onto a canvas for the hotel and the transaction was capped off with a photo of Shauna and the Shearwater Hotel Operations Manager Ruth O'Brien.

Shauna added: "This service is absolutely available to anyone whether it be for personal or for business with a range of options available for the customer to make great use of."

The prints have gone down very well with guest and staff alike.

For the next two months J&S plan to get their shop ready for the busy Christmas period. Already, they are receiving orders, which is great. They are remarkably busy and are extremely grateful to their loyal customers who

continue to support.

Shauna closed: "We deal with four local artists: Nicola Bowes, Rosemary Carty, Emel Osman and Mary Barber, who put a fabulous Christmas window display together of their artwork and selling their bespoke designed greeting cards for every occasion throughout the year. Their cards are extremely popular especially at Christmas time so we will be busy getting them ready over the next few weeks."

To get in touch with J&S Photos, dial (090) 963 1566 or email jskodakexpress@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JS-Photos-989040624491975> where you can keep an updated view of the range of their products they have in stock.

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Mags Connerty, Owner of New Florist Shop

Mags M. Connerty is new to business, opening her Florists and Craft Gifts Store in St. Michael's Square. Mags lives just a few miles outside of Laurencetown with her 14-year-old son, Alan and their cats Thunder and the bold Harley.

She was working in the hospitality industry before Covid-19 hit, then like many others, she lost her job as hotels were shut down. Deciding it was time for a change, she started to help a local florist out for some experience and started her online training with Kay's Flower School.

It was then she noticed the perfect spot for her florist shop in town which has loads of parking and lots of footfall in the area in St Michael's Square, across from St Michael's Church.

"As a lot of you know, things were tough for myself and my boy from 2020 to only a couple of months ago concerning my boy's health. So, between that and Covid it made me realize how short life is and I took the bull by the horns and opened the shop. Alan will hopefully be going to third level in four short years, and I want to be financially secure to see him through it and to have something for me that I love doing, will be great" she said.

Mags acknowledges that there is some competition from the supermarkets, but they provide premade bouquets while she provides a personal service from the minute the customer walks into the shop, discussing what they would like, and creates the arrangement to suit their needs, taste and budget.

She stocks products from local crafters which make the perfect complement to her floral arrangements, some of them even marry well with the flowers. For example, Mags stock these wonderful wooden umbrella planters to suit the plants or beautiful decoupage jars to arrange fresh cut flowers in.

"I'm normally open by 9.30 am unless there are early morning deliveries and tend to close by 6.30 pm or afterwards. Towards three o'clock the store will be closed to complete deliveries and collect supplies."

Mags takes payments through the usual channels, cash, card or PayPal. As well as having her own gift vouchers for those who would like to pick their own gifts and accepts ShopBallinasloe vouchers. There is also a deposits system in place too. Orders can be taken in person, over the phone, WhatsApp or through shopballinasloe.ie.

"The very first person that I would like to thank is my boy Alan for his understanding and patience during the process of setting up the business and to everyone who has supported me in my new venture and to Mal and Kathleen Croffy for their help in getting the shop ready. Thanks to Honoria and Niamh at Araya marketing, and Paul and Basil at Sign Space" exclaims Mags.

Currently, Mags is running a competition on Facebook. She will also be putting hampers together every so often and selling lines for a chance to win the hampers so keep your eyes peeled in Ruane Florist for these.

Get in touch with Mags and Ruane Florist by dialing (087) 061 1683 or email ruane florist@gmail.com. Follow her social media on both Instagram @ruane_florist and on Facebook. Where she shares images of her work, hints and tips, videos of all the wonderful locally crafter products she stocks, competitions.



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Originally from Buncrana, Co. Donegal, Patricia Flynn moved to Taughmaconnell 10 years ago.

With a strong computer background, she studied various courses including Office Information Systems, ECDL, Advanced ECDL with Computerised accounts and Windows Operating Systems. Patricia graduated with a JEB Teacher Trainer Diploma before the eligible course age, making her the youngest person to successfully complete this course in Ireland

She recently studied Microsoft Office Specialist in Athlone IT, attaining the highest accredited certificates in Microsoft Office; becoming the first person ever in Athlone IT to successfully complete all seven course modules achieving the Microsoft Office Specialist Master certification.

She now has decided to setup a Computer Training Company in Ballinasloe named **Login IT Training** and will offer a range of courses suitable to individuals of all levels from **The Study Centre, Marina Point, Ballinasloe**.

Patricia offers small class numbers to ensure a comfortable learning experience and a relaxed environment. All courses are exam free and progress at the rate of the students' needs whilst ensuring the students complete the necessary skills to carry out essential everyday tasks on

their computers and devices.

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M6 Sales Team pictured on our Opening Day with Brand Ambassador and Galway Senior Hurling Captain Padraic Mannion, (L to R) Niall Martin, Alan Naughton, Padraic Mannion, Eanna Ryan.



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When M6 Motors first opened in 2011, the company was focused almost completely on car sourcing as funding for a new start-up in the industry was very limited and therefore, they could not invest heavily in stock.

Proprietor Alan Naughton stated: "In the first year we never had more than 10 cars in stock. In comparison to 2020/2021, the average level of stock was nearer to 100 units. This has allowed us to move a little from our car sourcing system to a model where we have a car to suit everyone in stock and ready to go. This new model is a big advantage now as changes brought about by Brexit makes sourcing the vehicle type difficult, slower and more expensive."

In 2011 there was just Alan and past employee Denis. Currently the crew at M6 consists of 18 staff members which range from directors, sales, technicians, accounts, admin, valeting and drivers.

They combined celebrating their 10-year anniversary, and the official opening of their new showroom with a Gala Week. The Galway Bay FM Baycaster was on site along with a few other special guests including Brand Ambassador, Galway hurling captain, Padraic Mannion.

The new showroom was planned for an Opening in March but with the restrictions, it was agreed to wait until their recent anniversary to officially open the new premises with an outdoor and socially distanced event., involving locals, family and friends calling in and join in the celebrations.

In 2011, Ballinasloe, like a lot of towns and cities, was going through some very tough times - disposable income was at its lowest levels and buying a car was not a priority for most. However, over the next few years, the economic outlook improved and more jobs were created in the local community with more local customers enjoying the service.

Alan continued: "The level of support over the last 10 years from the people of Ballinasloe and the surrounding areas has really helped get our business to where it is today."

M6 Motors are still at the same address beside Dolan's filling station in Creagh, where they have been since 2012. Separating the sales part of the business to a new site next door to the workshop and service areas, allows

them to focus solely on sales, and the new showroom and forecourt have helped display more cars which get a lot more exposure and in turn, helps to sell more vehicles.

Since opening, over €1.5m has been invested in the business to help it grow. Funding has been used to increase stock levels, kitting out the workshop with equipment and diagnostics, to furnish their new premises, and to recruit, train, and maintain an excellent team of 18 hard-working employees.

Alan ended by saying: "We would like to thank all our customers for the incredible level of support shown over our 10 years in business, and we look forward to seeing you again in future. Our success just shows how important and how much of a difference can be made by people supporting local businesses."



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Ballinasloe native Mary Ward has set up a fundraiser in aid of children that will be in Portiuncula Hospital on Christmas Day!

With the aid of her family, they are hoping to raise funds to buy Christmas presents for all the kids in Oncology and St. Therese's Ward, to help make it a magical Christmas for them! Mary's main goal is to try to make as many happy smiles for the kids, their parents and staff, as possible on Christmas Day.

For those who know Mary, they are aware that some 20 years ago, at four years of age, she was diagnosed with type one diabetes, and spent time after the diagnosis in St Therese's Ward. The nurses and doctors there left a huge impression on Mary by helping every one of their patients in the ward.

Mary stated: "After they went above and beyond, I wanted to do something in return for the kindness I received, and after speaking to Ann Marie, Manager of the St. Therese's Ward, we both decided that it would be a fantastic idea to do something for Christmas."

So, this Christmas she hopes to give smiles and laughter to all the kids in Oncology and St Therese's and make it a Christmas they will always remember!

The family are currently organizing a huge raffle for Friday, November 26, which will

be held on their Facebook page @ creatingchristmasmagic. There will be over 30 prizes, mostly sponsored by local businesses, with tickets costing €5 each.

You can contact their Facebook page for more information regarding the fundraiser and to keep updated with all the latest news.

Mary added: "Thank you so much to all the Businesses in Ballinasloe and Athlone that donated spot prizes for our raffle over the last few weeks. Thank you to everyone who has supported us and donated to our fundraiser, it will not go unnoticed, by ourselves, staff, parents and of course most especially the kids."

TOWN BAND AWAIT RE-OPENING

By Jack Treacy

The Town Band, having taken a short break, returned to band practices on Monday, September 20, with sectional sessions for brass, woodwind and percussion.

The full band then rehearses every Thursday night at the Town Band Hall, in the old Parochial Hall, on Dunlo St. The Band has the Christmas season as its target and it will be making music throughout the town during December.

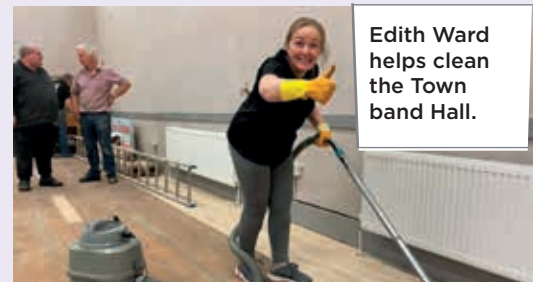
Music Matters (New Inn) has also commenced its autumn rehearsal schedule in the Band Hall, and this is a very welcomed development, fitting in with the aim to make the hall a repository of music-making in the future. If you want to play music, contact any member of the band. A group of juniors has just commenced instruction and the Town Band welcomes all.

The Town Band Hall has had a major makeover with the assistance of grant aid from GRD and Galway Co Council. Its many supporters have also contributed generously by standing orders and/or direct debit contributions.

Substantial support has also been generously given by Hogarty's Flooring & DIY and Keller's of Ballinasloe with the provision of floor covering for the three ancillary rooms in the hall. The provision of fire doors, both within the building and at the entrance

doors, now fulfils its fire cert obligations and the band will have a soft opening of the hall to the public with its Christmas recitals. The official opening of the hall will take place next Spring – COVID permitting.

To get in touch with the town band you can contact them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BallinasloeBand>, email ballinasloetown@gmail.com or phone (087) 971 0496.



Edith Ward helps clean the Town band Hall.

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Local SUAS Services were wonderfully appreciative of a generous donation of €500 from local author Padraig Lyons, from the proceeds of his most recently acclaimed book "Rediscover Ballinasloe and Surrounds".

SUAS Services is an outreach service based in Ballinasloe town centre and offers a range of supports to over 30 people with an intellectual disability living in the community.

Author Padraig Lyons stated: "I am very aware of the work of SUAS in the town. They have been very supportive to my family as there is a member of my family who needs special support, the staff have been wonderful in terms of those supports. I suppose when I was thinking of a project to donate the first €500 earned from this book I felt that SUAS were most deserving."



Bernard McDermott and Niall Woods at SUAS Service.

SUAS aims to promote well-being and enhance opportunities. The organisation prioritises people's independence, choices, access to community services, and safety using a person-centred approach.

The service supports people to be recognised as valued members of their community, feel equal and be treated fairly. SUAS is a multi-disciplinary service and provides access to community support work, psychology, social work and psychiatry based on individual needs.

SUAS is driven by the needs of the people they support. It supports individuals to enhance their independent living skills such as household management, budgeting, personal care and safety. They provide support to achieve personal goals and assist individuals at difficult times in their lives.

Supporting individuals to be active participants in their local community is key and individuals are facilitated to link with various community

resources, educational and training opportunities and services in the area. The service provides both one-to-one, group work and social opportunities.

During Covid-19, SUAS with grant funding ran an eight-week social online project, which helped individuals to learn how to use the internet and technology to participate in online training in areas of gardening, creative arts, yoga, mindfulness, healthy eating and cookery.

Many individuals supported by SUAS identified the need for a Polytunnel to further develop gardening skills with planting vegetables and flowers which hopefully will become a small social enterprise.

It will also be a wonderful opportunity to reduce social isolation, a safe place to meet with friends, work and share stories, whilst connecting with the wider supports offered by the service.

Padraig added: "People with special needs desire that kind of support, but they are very, very talented and when they get confidence in their skills, they can work wonders."

SUAS's office is based at 10 Church Hill, Ballinasloe, dial (090) 964 6400 for further information.

There are still a few copies of the Heritage and history visitor guide of Padraig's very well received book available in Salmons.



SUAS Services receiving a Donation from Padraig Lyons towards a Polytunnel. L-R: Clare Kelly, John F Lyons, Padraig Lyons, Niall Woods, Lyn Donnelly (Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre).

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Available by Appointment

By Jack Treacy

COMMUNITY

After a long lockdown, Ballinasloe Cycling Club was permitted to get things moving in June with Criterium Racing. Taking place every Tuesday night at the Pallas Track with some of the top competitors in the country in attendance. These were the cycling clubs that first organised open races, and with everyone who raced there enjoying it, more will follow in 2022.

On the leisure side of the club, they organised their first outing recently only for rain to arrive to spoil the show. However, that did not stop the group from meeting up for tea, coffee, and some snacks.

Recently member Gerry O'Sullivan completed a five-day 1000km monster cycle, from Ballinasloe to Mizen Head to Malin Head, in aid of Diabetes Ireland, so a large group of members gathered to cycle with him as far as Gort at the start of his endeavour. Through his efforts, Gerry managed to raise €8,800 on JustGiving, for the organisation.

In past weeks, Ballinasloe Cycling had their second club spin away of the summer and had two routes on offer for club members. The route for their novice cyclists was from Maam Cross to Leenaun and back to Maam Cross through Inagh Valley.

The second route, for the more seasoned members, totalled over 70 kilometres going to Cong via Loch na Fooley, and back through Cornamona to Maam Cross for a well-deserved dinner at Peacocks.

In the last few weeks, they were able to get out for their third club outing to Kinnitty where there were three routes on offer, one flat route and two routes taking place in the Slieve Bloom mountains, one with three climbs and one with four.

Several members took on the tough climbs of the Wolf trap and the Cut for the first time with a food stop in Clonaslee, and the all-important coffee stop afterwards in Kinnitty. With the onset of Autumn, one more outing is in the planning and an order for pleasant weather has been placed.



An order has been put in for Club Hoodies and are available for sale by applying to Barry's Cycles. Adult hoodies are €40 and Children's Hoodies are €35 euros. Anyone is free to order these hoodies and you can also order by dialling John on (087) 226 8375.

The Winter Schedule varies for different age groups and grades but at different times on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday - you will see the Lycra clad crew gathering outside Barry's Bicycles in Sarsfield Road !!

If you are interested in cycling, you can contact their Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ballinasloecyclingclub> or email ballinasloecyclingclub@gmail.com about joining for the year.

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Clann Baile an Rí at Dunlo in Ballinasloe, were shortlisted for the Public Choice ICSH Allianz Community Housing Awards recently, giving the public the chance to publically vote on the shortlisted entries - they feel was most deserving of recognition

Public voting closed in mid Sept and as we go to print - it was announced they were runners-up.

The awards are committed to showcasing age-friendly independent housing and services for people in need of housing all over Ireland. They celebrate family housing, projects that address homelessness, recognition of the needs of disabled people, and support that allows for elderly members of the community to live well.

Clann's Baile an Rí scheme in Ballinasloe, has a convenient central location within easy pedestrian access to main supermarkets and only a short walk from St. Michael's Square. Access to public transport is close by, allowing residents to go about their daily lives with ease.

Homes in Clann Baile an Rí has been sustainably built to universal design standards, allowing residents to age in place, and stay living in their own community for as long as possible. Clann works in partnership across national and local government, community support, and various charitable organisations to deliver top standard service across a broad range of resident supports.

Baile an Rí holds a strong sense of community, while also providing safety, privacy, and security. Residents are always provided support by a dedicated Scheme Manager and they also provide an out of hours emergency call

system.

During the pandemic general wellbeing has been low but with what was considered a lifeline by residents who were cocooning as access has been given to planters to allow them to grow their own flowers or vegetables.

One resident commented: "Living at Clann Baile an Rí has changed my life for the better so much, I am living now."



PORTIUNCULA 50-BED TENDER DELAY

The project was due to go to tender earlier this year but is now expected to be advertised on the e-Tenders website very soon.

Independent TD Denis Naughten states: "I have been informed that the delay had been primarily due to design development and the carrying out of due diligence

of all tender documents."

The Saolta Group also confirmed that enabling works for the project had allowed a number of onsite issues to be dealt with and that the natural gas and electrical network had been upgraded, while the medical gas infrastructure had also been modified and upgraded.

Denis said: "After I secured the commitment for the ward block development at Portiuncula Hospital from Health Minister Simon Harris there have been a number of delays in the project. It is imperative that this project is now given the priority it deserves within the HSE and that contractors are appointed as soon as possible."

By Jack Treacy

Paddy Keane I.P.A.V.

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COMMUNITY



Fun and games in the park for Junior Outdoor Summer Camp

Within the autumn activities include many events for many different youth age groups. Starting in October there will be a first-year chill zone, where newly starting secondary school students can get to know each other and hang out together.

The Get Lippy Youth Council will continue, as well as the FUNatics Junior youth group, Horses & Hounds youth group, the Dungeon & Dragons youth group and it will mark the return of the Feel-Good Friday youth group, setting everyone up for a good weekend!

Individual support will continue to be provided for young people aged 10 to 18 years of age who may need additional help or support and for individuals 16-18 years of age who are out of education and employment.

A junior Outdoor Summer Camp was also held over the summer with many activities taking place such as Yoga and Ice Cream and multiple fun games and exercises that got the kids working together and interacting with one another.

Based out of their Offices at Marina Point, all of the youth

groups and support work are **FREE** and are open to **ALL** young people from Ballinasloe town and surrounding areas.

Formal Registration for all youth groups and activities with Youth Work Ireland, takes place until the end of September with all groups starting back from October 5.

All you need to do is contact Maria (Youth Worker) via phone (text, call, WhatsApp) for further information on times, days of the week and venue: (087) 770 7775.

Maria can also be contacted via email: eastgalway@youthworkgalway.ie

Readers can also follow them on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Ballinasloeyouthproject and on Instagram: @youthworkirelandballinasloe



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Government funding secured for East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support to purchase a vehicle to transport patients requiring treatment

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FIANNA Fáil
 THE REPUBLICAN PARTY



Ballinasloe entrepreneur Jack Murray has published his first book - 'The Magic Slice - How to Master the Art of Storytelling for Business.

Driven by real-life stories and case studies, the Magic Slice book acts as a clarion call for anyone who needs to find their own Magic Slice—that unique place where what you want to say is exactly what your audience wants to hear. It is available worldwide on Amazon.



Murray (48) is a native of River Street and son of Noreen Murray and the late Joe Murray of the well-known farm supplies business. He dedicated the book to his late father. "From a very early age Dad lit the story spark in me. Growing up in the shop in Ballinasloe was a great way to understand the power of having a good story to face the public every day, and there were few better storytellers than my Dad," he said.

Murray says his career in storytelling was inspired by a story his father told him as a child. "As children we were often told about our Great Grandfather, John Murray, who returned from the USA in the late 1800s with an idea to start a business as a general merchant in the

town. That story has fascinated me all my life and guided me towards a career helping others to tell their story" he added.

Murray works as an entrepreneur, story consultant, speaker and author. As the CEO of both MediaHQ—a media contacts database and press release distribution tool—and the storytelling agency All Good Tales, he helps companies define their storytelling strategies, train their staff as storytellers, and share their stories through innovative technology.

Today, he lives in Dublin with his wife, Alison; his daughters, Matilda and Gwen; and a dog called Maxi Lopez.

FLETCHERS NEWS



Galway Bay FM are proud to announce the upgraded outside Broadcast Unit.

The Baycaster will be outside Fletcher's Society St. for three days 25, 26, 27 (Thursday, Friday, Saturday) November for the Megga Fletcher's Black Friday Sale.

There will be three fun filled live shows each day featuring all the best in chat, music and local updates!



Rock Artist Paul Weller with Sean Fletcher his 2FM Promoter at a pre COVID Concert in London.



Clem Burke the original drummer from BLONDIE has appointed Sean Fletcher of Modern Media his promoter for the 2 bands he plays with the Tearaways and Split Squad.

Pictured here with Sean at the last sold out Blondie gig in London before the lockdown.

He has confirmed two new gigs on the 8 and 9 of April in London.



Sean Fletcher and Modern Media have signed Paul Weller's Daughter Leah for a series of concerts in London's famous 100 Cub in Oxford street London. The first event is scheduled for May 13th 2022.



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Dean O'Farrell tragically passed away on January 11, 2021, due to metastatic terminal oesophageal cancer in Portiuncula Hospital.

A valued and honoured member of the Defence Forces - Dean, from Athlone was 31, and his cancer diagnosis was described as extremely rare in someone so young and extremely aggressive. He only had a short five months from his diagnosis to his passing which he battled through with a smile. Through his family and friends' efforts, they have raised an amazing €13,000.

A spokesperson at the Ballinasloe Cancer Support Centre, commented: "It is such a privilege for us to be nominated for this amazing, kind and generous fundraiser at this sad and tragic time. Dean had spoken with his family about his wishes to set up a cancer support group for cancer patients if he won the battle."

A spokesperson: "We here at the Ballinasloe

Cancer Support Centre offer emotional and practical supports to anyone with a cancer diagnosis. The services we provide include counselling and complementary therapies such as acupuncture, reflexology, Cancer Care massage and support groups."

It is hoped that Dean's memory will live on through helping others on their cancer journey. May Dean rest in peace and deepest condolences to all who knew and loved him.

All at the centre: "We would like to thank his family, Anita, Fiona, Derek, Shauna, Katie, Jamie, Hollie and David and all the wonderful supporters who donated to his fundraiser."

You can contact them on (090) 964 9767 or at ballinasloecancer@gmail.com

DEAN O'FARRELL-CLARIFICATION

This piece on Dean was published in our August/September edition with a number of misunderstandings and some quotes being inadvertently attributed to Jacqueline Daly, Director of Services at East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support Centre. It was an unfortunate mix-up in our editorial process, for which we unreservedly apologise.

We subsequently corrected the report in the online edition.

To the Staff, Volunteers, Benefactors and Families connected to both Cancer Centres, confused in the last edition, we offer our sincerest apologies for any distress caused.

The Editor.

CLARIFICATION

In our last Edition we misspelt the names of two volunteers who have been central to the success of the town business facade painting project.

Brenda Mulvihill Kelly and Anne Curtin who were the Voluntary Colour coordinators to the scheme and liaised with the County Council Architect and the business owners as to the styling and colours used.

Everyone visiting town in the past few weeks has remarked how wonderful the whole urban centre looks.

To the Council, the Colour coordinators, the Painters and Decorators and ALL the local suppliers of paints and the business premises owners - very well done!

Meet our Leading Lights



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A protest demonstration against the stoppage of Bus Eireann public bus services on route 20/ x20 was held recently outside the Emerald Ballroom. Towns served by this route are Craughwell, Loughrea, Aughrim, Moate, Kilbeggan, Kinnegad, Stops in Athlone no longer include the station.

This decision means that journeys between Galway, Ballinasloe, Moate, Dublin City or Dublin Airport will now be operated by private companies only, with a complete absence of stops in some towns and villages previously serviced as well as a reduction in the overall number of daily services travelling between Galway, Ballinasloe, Athlone and Dublin.

This public service stoppage will directly impact the 400,000 patient catchment area with free travel passes and companion passes as well as people needing this service to attend work, training, hospital appointments and shopping in the area. It comes at a time when the public is being asked to reduce car use and rely on public transport services and at a time when meaningful infrastructural support is needed to support rural regeneration.

Clare Kerrane TD stated: "We are hoping Minister Eamon Ryan will listen to us protesting, over 1700 signatures have been collected for a petition to restore the x20 bus, we want this service back."

Councilor Evelyn Parsons also commented: "The message is loud and clear to government - it is totally unacceptable to reduce our bus services, travel and companion passes at any time, let alone during a pandemic when patients and staff have increased need of attendance hospital services/ appointments."

Cllr Timmy Broderick and Cllr Michael Connolly were also in attendance and lent their support for the reinstatement.

Denis Naughton T.D. questioned the Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan in the Dail over the reduction in the public transport connectivity between local towns. "There has been a 60% reduction in buses that facilitate patients and visitors transport to and from Portiuncula Hospital. Transport Eireann did not replace Bus Eireann 226 buses a week to just 84 buses a week outside Portiuncula."


Minister Ryan promised to review the situation: "We do need to look again in terms of Portiuncula Hospital and making sure that the local link services as we adapt and change the overall route alignment, to make sure that we maintain critical connectivity to facilities such as that. I will have to ask the

department for an update in that regard".

Denis continued questioning the minister about the lack of connectivity for rural towns explaining it now takes over four hours to get from Roscommon town to Portiuncula Hospital.

The minister answered: "I think one of the efficiencies we want to get is to connect some of our health and transport needs we have to health facilities into that system and look at a variety of things we could put into that system to link up our health and general public transport needs and Portiuncula could be one example of that as we make the amendments that we need to make."

Fine Gael Senator, Aisling Dolan, has called for improved Local Link services from Ballinasloe train station to Portiuncula Hospital and the start of the public consultation process for the 'Connecting Ireland' transport plan for further services to Athlone and Mountbellew. Senator Dolan has also said it is important that private operators provide accessibility as well as connectivity to rail services at Athlone Train Station.

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The Town Team – Christmas Lights Committee are busy planning this year's illuminations – expanding again on the wonderful lights and installing some new features in the darker precincts of the town.

Funding has been secured from Ballinasloe Credit Union (€4,000) and Galway County Council Community Support Scheme (€3,000) with a surplus from last year's fundraising efforts in the region of €7,000, still sees a project shortfall to cover the installation and expansion costs for this year's illuminations.

The team propose to run the Xmas Raffle Draw similar to last year, to raise the needed funds, with similar

prizes, ranging from shopping vouchers to hotel vouchers (prize values €250 - €1000). The tickets will be available from all local businesses and from ShopBallinasloe.ie.

The whole idea of the campaign and the lights is to lift the spirit of the town and encourage the community to support our local businesses in these difficult times and really drive home the message of "Shop Local, Support Local" this Christmas.

The plan is to turn on the lights on Sunday 21 November @ 6p.m. with the Gig Rig and live entertainment at the top of the Square and negotiations are ongoing with the North Pole to see if the main man himself is available to stop by and switch the lights on and greet the children.

Full details to follow on Ballinasloe Life Social Media Channel, ballinasloe.ie & shopballinasloe.ie or for further details contact Lyn in Ballinasloe Enterprise centre on 9646516.



CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY *By Jack Treacy*

Christmas Jumper Day is back on Friday, December 10, 2021, with all proceeds going towards Ballinasloe Social Services and Galway Hospice. Both are very worthy causes.

Having taken a pandemic break the Day is a fun pre-Christmas activity that encourages people in schools, offices, factories, shops and other work environments to wear the favourite Christmas Jumper and make a donation to the chosen local charities.

Our Social Services is a voluntary organization that provides daycare for the elderly, Meals on Wheels, Pre-School, and Early Intervention Service in the East Galway and South Roscommon area. The mission of the center is to provide services to support elderly, isolated and disadvantaged people to enable them to remain living in their own homes and communities. In addition, the organization provides early intervention services to allow pre-school children, with additional needs, to reach their full potential.

Galway Hospice provides specialist palliative care to people with life-limiting conditions across Galway city, county and the adjoining islands. They provide services in the Inpatient Unit in Renmore, in the home setting through our Community Palliative Care Team and the

Day Care Service in Renmore. Galway Hospice services are provided free of charge for as long as they are needed. Support from the wider community is vital in the delivery of hospice services.

Check out their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/Ballinasloe-Christmas-Jumper-Day> for details of upcoming competitions. Lots of great prizes to be won. Contact bsloechristmasjumperday@gmail.com

Or the team at (087) 275 3861 (089) 415 4193.

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Mrs. McEvoy's new infant class at Lawrencetown National School leaving class. These clever children filled the school with happiness and curiosity. Well done to you all on completing your first week of 'big school'!

Comhghairdeas libh go léir!



Congratulations to all who received their 'First Holy Communion' recently at St Mary's Church, Lawrencetown.



Ardsoil Mhuire and Garbally College Collaboration

(L-R) Niamh Colleran, Pauric Hanlon, Lilian Hynes, Cindy Deady Henry, Angela Cusack, Paul Walsh, Roisin McSharry

The Transition Year students in both our local secondary schools are enjoying a series of modules delivered as co-educational groups. Each week TY students from Ardsoil Mhuire and Garbally College join forces to complete modules in Social Dancing, Music, Art, Relationships, Education, Sports and Woodwork.

This development allows both schools the opportunity to make use of their skillsets and facilities whilst providing the TY students with broader curricular choice and opportunities.

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Having worked through one of the most challenging periods in Irish Educational history, there is no doubt that the young people who received their Leaving Cert results in early September deserve great applause and credit for their achievements.

This was certainly the case for the young women from Ardscoil Mhuire who achieved beyond all expectations in the recent examinations. School principal Mr Pauric Hanlon said that "this year's results are truly a testament to the determination and grit of both students and staff. We are exceptionally proud of every student who received their results recently. The team of committed teachers have journeyed with them for the past five or six years and are delighted with the results also. Four students achieved above 600 points and 40% of students achieved above 500 points."

The excellent results extended into the Leaving Certificate Applied programme with four students achieving Distinctions in their course, a statistic that is far above the national average.

The school has been a hive of activity over the past number of months as work was completed to facilitate the introduction of two new subjects; Applied Technology and Graphics. Both subjects add to the extensive range of subjects on offer already in Ardscoil Mhuire.

Applied Technology is a hybrid subject, offering students the opportunity to develop their skills using wood, metal, plastics, pneumatics and robotics. Graphics (formally known as Technical Drawing) is another exciting addition to our curricular offering.

The modern specification requires students to complete drawings both on paper and using Computer Aided Design (CAD). In order to ensure that students have every opportunity to succeed in these subjects, it was necessary to develop specialist classrooms to facilitate the advancements.

The school now have a Technology Suite, complete with preparation area, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Room and a bright and engaging learning space where students will be inspired to design solutions to various problems. The Graphics Lab has been

equipped with a new suite of high-spec computers, complete with CAD software as well as four 3D printers. These rooms were developed thanks to a large financial investment from the Department of Education and Skills and with tremendous support from the school's Board of Management.

Mr Hanlon noted that these subjects are especially relevant to students wishing to pursue careers in modern industries such as engineering, IT and design. Indeed, students completing these courses will have the necessary skills for the jobs and industries of the future. Adding that both subjects have large elements of continuous assessments, it is possible that students who choose these subjects may have up to 50% of their grade before the day of the exam.




High Achievers 2021

Front Row (L to R): Jessica Greene, Martha Frehill, Sarah Dooley, Holly Costello, Abby Downey, Clodagh Powell, Megan Fitzpatrick, Aoife Castle.

Back (L to R): Pauric Hanlon (Principal), Orlaith Brennan, Hannah Russell, Leah Hogarty, Megan Noone, Alanna Higgins, Aoife Jordan, Kate Tierney, Chloe Johnston, Katie Naughton, Ailbhe Hanlon, Ms Lilian Hynes (Deputy Principal).

Absent: Alison Markam, Aoife O'Connor, Emily Farrell, Aoife Murray, Ciara Warde, Alanna Mulry, Niamh Kelly, Roisin NiBhroin Fahy.



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Clonfert NS - First week down, great to be back. Gardeners were in full swing harvesting what they planted earlier in the year. Courgettes, potatoes lettuce, onions, corn, carrots, turnips, peas, beans. Definitely doing our bit for nature with our flowers for the bees that are blooming out the front and the caterpillar enjoying some of our cabbage. Busy week next week digging!! A big thank you to all our parent volunteers who helped us with different projects, gardening, play shed artwork, computer coding, robotics etc.



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The Violet Mist Cover

First time novelist Siobhan Lally was born and bred in Kilconnell, Ballinasloe. She attended Ard Scoil Mhuire, from 1988-1990 before commencing her nursing studies in the early 1990s.

Siobhan qualified as a Nurse in 1996 and had worked as a critical care nurse in Portiuncula Hospital for 15 years before embarking on a writing career. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018, she took a year off work and found writing very therapeutic during that time and from there 'The Violet Mist' was born.

Siobhan said: "I uncovered a range of old Irish mythical characters of An Tuatha de Danann who are now known as the Sidhe. Over the next couple of months, I read everything

I could and visited sacred sites around Ireland that were connected to this mystical race. I had never considered myself a writer but drawing on my characters, my children, and their pets, An Tuatha de Danann and a great deal of imagination, The Violet Mist started to take shape.

Siobhan continued: "I think readers might be surprised to find that even though the story is essentially a fairy tale, many of the characters and places mentioned in the book have their foundations in Ireland's history and folklore and can easily be explored."

There is a message in the book, that good friends come in all shapes and sizes and you do not have to be the most popular or cool to have the best adventures in life. There is also a subtle hint of gender equality running through which depicts women as warriors



Siobhan Lally author of 'The Violet Mist'

fighting shoulder to shoulder with men, which was the way of An Tuatha de Danann.

Siobhan added: "I was listening to a podcast by Wayne Dyer - 'Five lessons in life' where he said, 'Do not die with your music still in you.' And so, I threw myself into finishing the book which was a great distraction while going through treatment."

As of now, Siobhan is working on the sequel where, during a global pandemic, she is hoping that Sidhe will help find a cure.

'The Violet Mist' is available to buy at €14.99 in the retail outlets in both Salmon's Department store, and Hickey's in Kilconnell as well as many other outlets throughout the county.

By Jack Treacy



THEATRE STARTS BACK SLOWLY

The Town Hall Theatre is thrilled to have its doors open for cultural activities again. watch out on their Social Media pages for new events as they begin to fill their calendar.

Already back in welcome action is AKT Stage School with Kori Kilduff on Friday evenings with lots of children learning, stagecraft, drama, dance, and singing to experience.

Currently, there is a play in rehearsal and details will be posted on Social Media soon. There is still much discussion about the practicalities of a normal Winter show program.

In October, their Foyer will get a much-needed facelift. This will not interfere with the Country Market on Friday mornings, which will move to another part of the building while work is in progress.

There is still some debt and with general economic increases, the Theatre will need all the help it can get but will be exciting to have audiences return.

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Some of the Junior Club dancers, with teachers Bridie Ruane and Martina Flanagan who danced at Tom Quinn's (RIP) 100th Birthday Celebrations in Gullane's Hotel.

Get your dancing shoes on, and be ready to jive as new Sean Nós, Old Traditional Céilí and Step Dances are starting up at the GAA Clubhouse, in Brackernagh.

This year the Club will be introducing a refreshing but traditional element to the classes. Being part and parcel of the word 'Sean Nós' meaning old style, the classes will be teaching some of the

original Traditional Céilí and Step Dances such as the Priest in his Boots, Maggie Pickie, The Three Tunes, High Caulded Cap, St. Patrick's Day, and many more great dances.

A lot of these dances began to fade away as Step Dancing 'stepped' up so to say and became the dominant force during Céilís. Nowadays, the popularity of these generation-old dances handed down throughout the years is beginning to emerge again in a non-competitive form.

Within Irish culture it is essential that the dances are kept alive and immortalised forever ready to break out at weddings, parties, and musical events - creating great fun for all.

Dancing in all forms is so good for your mental health and

wellbeing and as Céilí dancing is low impact it is suitable for people of all ages; all you need is a comfortable pair of shoes!

Registration for these classes is encouraged and will be great for fitness and fun. Registration for children will be held on Tuesday, October 5th, from 5 pm for children, and 7pm for adults of any gender, above the age 18, and over, who are also fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Covid guidelines will also be fully adhered to.

The Club marks a milestone 10 years of activity this year officially but with the 18 month Pandemic gap - they are working out how best to officially mark it!

For further information contact Martina Flanagan by dialling (087) 900 7036 or contact Bridie at (087) 216 8436.



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L-R: Odharna Raftery (Mountbellew) and Blanaid Fenton (Creagh) dancing at Teagasc Farming & Country Life 1916 Commemorative event held at Mellows Campus Athenry in 2016.

Singer and songwriter Rachel Goode released her debut single "Coal Miner's Daughter" towards the end of summer. She recorded it at Ballyrose Media Recording Studio accompanied by Wayne Thorose, with a track that was specially made for her, and they created a cover that allowed Rachel to put her own stamp on the song.

Rachel said: "It is an absolute country classic from the fabulous Loretta Lynn and was one of my childhood favourite songs, I knew every word by the time I was eight and it was one of my many party pieces!"

Many people will know Rachel from her Classical singing, which she is still very much involved in and loves to sing, but Rachel grew up singing country and Irish folk along with the classical and was encouraged for years to branch into the country route.

Rachel commented: "During the lockdown, I was putting various recordings on my Facebook page, and when I uploaded the country songs my Facebook exploded, lately I got the big push I needed, so I decided to go for it!! My biggest country's influences growing up would have been Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn. It is a genre I love to sing, and I cannot wait to release more in the future."

Rachel released the song on all major streaming platforms such as iTunes, Spotify, Deezer etc. and it is still available to stream and download, you can also add it to your playlists. The track now has 2,200 streams on Spotify, and 210 on YouTube gaining over 90 followers since the release.



Rachel Goode Singer/Songwriter

Rachel said: "I have an app that shows me how many streams it is getting and the various playlists it is included in, I can also see what countries re streaming the song and it makes me so happy to see it!"

For her next single, Rachel will be going down the Country route once more! "I have some exciting things in the pipeline which I will announce at the right time. Just recently I was part of Waynes 'Studio Sessions' in Ballyrose Media where I got to record three country songs with a live band, I am looking forward to seeing them" she revealed.

If everything goes to plan then she hopes to release a new single by December and to put on a concert then too, with a mix of Country, Irish Folk, Musical Theatre. Rachel will make her debut in the country scene on November 28, for a concert in Clayton Hotel Galway, more information will be coming on that soon!



Coal Miner's Daughter
Single Cover

"I would just like to thank everyone who helped me make this single a reality. Wayne Thorose for the fabulous arrangement and production, Simona Reyinite for my fabulous photos, Bryan Minton for the graphic design, Debra Dowler for her distribution to all the radio stations, Keller of Ballinasloe and Dolans Centra who have my CD on sale, and of course all the public for their continued support. I appreciate it so much and I hope you will all continue to follow me on my music journey!" remarked Rachel.

A limited number of CDs were made, with less than 40 still available to purchase in Kellers and Dolans Centra Garage for €5.

By Jack Treacy

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By Jack Treacy

The Annual Zombie Walk is making its 'haunting' return after one season of inactivity and will take place from Friday, October 29, to Saturday, October 30 after the Bank Holiday weekend taking place at 6:45 pm, 7:45 pm and 8:45 pm on both days in Garbally Woods.

Set in the parkland of the historic Clancarty Mansion, complete with its own resident ghost – the White Lady – the walk will be bedecked with a cast of witches, zombies, goblins, pixies and Garbally House staff from the eighteenth Century, who had left their tombs to haunt the walk.

Organized by the Town Team and coordinated by Ballinasloe Area Community Development in response to the Town Benchmarking Plan – to incorporate more family activities into our annual calendar of events – the event was branded a huge success by attendees and organizers alike for the five seasons before a storm and Covid robbed 1.5 seasons!

After parking in Ardscoil Mhuire, patrons will again go to the handball alleys to queue for their walk. Groups of 15 will be taken by zombie guides – all past staff members of Lady Clancarty's Household.

This year the route will go through the woods, to the Zombie Training Compound and the Witches Coven.

The Zombie Walk is suitable for all ages from five to 105 but again organizers are recommending that children under the age of 12 are accompanied by their parents/guardians.

The main organizing partners, led by Seamus Duffy of the Ballinasloe Area Community Development, are Ballinasloe Musical Society, the Town Hall Theatre and Ballinasloe Panto.

BACD Chairperson Seamus Duffy said: "on previous occasions, we had over 60 stewards as well as performers and this year we are appealing to other clubs and organizations to lend us their volunteers for a few hours on the build-up and the nights."

This year tickets are priced at €10 per person. The money raised from the walk will go towards the funding of the Town Team Projects. This year the tickets are exclusively being sold online via Ballinasloe Town Hall and will be available on their Facebook page early this month and the plan is to be able to sell pre-allocated time slots to reduce the queue time. Parents are advised to keep an eye out on the Ballinasloe Life Facebook page and Ballinasloe.ie for full details.

Seamus continued: "We are thrilled as a group that Fr Allman and the governors of Garbally are allowing us to use the grounds"

An information evening will be held for volunteers on Thursday, October 18, at 8 pm in Gullane's Hotel. So far more than 60 volunteers have committed for this year's Zombie Walk but **New volunteers are very welcome and are encouraged to come on the night!**



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Well perhaps not quite the hills but for the two dozen or more singing souls who make up the BARRA singers to be able to meet, rehearse and now perform again is nothing short of miraculous!

These past few pandemic months have been torturous on them, as all singers and choirs in the locality they gave their first recital in over 18 months to the residents of Mill Race (Aperee Living).

Founded by retired Music Teacher – Wicklow's finest; Marie Power some 15 seasons ago – it delights its members in weekly rehearsals, annual concerts and participation in a myriad of cultural and musical activities.

There are some similarities to the Dunlo Singers of old in some of the wiser faces peering out over their song books but the formal wear and pink dresses for recital are banished. "This is fun ensemble for folks in the early 50s to their late 80s, and there are no auditions to get in – if you can rasp we will find a note for ya" jokes conductor Marie.

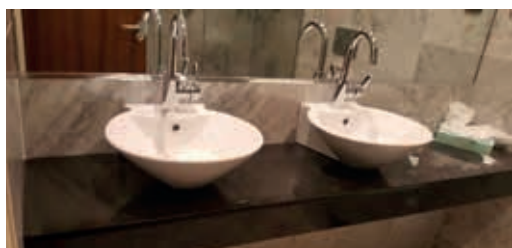
Whilst the camaraderie of the town centre weekly rehearsals and coffee do provide much needed contact and enjoyment to many – there is a serious side to their tonic solfas. In their 15 seasons they have amassed through their annual Songfest over €20,000 for various local charities.

Their repertoire is a mixed bag of soothing two-part and three-part harmonies for male and female voices – featuring the canon of Gershwin, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Gilbert and Sullivan, and most other light operatic and indeed some Latin liturgical pieces. However, they always try to include some famous and perhaps lesser known Irish Composers as well as folk and campfire ballads.

They are busy back in weekly rehearsals for their Christmas Circle of visits to as many of the local nursing homes as they can fit in December and to be able to plan and stage their Songfest in early summer 2022.

Quite a number of the members only took up to singing in their retirement years and have not been formally taught or trained at all but still pack huge enjoyment into it. The group are always looking for newcomers – one does not have to be a member of the Active Retirement but a small fee to cover the coffee and annual insurance through a national federation is required.

Give Marie a call on 087 9790416 – why not! they are especially looking for a few loose Baritones !



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The Ballinasloe Library is presenting their second edition of its hybrid online and in person Comic Con this November.

After the success of the first edition of the event, the Library will hopefully entertain all comic, cartoon and science fiction fans locally with a chance to hook up and spend a few days celebrating their passion for animation and illustration.

Focusing on three pillar themes of Creativity, Science and Music the Comicon will take place on November 5 - 7 and it will consist of a series of discussion panels, workshops, interviews and some displays. There will be a schools art competition and indeed a COSPLAY competition also.

Among the headliners of the event, there will be Alan Nolan, an illustrator graphic designer and the author of the very popular novella, Sam Hannigan's Rock

Star Granny and Dr. Barry Fitzgerald a speaker, author, superhero scientist, enthusiastic communicator and a super-fan of the superhero genre.

Ballinasloe's very own Amie Doherty and Eimear Noone who work in the movie, animation and music world have agreed to participate in the programme and announce the winners of the competitions.

The full programme for the weekend will be published online during early October for participation. The event will be free, but booking it in advance will be compulsory in order to attend it and take part in some of the events which will have limited online numbers.

Further information regarding the event will be published on the Library's Facebook account <https://www.facebook.com/EDBallinasloe/>.



LIBRARY OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

By Jack Treacy

The library is developing its Courtyard as the new space for outdoor activities. They kicked off these activities with a visit from 'Print Van Go,' a mobile art and printmaking studio run by the amazing Aoife Barrett.

The library staff were thrilled to recently invite 15 kids who created some beautiful books and cards from the prints. Well done to the Kennedy,

Daly, Ganoy and Flanagan families for taking part!

For Autumn 2021, Ballinasloe Library will also host two very special series of classes, both aimed at women from disadvantaged communities. The first set will be hosted by Sara Slattery, Life Coach for Women, and will be based around personal development for women.

The second will be a community leadership programme for women. Both will happen online and will last for seven weeks. For details email ukelly@galwaycoco.ie.



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30 UNBOUND-CULTURE NIGHT OPENING

For its eleventh outing, Ballinasloe-based artist collective Group 8 held the opening of its annual exhibition, UNBOUND, on Culture Night, recently in Artisan Alley at the Town Hall Theatre.

It was a poignant evening in Autumn sunshine as patrons gathered in the Theatre for the first time since a play in February 2020.

The exhibition featured writing, paintings, woodturning, textiles, photography, ceramics, mixed media and sculpture, and was opened by local Jungian psychotherapist Brendan Harding.

UNBOUND is the result of collaborative, taking inspiration from the experience of living through the Covid-19 pandemic and finding hope despite the loss, grief, and uncertainty.

Artist Nuala O'Connor said: "We had already decided that we would make this exhibition in response to our pandemic experiences to each of us so while the linking theme is the pandemic and how it affected us, we each came at it in very individualistic ways. I lost my father who contracted Covid-19 during the pandemic in hospital and three other members of the group lost their father, son, brother, so we've had a lot of personal tragedy.

We have woven that into the working as best as we could dealing with grief, when you cannot see anybody it's a different experience to dealing with it when you can be in company, so it has been a very strange time for a lot of us in the group."

Group 8 is comprised of eight visual artists and two writers: Joyce Little - visual and multimedia artist; Tommy Campbell - sculptor and woodturner; Lily Kelly - visual artist; Grellan Ganly - visual artist; Una Spain - visual artist; Nuala O'Connor - writer; Zara Little-Campbell - writer; John Soden - painter; Walter Coughlan - ceramicist and Fiona Ormsby - textile designer.

Nuala stated: "We got together in 2009 because we saw a gap in the town for a group of professional artists to come together and create a cultural offering for the town. Art has always made artists that cannot help themselves. It is compulsive,



Pictured on Culture Night of the opening at UNBOUND exhibition (from left to right: Grellan Ganly, Lily Kelly, Fiona Ormsby, Zara Little-Campbell, Tommy Campbell, Joyce Little, Una Spain, Nuala O'Connor, John Soden and Walter Coughlan.

it is part of who we are, it is not just an add-on to our lives, it's who we are and so we all continue to produce art during these strange times."

Nuala added: "I am just so impressed and sort of burned up by the fact that there are so many talented fellow artists in the town and that we enjoy each other's work just as much as each other's company."

They were able to set up the event in the Town Hall theatre and turn the space into their own. They were thrilled to experience audience participation throughout the event that was sponsored by Galway County Council.

Nuala commented: "Loads of people came through to see the art and it was just so nice to see them and overhear the conversations between people about what they had enjoyed in the exhibition, so that is heartening for us all."

By Jack Treacy



Elizabeth Affolter on Harp, and Steven Boyle on Guitar

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IMMUNE HEALTH FOR WINTER



When the white blood cells detect “invaders” such as viruses, bacteria of fungi, the body mounts a natural immune response by producing antibodies which bind to pathogens, killing them preventing infection and disease.

In order for the immune system to do this effectively, it requires essential nutrients to function optimally.

As the long winter evenings are starting to set in and the fires may soon be lit it's time to consider boosting our immune systems to help prevent colds, flus and viruses. Nutritional Therapist Anne Quirke has some advice for you as we head into the long nights of Winter.

For optimal health, it's important to eat a well-balanced varied diet rich in vegetables, fruit, wholegrains and good quality proteins (organic eggs, chicken, turkey, fish, lean red meat, beans, peas, lentils), nuts and seeds, olive oil and coconut oil. And while we all know on some level that making dietary improvements and cooking more from scratch is the ideal way to increase our nutrient intake, it's not always possible in our busy lives. It's also important to note that at certain times of year, our immune system needs additional support, so finding other ways to support our immune system is important.

We all know that eating well all of the time is not always possible so it's important during the year to make up any dietary shortfalls with supplementation, especially coming into the winter months.

IMMUNE SYSTEM

The immune system is super interesting but so complex. Did you know that 75% of our immune system is in our gut and it is considered to be the protective barrier between the outside world and our blood stream? Now you might wonder where in the gut our immune system is? Well, it's simple really, there are immune cells that line the walls of the entire digestive tract but the majority of these immune cells are found in the small intestine where the absorption of food occurs. The remainder of the immune cells are found in the blood stream, spleen, and lymph nodes.

The cells of the immune system e.g. the white blood cells are like the soldiers protecting the castle, constantly on surveillance keeping the enemies out.

IMMUNE BOOSTERS

One nutrient commonly associated with boosting immunity is **Zinc**. It works to help increase the production of white blood cells, decrease symptoms of the common cold and promote wound healing. Foods rich in zinc are pumpkin seeds, pumpkin seed butter, cashew nuts and oysters.

Vitamin C is well known for its role in collagen formation in ligaments, tendons and skin but it is also an anti-viral which supports antibody production and enhances the function of some white blood cells. Good sources of vitamin C are citrus fruits, peppers, strawberries, blackcurrants, thyme, parsley, spinach and kale.

Quercetin is not the most commonly known immune boosting nutrient, but it is the most extensively researched flavonoid. Found in citrus fruits, apples, parsley, onions and even red wine, quercetin is a potent anti-viral which supports the immune system by helping the production of antibodies. Studies have found that Quercetin has been shown to inhibit both viral replication and infectivity.



Now that our Summer is over, and there's little chance left to get any more **Vitamin D** from sunlight, it might be a good time to top up with a supplement to help prevent the winter blues. It's a well known fact that Vitamin D helps with calcium absorption and is needed for healthy bones but it also has essential roles in immunity like fighting infection. Ballinasloe based supplement company Macánta Nutrition do a fantastic blend of the above nutrients called Quercetin Complex which makes it an ideal immune boosting formula. Their Quercetin Complex contains added Zinc, Vitamin C and Vitamin D.

ECHINACEA



Another popular immune support product is the herbal tincture Echinacea. Widely advertised every year, it is said to help boost the production of the white blood cells, which in turn can help with the prevention and symptoms of colds, flus and respiratory tract infections. Irish botanica and A. Vogel are both popular brands.



MANUKA HONEY

Manuka Honey has antibacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits. Unlike some nutrients it has never gone out of fashion and is still very popular today as an immune support. Manuka honey can be taken off the

spoon or mixed in to porridge and is also available in an elixir by Comvita.

Olive leaf extract from the leaves of the olive plant is particularly good for coughs, colds, asthma, fungal infections and has antibacterial and antiviral benefits. Tera Nova do a capsule version and Natures Answer comes in a liquid.

HEIGHT OF HEALTH

Anne and the team at Height of Health, Ballinasloe's newest Health Store are happy to offer their advice or answer any questions you may have about your own or your family's immune health. The store on Dunlo St. is open from 10-6 Monday to Saturday. Feel free to pop in and chat with us at Height of Health where you will get expert nutritional and supplement advice.



Killimor born Anne is a qualified nutritional therapist with 10 years' experience in the area of natural health. Drop in to Height of Health on Dunlo St. to speak to her and the team.



Pictured at the presentation of €3,000 from the Credit Union social fund to Scoil Ui Cheithearnaigh pitch development is Marian Brady BCU chairperson & Ruairi O'Hanlan with pupils from rang 3.



Presentation of €1,000 to Ballinasloe Golf Club, Club President Johnny Hurley and BCU Chairperson Marian Brady.



Jackie Flannery, centre, being presented with Ballinasloe GAA Bingo Jackpot of €5,000 by Gerry Seale, Christine Kenny and Therese Dillon from Bingo with members of the Club Nursery Group.



Above are pictures from a recent Sponsored Kayak, where funds were raised for East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre. A fantastic day was had by all. Many thanks to Ballinasloe Civil Defence for all their guidance and support on and before the event. Also, to Emily Gavin (Connacht Rugby) and Ultan Dillane (Connaught Rugby) for coming out supporting us also.



(L to R)
Kitty Tuohy and
Edel Kelly,
who undertook a
fundraising walk
to raise funds for
East Galway and
Midlands Cancer
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Alan Naughton, M6 Motors (Main Sponsor of Ballinasloe G.C. Festival of Golf) presenting a cheque to Mary Barrett & Noreen Kenny members of the organising committee.



A protest demonstration against the stoppage of Bus Eireann public bus services on route 20/x20 was held recently outside the Emerald Ballroom. See page 19 for more details.



Blaithín & Ms. Carol McCann with Cllr Evelyn Parsons mounting a local Anti-Litter Awareness Initiative, with student creative artwork placed on display throughout Ballinasloe Town. Selection of pupils' posters above.



Donnchadh Duane pictured with grandparents Joe and Rita Duane after his win in the Optimist dinghy bronze fleet at the Lough Ree Yacht Club annual Regatta in August 2021.



It was a lucky week for two residents lately as they won €4,000 in Ballinasloe GAA's Lotto. Declan and Helen Harney from Ruane were the lucky winners and were presented with their cheques by Chairman, Paul Madden, Officers and the Under 14 Girls Football team. The Ballinasloe GAA Lotto continues every week, you can enter the lotto on the club's website, you can enter for one draw or multiple draws up to a full year, the jackpot is now at €3,000.



John Hurley Jnr. Captain Ballinasloe Golf Club pictured presenting his Captain's Prize to the overall winner Brendan Naughton (on left).



Pictured at the presentation of free hand sanitiser by Supervalu Ballinasloe for the summer soccer camp are L to R: Michael Riddell club committee member, Fergal Dunne Supervalu Ballinasloe, Eddie Kelly Supervalu Ballinasloe, Ellen Egan club treasurer and Johnny Walsh club development co-ordinator.



Three Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, who joined the Order in Portiuncula Hospital in 1949, celebrated their Platinum Jubilee of their professions, in the Ballinasloe Hospital with a special Mass celebrated by Fr. Paddy Kenny, PP New Inn. The three nursing sisters were professed in 1951 and worked in Portiuncula, Guilford, Surrey, UK; Zambia, New Zealand, Nigeria and Australia during their seventy years in the Order. Photo shows, from left: Sr. Helena Mitchell, Ballinamore Bridge, Ballinasloe; Sr. Sarah Duggan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary and Sr. Margaret Mulligan, Glinsk, Co. Galway with their 70th Jubilee cake.



U12 girls' soccer team members: Ava Ryder, Ciara Gately, Emily Daly and Lily Kilkenny



Tom Cafferkey became the first Ballinasloe golfer in almost 20 years to win a Connacht Golf Singles Title when he won the Connacht Golf Close (under 17) Championship.



Some of the staff of St. Brigid's Hospital enjoying a break in the 1960's. From left: Florence Twohig, Anne Dunne, Mary Mitchell, Kate Killilea, Brendan Greaney, Teresa Kenny, Eileen O'Sullivan and Mary Noone.



Congratulations to Jessie Collieran who won Special Merit in the senior category of the Texaco Art Competition. Jessie's work entitled Half of Me is an impressive example of this exceptional student's talent!

Since 1889, with the formation of the GAA in town, there has been a significant following for Gaelic games, men and in latter year women's football and indeed camogie, with Ballinasloe always being very welcoming to homecoming teams-victors or vanquished.

Countless of memories from glorious homecomings after mighty Croke Park victories, in the Square or in latter years in the Fair Green, in 2017, with the Senior and Minor Hurlers on Mondays after All-Irelands pepper most heads.

The last few seasons though have been testing for the die-hard supporters and a group led by long-serving GAA Supporter, Joe Kelly Senior, of Society Street, have set up a publicity campaign to remind the Games Administrators that the tradition of teams stopping and being feted and welcomed West into the County, as the principal county town won't be let go for more modern processes.

There was a sense of bewilderment to Galway's All-Ireland Camogie win, in early September, when groups of supporters huddled at Creagh and the top of the Square to applaud and cheer the cavalcade as it passed through the town, but did not stop.

Secretary of the Galway Camogie Board, Ann Kearney explained that due to COVID restrictions the squad victory bus and cavalcade only was stopping (as is their tradition) in the village of the Captain - in Mullagh. "We received a call on Monday from Senator Dolan to see if we would come through the town in cavalcade for the supporters-which we were happy to do-but due to the restrictions it was not possible for anything more formal and we received a very enthusiastic welcome."

GAA County Chair Pat Kearney, was at pains to point out that the town, or the East Galway supporters, are not being snubbed when he outlined that in 2019 after the Minors won, they came straight from Croke Park to their Loughrea team hotel and dispersed to their clubs and families after a meal/function. "These are not normal times, with the COVID regulations and precautions there is no County Board that would look to creating a free for all welcome- every All-Ireland County this year came back to a stadium where restrictions could be complied with.

"There is no anti East Galway bias to our arrangements. We plan all homecomings with Garda supervision and I can assure your readers that if we are lucky enough with a win next year, in any All-Ireland code or grade, we will be back stopping in Ballinasloe."

Joe Kelly and his ad hoc group of acclaimed players of their era though are not convinced. "We have supplied numerous 'Heroes' to Galway, at all levels down through the years and hopefully this will continue



Joe Kelly Snr.

for the future. Even in death we always honour our greats. The sight of the crowd lining the streets of Ballinasloe for our greatest ever player, Sean Purcell RIP, when his funeral passed through town, made me so proud to be a Ballinasloe and Galway man. We supported every Galway club down through the years that has reached an All-Ireland final and welcomed them home, win or lose, in the Square. So we are appealing to those in charge to restore the traditional stop" pleaded Joe.

"The First Stop Ballinasloe Group" will have a photocall for the start of their petition signing on Friday Oct-01 at 12 noon in the Square and support will be collected on line also through B'sloe Joe facebook page.



MEDALS HAUL FOR AVA McKEON

Ava McKeon from Ballinasloe won four medals recently including a National Gold medal in the u17 100m hurdles and a National Bronze medal in the 300m hurdles at the National Juvenile Track and Field Championships in Tullamore recently.

Ava followed this up in September by winning two more National medals representing both Ardscoil Mhuire Ballinasloe and Connacht at the historic Tailteann Games which was held in Santry.

In this competition, the top two athletes from each province represent their school and province in each event. Ava won an individual bronze medal in the 80m hurdles and her four x300m relay also won bronze.



NEW TENNIS COURTS NOW OPEN!

The first phase of Ballinasloe Tennis Club's new development, above the running track in Brackernagh, is finally open, with two brand new courts now fully operational.

Despite the shorter nights, there are still plenty of activities on offer, and when evening activities are no longer possible, weekend activities will be increased. A ladies and men's singles ladder competition has just started and will be ongoing throughout the year. The club also has a competition scheduled over two weekends next month for singles, and mixed doubles.

Cardio Tennis was recently introduced on Wednesday nights, and there has been so much interest that two sessions have been held most nights, and this may need to be extended to three sessions.

The activity is a social and engaging group fitness programme, featuring the heart pumping effects of tennis drills and games suitable for all ages and standards, delivering the ultimate full body and calorie burning aerobic and anaerobic workout.

A group of newer players challenged Loughrea to a friendly competition, as did a group of Juniors. Singles and mixed doubles teams also participated in a regional tournament over several weeks at Claremorris Tennis Club.

As the club currently has only two courts at their new site, the club continues to use the courts at their temporary home at Ardscoil Mhuire when necessary.

New players of all standards are welcome to attend a free introductory session

or to join the club for the extremely reasonable membership fees of only €30 for adults, €20 for Juniors and €50 for families, which allows unlimited access to the courts, subject to availability.

The courts will also be available at set times to local residents, folks should contact your local resident's association representative for further information.

Some newer club players at Loughrea Tennis Club L-R Ciara Cormican, Alma Cormican, Triona Waters, Lucy Dolan, Emily Riddel, Ellie Finn, Supha Upadhayay, Finola Riddel, Breda Sammon.



Ballinasloe Juniors at Loughrea Tennis Club

Sports Capital funding has been applied for the next phase of the development, principally a third court, lights and artificial surfaces for all three courts. Pending the grant aid- the next phase will hopefully be completed next year.

For further information see <https://www.facebook.com/bsloetennisclub> or email bsloetennis@gmail.com or call: Garry (085) 112 4197, Joe (087) 252 1424, Louise (087) 135 3751 or Sarah (087) 680 0598 (Junior and Coaching queries).

Current weekly activities:

Monday and Friday - Open Club Nights 6.00-8.00pm,
Tuesdays 6-8 pm - Teen sessions, **Wednesday** 6-8 pm - Cardio tennis sessions, **Thursday** 6-8 pm - Experienced players session, **Saturday** 11 am-12 noon - Junior sessions ages 7-11, **Saturday** 12 noon-1pm - Junior sessions ages 12-17. **Sunday** 10-11 am - Introductory session for new players ; 11 am - 1 pm - Open Club Sessions



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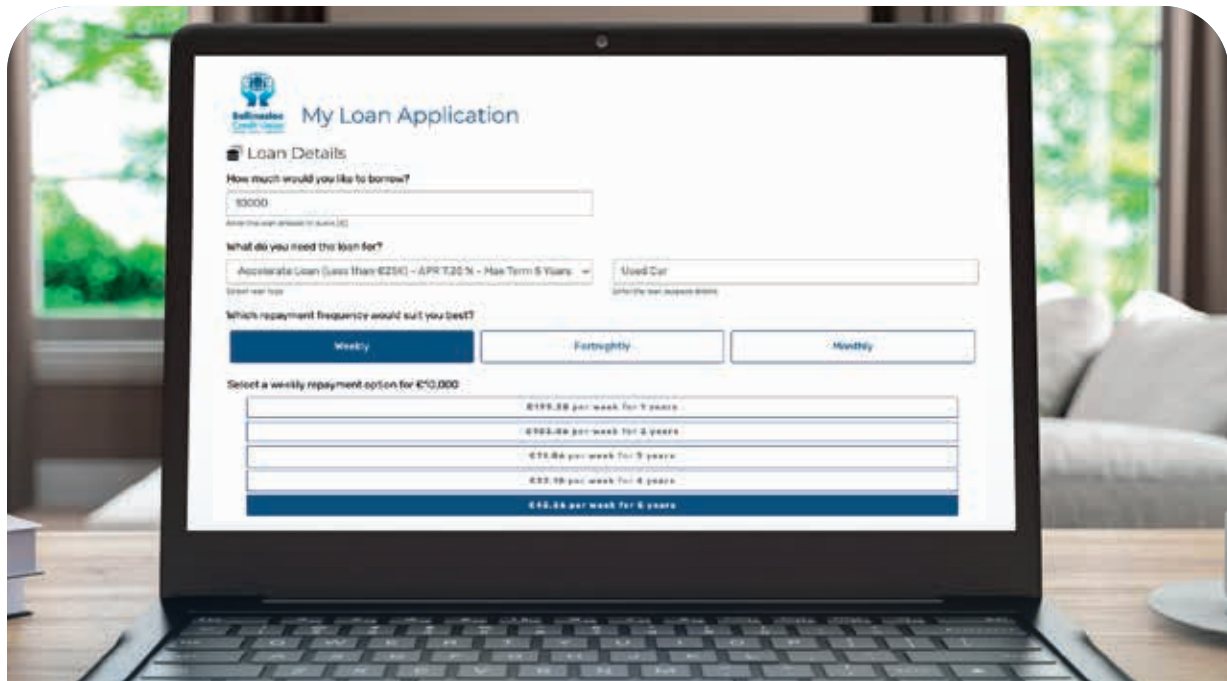
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Members of IKKI Karate have returned to indoor practice since late September, which is very welcome since the initial closedown on the 12 March 2020 was a long time ago. Karate practice through the pandemic was by Zoom classes and some outdoor classes in 2021.

There was an additional focus as the association competed in two virtual international kata tournaments, October 2020 and July 2021, organised by the IKIF headquarters in Yokohama, Japan. The 2021 tournament was for U 16's.

Competing in the IKIF virtual international were: Ciaran O'Hara, Flynn Miller, Ivan Stehel, Emer Browne, Lea Stehelova, Kevin Duane, Roisin McCauley, Liam Egan, Nina Stehelova, Katie Browne, Lily Hurley and Joe Hurley. The team took four bronze medals.

Training gets back to near normal for the next season in the Emerald Ballroom, Society St. For more information on classes and beginners see www.ikki.ie and click on the 'IKKI CLUBS' tab.

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Now that the reset button has been pressed, Ballinasloe Walks and Trails are grateful for the opportunity to get back out walking.... normally!

Recently, the group enjoyed the first of many herbs walks, where herbalist Paula Sharkey took them on a journey of folklore and remedy. They were educated about a variety of plant life in Poolboy Bog.

In recent weeks, two of their passionate enthusiasts, Deirdre Boyle and Eric Naughton delighted walkers to the greater abundance of Biodiversity of the local bog of Poolboy again, where their awareness was brought to plants, insects, flowers and butterflies, some of which are unique to the area. They finished out the summer walks by a trip to Lough Key Forest Park stopping in Roscommon for a bite to eat.

Moving forward into October and November, Walks and Trails' (W&T) aim is to encourage walkers to get out in the fresh air, in nature and build their resilience and stamina on the shorter walks of 10-12 km during the week which is on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday in preparation for the bi-monthly walks of 15-20km.

On Wednesdays, the walk is chosen by the walkers, so it can be a lucky dip. If you love to walk and know of a local walk in your area, we always welcome new adventures.

Nearly three years ago, W&T's first walk was from Ballinasloe to Shannonbridge, and this coming October 10, they will set out from Poolboy bog at half nine in the morning.

Valerie Dolan PRO states: "Whilst we welcome everyone, a moderate level of fitness would be advised. Most of the community like to ramble at a very moderate and enjoyable pace to savour the lightheartedness and joy of walking through nature. This walk is especially beautiful as it will pass through three main landscapes."

For the rest of October and November, the following walks are intended to take place: The Giant's Grave in Slieve Bloom, Slieve Bawn in Lanesborough, Aughrim to Killure, Woodlawn, Clonmacnoise loop and Kylebrack. There is a multitude to choose from. The beauty of the group is you can drop in and out as you wish.

It is advised that walkers dress appropriately for the weather conditions. A sturdy and comfortable pair of walking boots or shoes is a must. All walkers should keep well hydrated and have a snack or sandwich for the journey. Hi-Viz jackets are also strongly recommended. These walks are being run on a volunteer basis so your safety is your responsibility.

To stay informed about the weekly walks you can contact the group and request to be added to their WhatsApp group where all walks are highlighted.

Get in touch on Facebook through Ballinasloe walks and trails or on (087) 645 8979.



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SPORT

A native of Ballinasloe, whose family have ran the Pillar House on Society St. for decades and have been connected with Hunts, Shows and all matters equestrian recently won the Irish Field Young Rider of the Year accolade.

Godfrey is the son of Godfrey and Marie Gibbons and has one sister Katie, has just started his fifth year in secondary school at St. Joseph's, Garbally.

Having been involved in horses since he was really young, Godfrey joined the East Galway Pony Club when he was seven years old and also started hunting with East Galway around that time. Godfrey's aunt, Sinead, also has a riding school in Ballinrobe, where he spent many summers holidaying and improving his equestrian skills.

Godfrey began eventing through the Ballinasloe Pony Club, competing in some local competitions, and eventually moving on to national events. There was a variety of disciplines that Godfrey really enjoyed along with the dressage, showjumping, and cross country, he then progressed to compete with Eventing Ireland.

"I became part of a high performance programme in 2019, unfortunately all the international competitions were cancelled in 2020 due to Covid, but I continued to train hard and had a successful season on the national circuit, this along with the results in early part of 2021 put me in contention for the Irish team" explains Godfrey Og.

Recently Godfrey travelled to Sweden, waiting four days for the horses to arrive. The horses left

Ireland on Wednesday, and Godfrey flew out on Sunday arriving right on time to take them off the truck!

Competing on a team of four alongside Tom McCormack, Susan Shanahan and Indya Rogers, they started out well, lying third after dressage, when a few mishaps on the cross country course moved them down the leaderboard and they finished in sixth place overall out of 14 teams.

"My horses name is Milchem Free Spirit. Nine years of age, we bought her two years ago and introduced her to eventing, moving her up the grades over the last two seasons" states the young rising star.

Godfrey was really proud to be part of the team and enjoyed meeting riders from other countries. He was shocked to learn that he had been awarded Irish Field Young Rider of the Year Award for 2020 as he was unaware that he was even in the running for the award and the first young person of our community to do so.

"I will hopefully continue to compete in international events with Milchem Free Spirit and I am also breaking and bringing on some younger horses with a view to being able to compete them at that level in the future. Horse riding is an individual sport but it takes a team to make it happen - big thanks to my family and my coaches especially Ralph Conroy who have helped me along the way." noted the young Eventer.



Godfrey with his Uncle Cathal Gibbons



Godfrey with his mother Marie Gibbons



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Significant Club activities covered in the Chairperson and Secretary reports included the weekly youth soccer academy which regularly attracted up to 100 participants, the Clubs Summer Soccer School which this year attracted 175 participants, FAI COACHING workshops, the successful return of the Ladies' Senior Team with 30 regular participants, at their most recent AGM.

Chairperson Joby Kelly stated: "It has been a particularly challenging year for the club, nevertheless we have achieved a lot during the 20/21 season. I would like to thank everyone including our officers, committee members, coaches, grounds men, members of the community employment scheme and our managers for their tremendous work throughout the season." Joby also thanked all club sponsors and welcomed the Shearwater Hotel on board as the new Main Club Sponsor.

The Club Secretary, Wayne Braithwaite, in his Annual Report gave a detailed account of all Club activities throughout the season. Club Treasurer Ellen Egan in her financial report stated: "It had been an incredibly challenging year financially for the club with normal fundraising severely restricted. However, I am happy to report that due to the few successful and focused fundraising ventures organized by the club, we were able to meet all our financial commitments."

Club Development Co-ordinator Johnny Walsh reported that the club had submitted a detailed Sports Capital Grant Application to enhance their Astroturf pitches and it is expected that news would be announced before the end of this year. There were numerous calls for local politicians to make strong representations that the club would receive the maximum grant for their project of €100,000.

Joby Kelly thanked committee member Mike Riddell for his magnificent work in assembling and documenting club memorabilia which is being put on display at the new clubhouse.

The following were elected at the AGM FOR THE 21/22 SEASON.

Chairperson: Joby Kelly, Vice Chairperson and Sec.: Wayne Braithwaite, Assistant Secretary: Brendan Fahy, Treasurer: Ellen Egan, Assistant Treasurer: Johnny Walsh, PRO: Johnny Walsh, Youth Secretary: Sonya Coyne, Child Welfare Officer: Simon Price, Groundsman: Mickey Burke, Assistant Groundsman: Brendan McNally.

Committee Members, Mike Riddell, Pat Campbell, Vanessa Lloyd, Katie O'Connor, Breda Cleary, Mark Duffy, Bobby Burke, Seamus McCarthy, James Kinsella.

Both the Cub's adult male teams began their seasons with a brilliant start in the Roscommon and District League. The A team managed by Petie Keighrey, and Mark Duffy are currently on top of the premier division with three wins out of four while the B team under the management team of Petie, Mark and Mark Nee are unbeaten so far this season with four straight wins and currently sit on top of the first division.

The Ladies Senior team are busy with training sessions currently and the organization of friendly games is in the works.

The Summer Soccer camp, which concluded recently, once again proved an enormous success with 175 participants. It all wrapped up with a fun activity day with four Bouncy Castles, Obstacle Courses, and Disco Domes supplied free of charge by Bounce Ballinasloe on the final day with the club supplying refreshments for as well as medal/ presentation package to all participants.

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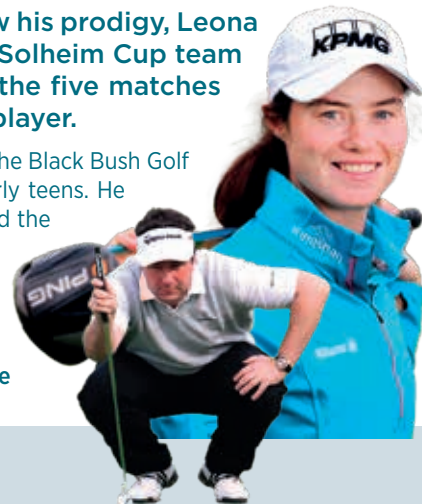
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Ballinasloe-born Shane O'Grady was the proudest man in Ireland when he saw his prodigy, Leona Maguire from Cavan, become the first Irish lady to feature on the European Solheim Cup team that defeated the USA in Ohio. Not alone that, but Leona was unbeaten in the five matches she played in, over three days and was heralded as the team's outstanding player.

O'Grady, who is son of Willie and the late Vera (nee Kelly) of Creagh, is the golfing professional at the Black Bush Golf Club in Meath and has been coaching Leona and her twin sister Lisa, since they were in their early teens. He has followed their successes over the years before Leona turned professional and twin Lisa entered the business world.

A former member of Ballinasloe Golf Club, Shane was very emotional after Leona's historic performance and said "she is right up there with the best in the world, she even beat the world number one, twice in the competition. I am so proud of her and the trust she and her family put in me, in the earlier years. She started in the Slieve Russell and remains loyal to the Cavan venue and the help she got there. I think she is now capable of winning a Major title"



Ballinasloe Golf Club retained the Connacht Junior Cup Title but were narrowly defeated in the All-Ireland Semi-Final by Killarney Golf Club.



Pictured front row l-r are: Paddy Creaven (Selector), Aiden Dooley (Team Manager), Ashley Weily & Gary Rigney (Meadow & Green Clubhouse Restaurant - sponsors of team outfits), John Hurley (Club Captain), Mattie Curley (Team Manager). Second row: Tom Cafferkey, Arron Leonard, Jamie Corbett, Padraic Ryan, Liam Coughlan. Back row: Charlie Mooney, Alan McGuire, Fergus Finneren, Aidan Grenham & Mark Conneely.



Carol McCarthy presents the Peter McCarthy Memorial Cup to Brendan Naughton, winner of the Ballinasloe Golf Club Seniors Matchplay Competition.



Pat O'Sullivan, Seniors Captain, Ballinasloe Golf Club (left) presents his Captain's Prize to the overall winner Des Duane.

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SIMI



Ballinasloe RFC was again basking in the reflective glory in the performances of two of its recent Rugby graduates, with Shane Jennings starring for the Ireland 7's Rugby team in Canada and the sensational performance of Ballinasloe and Connacht Women's player Beibhinn Parsons in the World Cup qualifier in Italy.

Both players represent a 'golden generation' of current and recent players being selected in Connacht and Ireland development squads in both

Women's and Men's Rugby at Under 16, 17, 19 and Senior.

Club President Tom Waters said: "Seeing players from the Club playing

with such distinction and success gives great pleasure to all the members and players."

"Minis Rugby continues every Saturday morning at 10:30 on the Club grounds, with coaches trained in child welfare and health and safety guaranteeing a fun experience in a safe environment. Youth age-grade teams train throughout the week and are always open to new players joining" he added.

PLAYING WITH BEIBHINN – WRITES MAEBH DEELY

I've been playing rugby with Beibhinn Parsons since I was about 12 or 13.

I knew her as a friend long before we ever played rugby together. We both played on the GAA teams for Ballinasloe in the years before the girls team was set up in the rugby club and we had a mutual friend who introduced us when I was about 9. Beibhinn was like a golden ticket when we played together for Ballinasloe and Connacht at underage.

Just get her the ball and she'd do something special with it.

I found it funny when she once told me a few years ago that she didn't know how to tackle people. She was so quick that she would just get to the person with the ball before they could run anywhere, and in her own words 'hug them' until someone else got there to tackle them properly. It's amazing to see how far she's come in the last few years. I still play alongside her in the Irish women's sevens programme, I've known her all these years and no matter how much hype surrounds her she has not changed much. She's still the same funny, well rounded and humble girl, always willing to learn, grow and be better.

Myself and a few of our 7s teammates are heading out to support the XV's



Meabh, Aoibhinn Reilly and Beibhinn - All-Ireland Schools 7s

women in Italy in their final match of their journey to qualify for the World Cup. I will always be excited watching Beibhinn play. It gives you a complete different perspective of the game when you know someone who's playing so well. You feel like your going through all the emotions with them even though your just watching.

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Ballinasloe's Junior Ladies opposed Corofin in their League County Shield Final. It was a tough game and Corofin took the game by the scruff of the neck in the first half and Ballinasloe was 1-6 to 0-7 in arrears at the end of the first half.

As Ballinasloe came out in the second half, they held the ball in the Corofin end of the pitch for most of the remainder of the game. An impressive performance by the local girls, saw them hold Corofin scoreless in the second half with a final score line of 1-17 to 1-6.

This win will surely put the girls, captained by Francis Twohig, in good stead as they head into their championship campaign.

The U14 Galway North Academy has been taking place throughout the Summer in Lough George and St. Jarlath's in Tuam. Ballinasloe has been represented by three players at each of the Saturday morning sessions, Daire Clarke, Odhran Sheanon and Conor Berrigan. Their player development programme will continue throughout the winter months.

The Ladies footballers had representation at County Level also. Emma Mitchell plays minor and junior for the club. She was chosen on the County Minor Panel and had game time in each of the provincial group games. Galway, having beaten Mayo in the group stages, went on to play Mayo in the Connacht Final and had a comprehensive win, Emma again had a good game time and Galway secured the Connacht Title with a score line of 3-20 to 2-14. It was a shame, that due to Covid the LGFA did not proceed with the All-Ireland Minor Campaign.

Chairperson Paul Madden commented: "Well done Emma, you represented the club, your family and yourself brilliantly, proud days indeed!"

Ballinasloe GAA Bingo has resumed and continues every Tuesday evening online at

eight pm. No matter where you are in the world it is possible to purchase a Ballinasloe Bingo Book from €10 on the Ballinasloe GAA website, it is a great way to have a real-time connection with family and friends at home.

There is a prize fund of up to €7,000 every week, the jackpot being €5,000. If you buy a book and find at night you cannot play, you can still win any of the prizes as your book is entered even in your absence. Ballinasloe Bingo page on Facebook contains all the details, how to buy your books and how to log in. On the FB page you will also be able to enter a draw each week for free books, so buy your book online and tell your family and friends.

Get in touch by dialing (087) 904 6140 or emailing secretary.ballinasloe.galway@gaa.ie or visit their FB page at: <https://www.facebook.com/ballinasloegaa>



County Shield winners:

Back Row: Claire Collieran, Rachel Mannion, Katie Galvin, Hannah Russell, Roisin Fahy, Emma Keane, Maeve Reynolds, Eabha McCann, Leah Dolan, Nicole Ward, Ava Kilduff, Orla Madden, Emma Mitchell, Gemma Ward, Shauna Mitchell.

Front Row: Lisa O'Neill, Amy Dempsey, Hannah Gullane, Ashling Brannelly, Niamh Loughnane, Orla Reynolds, Mia Costello, Lisa Naessens, Toyah Fogarty, Alana Cunningham, Eilis Kerr.

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Ballinasloe Football Club—known then as St. Grellan's—was blessed in the 1970s with an abundance of young footballers who went on to win county titles in u-16 (1972), minor ('74), u-21 ('78) and senior in '79 and '80.

The late Mattie Ganly had been doing trojan work for many years coaching the boys of St. Grellan's National School in the skills of the game. The club wisely set up a juvenile committee in 1972, to ensure that these young lads were properly catered for. John Molloy, Chairperson, Tony Broderick, Secretary, and a very enthusiastic committee did terrific work in developing a very deep reservoir of footballing talent.

The 1974 successful minor team travelled to London in April 1975, winning both of their

matches against strong opposition. The trip had a real bonding effect on the squad and played a key role in ensuring subsequent victories. Following the winning of the u-21 title in 1977, the club decided to embark on a trip to the United States in 1978, something few clubs in Ireland undertook at the time.

John had worked for four summers in San Francisco in the early '70s and really enjoyed the West Coast far more than his time working in New York. The original idea was that the club would play a game in New York on the way out west, a few games in San Francisco, and one on the way back in Boston. But the cost of flights proved prohibitive, so the club decided on a three-week trip to New York, Hartford, and Boston, with a visit to Washington proving exceedingly popular. A monthly draw was arranged, for shared expenses but each player financed their own trip.

Twenty-three players flew out of Shannon Airport in July 1978, a new experience for all of them as flying was neither popular nor affordable then—43 years ago.

The team played five games, winning four, and drawing one against the fabled Connemara Gaels, New York. Football was extremely strong in the States at that time as there was a lot of emigration.

John added: "The games were tough, and you fought for every score, there were no yellow or red cards then and crunching tackles were part of every game. The Ballinasloe lads were well prepared to take on all opposition and made Ballinasloe and Galway football proud."

Among the Ballinasloe natives, who were so happy to welcome the team, were Sean Smyth and Packie Reynolds, who had played for Ballinasloe before being forced to emigrate, along with many more from the area, they ensured that the team wanted for nothing and that a wonderful time was enjoyed by all.

The footballers repaid the hosts' generosity by their excellent behaviour and making the Ballinasloe jersey proud on the pitch. An extremely happy, tired and, undoubtedly, wiser band of young men returned home in mid-August after an unforgettable experience.



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Valerie Thorington, former President of the Ballinasloe Agricultural Show and indeed former national Director of the Irish Shows Association, took some time over the lockdown to do some decluttering of her late father's papers and books and fascinatedly came across a 1920 Autobiography of one Joseph Tatlow.

Of a Train family, the Railway Gazette published his witty and reflective memoir in 1920 after he rose to the position of Director of the Midland Great Western Railway and served a member of the Dominions Royal Commission 1912 – 1917.

Chapter 14 reflects his first visit as Manager to the Fair in 1891 and the railways role. Thackeray, the famous travel writer, commented that Ballinasloe Fair where cattle and sheep assemble in greater numbers, than at any other livestock fair in the United Kingdom up to the Napoleonic Wars.

"On the first Monday in October, 1891, to a special train of empty carriages run by the Midland from Dublin for the purposes of this fair, a vehicle, called the directors' saloon

was attached, and in the chairman of the company, most of the directors and the principal officers travelled to Ballinasloe, there to remain until the conclusion of the fair at the end of the week."

The saloon merits a word or two. It was built in the year 1844, was originally the property of William Dargan, the well-known contractor and the promoter of the Dublin Exhibition 1853, whose statue adorns the grounds that front the Irish National Gallery.

Ballinasloe fair has two specially big days – Tuesday and Friday – the former devoted to the sale of sheep and the latter to cattle, though in fact its commerce in cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, calves, rams and goats, not to mention donkeys and mules, goes on more or less briskly throughout the whole week, Saturday being remnant day when jobbers pick up bargains. For a hundred years ago, in Peggy

O'Dowd's time, in the west of Ireland it was the great event of the year, not only for the sale of flocks and herds, but also for social gatherings, fun and frolic, so at least I am told by the oldest inhabitant. An older account still, says these fairs were a time for games and races, pleasure and amusement, and eating and feasting, whilst another record describes them as places "where there were food and precious raiment, downs and quilts, ae and flesh eat, chessmen and chess boards, horses and chariots, greyhounds and playthings besides." It is curious that dancing is not mentioned, but dancing in the olden days in Ireland was not, I believe, much indulged in. Eighty years ago over 80,000 sheep entered the fair and 20,000 cattle.



President Mary Robinson greeting members of Ballinasloe Urban District Council in Aras an Uachtarain, in September 1991, to thank them for their contribution to Co-operation North, since 1966, to help improve North-South relations. From left: Chairman Cllr. Patsy Geraghty, Councillors Sean Og Hurley, Brian Parker, Lilly Broderick and Michael Finnerty.

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Arrived at Ballinasloe we established ourselves in quarters that were part of the original station premises. These consisted of a good sized dining room.

In the creature comforts provided at Ballinasloe the working staff was not forgotten. Adjacent to the station was a large room in which meals were provided for the men, and another large room was furnished as a dormitory. Two long sleeping carriages had also been built for the accommodation of drivers, guards and firemen, which were used also for other fairs.

Ballinasloe was never new to me, and I felt not a little anxious concerning the working of the fair traffic, which I knew was no child's play, and which I was told was often attended with serious delays. Early on Tuesday morning I was awakened, long

before daylight, by the whistling of engines, the shunting of wagons and the shouting of men. My friend Atock and I rose early, went along the landing banks where we found the work in full swing and one special train loaded with sheep ready to start. The entraining of sheep, not so difficult or so noisy a business as the loading of cattle, is attended with much less beating of the animals and fewer curses; but there was noise enough, and I can, in fancy, hear it ringing in my ears now.

Throughout the day I was besieged by grumbling and discontented customers: want of wagons, unfair distribution, favouritism, delays, were the burden of their complaints, and I had to admit that in the working of the Ballinasloe fair traffic all was not perfect. The rolling stock was insufficient; trains after a journey to Meath-not Dublin-with stock had to return to Ballinasloe to be loaded again, which was productive of much delay; and what added to the trouble was that everyone seemed to have a hand in the management of the business. It gave much to think about. Before the next year's fair I had the whole arrangement well thrashed out, and when the eventful week arrived, placed the working of the traffic under sole control of my principal outside men, with excellent results.

Under Thomas Elliott's management, the work at Ballinasloe has for many years been conducted with clock-work regularity.

In 1891 there were 25,000 sheep at the fair, 10,000 cattle and 1,500 horses, and the company ran 43 special trains loaded with stock. The sheep fair is held in Garbally Park,

on the estate of Lord Clancarty, and the counting of the sheep through a certain narrow gap, and the rapidity and accuracy with which it is done, is a sight to witness.

The hospitality part of the business was attended with the success deserved, and helped to smooth the difficulties of the situation. I remember well our dinner on the Tuesday night. On the Monday we dined alone, directors and officers only, but on Tuesday the week's hospitality began. That night our table was graced with five or six guests, one being Robert Martin, of Ross, a famous wit and *raconteur*, and the author of *Killaloe*.

Another delightful guest was Sir George (then Mr.) Morris, brother of the late Lord Morris, the distinguished judge.

Whilst Sir Ralph remained chairman of the company, which he did until the year 1904, the directors annual stay at Ballinasloe and its attendant hospitality continued. But time inevitably brings changes; for some years now the old hospitality has ceased, the rooms at Ballinasloe are turned into house accommodations for one or two of the staff, and the great fair is worked with no more ado than a hundred other fairs on the line. Not many complaints are made now, for delays and disappointments are things of the past. Yet I dare say there are some who, still attending the fair, look back with regret on the disappearance of the good old days".

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TEAMS OF THE PAST



The First Ballinasloe Soccer Team in the 1950's

Back L-R: Tony Bradley, Ancel O'Carroll,
Leo Bradley, Johnnie Riddell, Des Byrne.

Front L-R: Micky Fogarty, Sonny Higgins, Aiden Kenny,
Brendan Tierney, Billy Vaughan, ?, Patsy Finn.



The First Ballinasloe 7-Aside Soccer Tournament

Back L-R: Sean Donellan, Eugene Curley,
Josie Kenny, Johnnie Riddell.

Front L-R: Jacko Keighrey,
Mickey Gavin, Brian D'Arcy.

**Ballinasloe Senior GAA Football team of early 70s -
that had four sets of brothers playing ! Devlins, Farrells, O'Neills and Meades.**



Back L-R: Selectors:
Johnny Kilcommins
and Inky Flaherty,
Players: Kevin Blehean,
Michael Phelan, Michael
Meade, Willie Devlin,
Liam O'Neill, Paddy
Monaghan, Brendan
Farrell, and Manager
Mick Walsh.

Front L-R: Pa O'Neill,
Eamonn Devlin, Johnny
Costello, John Kenny
Cyril Dunne, Anthony
Farrell, Frankie Walsh,
Sean Meade.



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For the second year running, the annual Official Ballinasloe Great October Horse Fair and Festival was cancelled due to public health measures and Covid restrictions associated with festivals and outdoor events.

The decision was fully supported by the Fair and Festival Committee when it was announced in July. It is unfortunate timing for the Ballinasloe economy that those same restrictions will soon be lifted, and we will shortly see a full return of outdoor festivals/gatherings throughout Ireland.

The Fair is rooted in the fabric of the town and surrounds and there are endless studies to prove that festivals like the Fair enhance and benefit their local economy. "Its absence in 2021 will not go unnoticed by many local businesses as well as many locals and the thousands of visitors that come to Ballinasloe each year. The festival committee look forward to the fair's return next year and welcoming all" stated Mal Croffy, Chairperson of the Fair and Festival.

The 2022 hosting of the annual fair and festival is scheduled to take place from Sunday, October 2 to Sunday, October 9, 2022.

Since its inception in the 1960s, the focus of the festival committee has always been to provide the people of Ballinasloe with a festival they could enjoy and be proud of with many events free to the public. To halt the decline in the quality of horses being presented for sale on the green in the 1980s the committee turned its attention to organizing equine competitions again with the sole focus of enhancing the horse sales at the fair.

These remain the priorities of the current team, to provide a free festival to the visiting public and an opportunity for local equine breeders to highlight their animals to national and international buyers in a controlled lunging ring environment.

"Other activities on the fair green, showgrounds, market stalls and fun fair from which Municipal Authority (who own, regulate and operate the Fair) and other local organisations collect significant funds independently. Not one cent of the finances collected by any of these organisations have been reinvested to support the costs of the free festival events in the past decade" explains Chairperson Mal.

The priorities of the Fair and festival committee come with a price and the committee remain indebted to the many generous sponsors that have continued to support the endeavors of the fair and festival

committee year after year. Without their support the festival element of the fair and equine competitions would cease to take place. It is worth noting that if the festival were to diminish the Horse Fair will still take place and organisations will continue to collect funds from it.

As planning for the 2022 event commences, thoughts of the committee quickly turn to finance. They plan to launch a fundraising initiative shortly to continue the festival element of the fair and they are appealing to the public, local businesses, and the municipal authority to support this initiative. "We hope all will get behind this initiative and make the 2022 festival one to remember" states Mal.



Pictured at a Press Launch for the Fair and Festival in 2018 were Sec Mary Phelan, Chair Mal Croffy, Queen of the Fair Robin Ashely, Michael Fitzmaurice TD and Adrian Ahearne past Chair.

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I was only about five years old when I saw them first. They were sitting on the grass around an open fire, on the side of the roadway leading to our house out the country. They were rough looking men, old women covered in black shawls and young kids running about, almost naked.

I was frightened. I dashed home to my mother and told her what I saw. She sat me down and explained that some people called them tinkers, others called them gypsies, they were also known as travellers but, she said "They are all God's Children. They just like to live like that, travelling around the countryside, from place to place, living off the generosity of the farming community."

The 1940's saw regular encampments of travellers on country roads. The called to the houses in the area for "a pinch of tay or a graineen of sugar or a heel of bread." They were polite women who did these chores

while the men tried to get a day's work labouring in the fields. They liked the open air. Under canvas they slept on a bed of straw or hay while their horses grazed on "the long acre" never roaming too far.

Out on holidays with my grandparents I learned more of these nomads. The old lady called in, sat by the open fire, filled her clay pipe with turf-mould and as she smoked her "dudgeen" she told us all of her travels during the year. They walked a lot, even the women had hob-nailed boots and wrapped themselves up with a heavy black shawl. After getting some tea or sugar or home-made bread, the weather-beaten woman returned to her camp.

Two days later she returned and sat by the fireside, where she was welcomed. She then produced a tin can and a tin mug, made by her family who were tinsmiths, as a thank you for the alms she received. As I passed their camp that evening I was surprised to see them playing accordions and fiddles around the open fire. Some were gifted musicians that later went on to be household names nationwide, including the "Blind Accordionist" and The Fureys.

However, these "tinkers" were not popular in the towns. They were accused of being beggars, robbers and drunken yobs, known for their brawls at funerals and weddings. But I still remembered my mother's words "They are all God's children" and thought "There, but the Grace of God, go I."

Those people overcame racism, abuse and insults to eventually be integrated into our community. They are part of our culture, our heritage and our bloodline. Every October, for over a century, they arrived for the Great Ballinasloe Fair. Some travelled by horse and cart, others in hooped caravans and some in motor caravans. There was matchmaking, fortune telling and the buying and selling of horses but most of all it was the traditional meeting place to join up with relatives and friends, long before the age of the mobile phone.

Unfortunately, society still frowns on some of these individuals, many of who have fallen by the wayside or decided to accept the nomad way of life. When you see them again or an unfortunate huddled up in a doorway, or a beggar on the street, just remember they are all God's children.



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Ballinasloe Urban District Council were one of the first public bodies in the country to initiate cross-border friendship when they decided, in 1966, to twin with the Co. Antrim town of Ballycastle, which was famous for its staging of "The Ould Lammas Fair" every August.



The late Gus Hynes of Ballinasloe UDC.

The idea was the brainchild of the late Cllr. Gus Hynes, who told a Council meeting that as both towns were known for their big annual fairs, it might be nice to forge relations with their Northern counterparts, the Moyle District Council. The move was warmly welcomed and Cllr. Hynes along with Cllr. Martin Lynch were the first to make the trip North and the visit was reciprocated a few months later for the Ballinasloe October Fair.

The visits were renewed in 1977 after a lapse of a number of years due to the Northern Troubles. In August 1978, when over forty Ballinasloe people made the trip, Moyle District Council Secretary, James O'Kane suggested at a dinner in The Marine Hotel, Ballycastle that representatives of Ireland's three best-known fairs-Ballinasloe, Ballycastle and Killorglin (Puck Fair) in Kerry, come together to promote their annual events.

At a press conference in Dublin, in May 1979, the amalgamation of The Three Fairs got unanimous approval. It was attended by representatives of each town's Councils and Fairs' committees, as well as Ireland West, the Northern Tourist Board and Government representatives, with a view to increasing North/South relations and tourism.

At the Puck Fair, in Killorglin, in August of that year, representatives of all three Fairs attended and later exchanged views and gifts to mark a unique milestone. As a result of the common twinning bond, there were exchange visit by college students, ICA groups, hurling and football teams, NFA groups etc.

Former Cllr. Sean Tully, who attended the 1978 dinner in Ballycastle, as Ballinasloe UDC Chairman at the time, said "It was a historic and far-seeing meeting. Numbers grew with each visit, friendships were strengthened, many of them existing to this very day. However, visitors dwindled, Killorglin lost touch and when the Town Councils were abolished they trips unfortunately petered out. It was nice to see that when the Ballycastle party came

to the October Fair in Ballinasloe the Rev. Robert Jones, a member of the Orange Order, was invited to say the grace before meals, prior to the annual dinner. That to me was what twinning and friendships meant."

Mr. Tully also went on to the praise the work of the late Council Clerk, Mary Molloy and late Cllr. Lilly Broderick as well as Town Twinning committee member Seamus Doherty for helping to establish links and contacts in the North over the years.

The twinning of Ballinasloe UDC and Moyle District Council, initiated in 1966, was praised by former President Mary Robinson in 1991 when representatives of both Councils were invited to Aras an Uachtarain to be thanked for being the first to establish Co-operation North, 25 years earlier. It was later acknowledged that this North-South twinning was a forerunner to the Good Friday Agreement.



Sean Tully, Chairman of Ballinasloe UDC, third from left, and Fergus Wheeler, Chairman Moyle District Council, with the joint coat of arms of both Councils after receiving it from Brian Flynn (extreme left), Regional Manager Ireland West, in the Ballinasloe Showgrounds, in October 1978. Also in picture are Cllr. Maura Croffy, Ballinasloe UDC; Price McConaghy, Moyle District Council and John Clarke from Ballycastle.



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The Great October Fair evokes many emotions and memories for the people locally. For me it always brings to mind the heritage of ballad-singing and street entertainment. Balladeers have graced the streets of our town for the October Horse Fair for many centuries. They were important conveyors of local and national events and, indeed, were often employed to sing the praises or spread ‘fake news’ about contenders during elections.

They often used wit and subtle offence to decry the foreign forces of the state and the penalty for singing seditious songs in public was often six months in prison. Selling of such ballad sheets, or broadsides, could incur a similar penalty. Initially the charge was obstruction of pedestrians and, as the balladeers tried to circumvent the law by peddling their songs while standing on the street instead of the footpath, the law was amended to include 'obstruction of equestrians'!

Many balladeers were known to stand in the gutter, much to the ire of the 'Polis', and thus avoid prosecution. They were also adept at carrying a bundle of straw and selling a few 'tráinins' for a penny while offering the broadside as 'a token of appreciation'!

Many of the older ballads make reference to Ballinasloe as a location in their lyrics. This is, no doubt, as a result of the fair and its strong association with the travelling community. Songs such as 'Nancy Miles', 'The Tinkerman's Daughter', 'The Great Big Roamin' Ass', 'The Fair in Bellaghy', 'A Sailor Courted a Farmer's Daughter' and, more recently, 'Rosie Reilly' come to mind. Travellers were the keepers of tradition in terms of music, song and folklore for centuries and a great debt is owed to them. Indeed, their recent recognition as an ethnic group was long overdue. The tone of the traveller's singing voice is distinct, unique and cannot be replicated.

Of course, complete songs extolling the virtue and beauty of Ballinasloe are many and varied. Local historian Tadhg MacLoughlin had two of his own fine ‘Ballinasloe’ compositions included in his ‘Songs and Ballads’ publication in the 1970’s. Our own Lee Lynch had a hit with ‘Ballinasloe Fair’ as did Brendan Shine. The following song, ‘Nice Little Jenny from Ballinasloe’ appeared



King of the October Fair in 1958, Gerry Kelly and his Queen, Irene Gannon (O'Grady) seated, surrounded by student nurses at Portiuncula Hospital following an exhibition of Irish step-dancing by Anne Murray, Brian Grogan and Norrie Kelly (in front, kneeling) in the hospital. In centre of picture is Mrs. Agnes Kelly, Nurse Supervisor.

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in printed form in a chapbook in Co. Waterford in 1835. I first heard it from a noted Dublin balladeer, Loke Cheevers, in the Góilín Singers Club in Dublin many years ago. It was also recorded in 1947 by Seamus Ennis of the Irish Folklore Commission, and later by the BBC, from the singing of Elizabeth Cronin, Fuhirees, in West Cork. It is also included in 'Irish Street Ballads' by Colm O'Lochlainn. The style is a simplified form of the traditional bardic compositions.

famous by Dessie O'Halloran, Miko Russell and Cathy Jordan, was originally titled 'Ballinasloe'. In October, 1940 Pete McNulty, of the McNulty Family in New York, took this very old ballad, changed a few of the verses, renamed it and recorded it as 'Old Ballymoe'. The original song begins with:

***'In the county Roscommon in sunshine and rain,
My pockets were empty, my stomach the same,
I met a colleen and says she, "Do you know
The shortest short cut into Ballinasloe'***

and concludes with:

***'The roads they were long and the roads they were narrow.
I loaded this cuckoo into a wheel-barrow.
The wheel-barrow broke and she stubbed her big toe,
So, I carried her home into Ballinasloe'***

There was an inference in this final verse that the lady in question may have been a patient from the then Ballinasloe District Asylum and, out of respect, the song was altered.

The politics of a nation are recorded in libraries but the social history of strife, joys, love and local events are recorded in its songs. Ballinasloe has many such songs of local heroes, factions, street leagues and colourful characters. Will these songs be lost? Who will maintain them as a living organic tradition? That issue has surely been addressed by Ballinasloe's Singing Circle that has been in existence now for 15 years, took a break before COVID and we'll see what the future holds.

While lockdown may have lulled our creative impulses there are still some who have used their time well to continue the old tradition of crafting ballads. One of these is our living musical legend, Bobby Kilkenny, who has composed this lovely nostalgic ballad of simpler times. Téann an dúchas ó ghlúin go glúin. Thanks Bobby. When you get 'The Noble Call' at the next seisiún we look forward to hearing your rendition in good company.

'The Wonders of Ballinasloe' is another fine ballad to be found in James N Healy's 'Old Irish Street Ballads'. No doubt the exhibition of first class pedigree stock at Ballinasloe Fair was foremost in the author's mind.

The song 'Ballinasloe' is included in the comedy opera 'My Lady Molly' by Sidney Jones and was first staged in Brighton in August, 1902. The song is very much in the 'stage Irish' mode and is sung by an Irish manservant named Mickey! While the opera was a huge success at the time, the inclusion of this bawdy piece certainly exemplifies attitudes towards Ireland and the Irish at the time. Presumably Ballinasloe was a random choice!

It is not generally known that the song 'Old Ballymoe', made



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A company with a strange name that came to Ballinasloe, by accident, in 1971, went on to have a major impact on Ballinasloe and the hinterland for the next 32 years.

Square D Company started out in Detroit, in the United States as the McBride Manufacturing Company in 1903 and in 1915 became the Detroit Fuse and Manufacturing Company. Its products had a new trademark-the Capital D in a Square-and people started asking for the Square D switch, so when the business was sold in 1917 the name changed to Square D Company.

Just fifty years ago Square D Company, which already had a plant in Swindon, UK, decided to expand into Ireland with a view to supplying products into Europe, at a time when Ireland was becoming a member of the EEC.

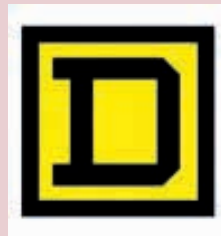
The Company Directors first looked for a premises in Tuam but when nothing was available they approached the Urban Council in Ballinasloe who provided them with a disused building in Bridge Street, known as "The Long Store." In a short time, under the guidance of Town Engineer P.C. O'Connor, production of Moulded Case Circuit Breakers was under way, where the first employees included Gabriel Donelan, Rita O'Beirne, Rose Anne Flynn and Oliver Glennon.

In 1973, Square D constructed a 25,000 sq. ft. factory at Poolboy to manufacture additional products while still operating in Bridge St. The General Manager was Tony Ellis, who had transferred from the Swindon Plant and by the following September, when the new plant was blessed and officially opened, there were sixty employees at the company.

A further expansion in 1976 saw an additional 42,000 sq. ft. to enable the consolidation of manufacture from Bridge St. and the introduction of Miniature Circuit Breakers. Over the next few years employment grew steadily as new products were introduced and the volume of products for the US Markets increased which saw a further 14,000 sq. ft. of floor space added.

When Square D celebrated its 10th birthday in 1981, there were now 236 employed, mostly from the town and surrounding hinterland. The 1980's saw a consolidation of

the plant as a centre of excellence for Miniature and Moulded Case Circuit Breaker manufacture. There was significant investment in computerisation, a short circuit test laboratory was added and a Research and Development department was established.



In 1991, Square D Company worldwide was acquired by Groupe Schneider-a French Company. The Ballinasloe plant continued to grow and increased production by 65% to the USA. Employment continued to increase and at one stage there were 520 people on the payroll.

However in early 2003 the bad news came when Schneider North American Division decided to close the Ballinasloe plant, due to changes in the market for Circuit Breakers. Some of the American plants were also downsized because of over-capacity.

In fairness, the Company acted honourably at the time of closure: They put in place a Redundancy Package, Assisted employees in securing other jobs, provided outplacement assistance and job search training.



Employees pictured at the tenth anniversary celebrations, after they had received their service awards from manager Tony Ellis, in 1981.

Front row, l to r: Ken Lynch, Stephen Dervin, Martin Donnellan, Tony Ellis, Plant Manager; Gabriel Donelan, Christy Manning.

Second row, l to r: Breege Keane, Sarah Dolan, Nuala Kelly, Bernadette Donoghue, Maura Dolan, Pauline Dolan, Phil Horan, Patricia Healy.

Third row, l to r: Margaret Whyte, Carmel Lyons, Ann Keating, Ann Dolan, Mary Barrett, Mary Flood, Mary Clancy,

Margaret Dolan, Kathleen Ryan, Mary Kenny, Michael Mullins, Personnel Manager.

Back row l to r: Bernadette Ryan, Marion McEvoy, Josie Dowd, Michael Treacy, Patricia Dooley, Mary Diskin, Doreen Murphy.



Special presentations were made at a function in the Ballinasloe Plant to mark the 85th anniversary of Square D Worldwide. Seated, l to r: Caroline Kelly, Ann Breen, Marion McEvoy, Mary Coughlan. At back, l to r: Tony Ellis, Plant Manager; Brendan Tully, Martin Donnellan, Martin Healy, P.J. Coughlan, Tommy Kelly, Dermot Hurst, Michael Mullins.

of the city and eventually returning to Ballinasloe by train.

Former employees at the Poolboy plant recall the great bond that existed between management and staff, the many social outings and especially the annual Christmas Dinners Dances, the company's birthdays and the awards ceremonies during the 32 years of Square D in Ballinasloe.

The town is still reeling from the closure of Square D. Efforts to find a large employer by State Agencies have failed and one wonders if we will ever see a plant employing up to 520 people ever again in our town. We live in hope.

But the bombshell of the Square D closure rocked Ballinasloe and affected so many businesses and families. The workforce was very local and was drawn from the hinterland of 15-20 miles around Ballinasloe. There were many family connections within the company and many employees met their future partners in the workplace. Square D always had a close relationship with the schools and training centres in the area and provided work experience and summer employment for many students over the years.

Square D was always very supportive of local clubs and charitable organisations, particularly Portiuncula Hospital. In September of 1990, the Square D Foundation in the US donated \$100,000.00 to Portiuncula for the provision of medical equipment.

Over the years there were very many memorable events organised by the Sports and Social Club, including an amazing children and parents' summer outing which entailed travelling to Shannon Airport by bus, taking an Aer Lingus flight to Dublin, collected by bus Eireann for a tour



Pictured at one of the Square D Christmas Dinner Dances were, back, l to r: Pat Ward, Bruno Burke, Tony Darcy and Brendan Tully. Seated, l to r: Noreen Curley, Mary Kenny, Yvonne Dolan and Marion McEvoy.

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By the mid-1960s the traditional music festivals (Fleadhanna Ceoil) organized by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann were attracting – in addition to the genuine aficionados – a raffish, hippyish following whose sexual mores were rumoured to be at odds with the Sixth Commandment. When Ballinasloe was chosen to host the 1965 All-Ireland Fleadh the announcement was generally welcomed as the benefit to the local economy would be second only to that of the October Fair, and the hippies, it was felt, would add colour to the event.

The Bishop of Clonfert, Thomas Ryan, however, was of a different mind. He viewed with horror the prospect of an invasion of his diocese by a horde of long-haired weirdos of questionable morals, and was quick to declare his opposition to the proposed Fleadh. At the time it was argued that though “ladies of the night” traditionally flocked to Galway to ply their trade during the annual horse racing, no churchman had even called for the abandonment of the races on that account. Such reasoning failed to impress His Lordship who remained obdurate and declined to debate the issue in public.

Since the church controlled virtually all potential venues for competitions and concerts, there was no possibility anyway of the Fleadh going ahead without at least the bishop’s tacit consent, nonetheless he apparently felt the need to engage in a public relations exercise of sorts. The Administrator, Fr. Peter Dunne, was given the unenviable task of persuading local organizations to pass resolutions in support of the bishop’s stance. Though the compliance of a few was secured, the desired illusion was never created of popular opposition to the proposed event. Ultimately of course the bishop had his way, and that year the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil went instead to Thurles, greatly, one supposes, to the chagrin of Ballinasloe’s licensed vintners.

A native of rural Tipperary, Thomas Ryan was born on 8th February 1915. After initial training at St. Patrick’s College, Thurles, he progressed to the Irish College in Rome where a classmate of his was Jim Reynolds of Killoran who later worked as a department of agriculture official and resided for many years with his family at Birchgrove. Having been conferred with Doctorates in Theology and Canon Law, in 1943 Ryan was appointed Secretary of the

Apostolic Delegation in Istanbul. His duties included acting as secretary to Cardinal Roncalli, the future Pope John XIII, to whom he was credited with teaching English. Following the translation of William Philbin, Bishop of Clonfert, to Down and Connor in 1962, Thomas Ryan was appointed his successor and installed in Loughrea on 14th July 1962, becoming at the same time ex officio parish priest of Ballinasloe.

It was Bishop Ryan’s misfortune to be remembered chiefly for his involvement in the infamous “Late Late Nightie” controversy of 1966, whose details are too well known to be repeated here. Suffice it to say that guilty of a gross error of judgement in confusing poor taste with immorality, he thereby incurred ridicule that was to haunt him for the rest of his days. To his credit it should be said that he eventually acknowledged his mistake and offered an apology to the woman at the centre of the affair.

An amusing incident occurred in the 1970s illustrative of Thomas Ryan’s mentality. The musical “Fiddler on the Roof” was presented at Garbally College and included in the cast was



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Fr. Joe Cassidy. Amongst the audience at one performance was the bishop who took grave exception to a perfectly innocent scene depicting Fr. Cassidy clad in an ankle-length nightshirt sharing an exceptionally wide double bed with a female member of the teaching staff. After the final curtain His Lordship conveyed his deep displeasure with the priest in question through a third party. The recipient of the episcopal censure is reported to have saucily retorted: "Go back and tell Tom Ryan that if (naming the teacher's husband) has no problem with me being in bed with his wife I don't see why he should object!"

When Thomas Ryan began his term as Bishop of Clonfert he had been a quarter of a century absent from the country and lacked pastoral experience. He also laboured under the added burden of prudery acquired perhaps during his student years in Rome or inherited from his youth in the Ireland of the 1930s.. The decade he now found himself in was one in which the influence of organized religion was waning, and clerical pronouncements were no longer received with unquestioning deference. Did he ever manage to come to terms with this changing society? Or did he at heart remain an unsophisticated countryman

whose abiding interests were farming and the GAA? In his personal relations he was of a kindly disposition, approachable and affable. If he had a fault it was possibly his over-tolerance of the foibles of his clergy. A case in point is that of Fr. John Fahy, a notorious eccentric, political firebrand and agrarian agitator.

Fahy, a lifelong enthusiastic supporter of militant Republicanism, had served a term of imprisonment in 1929 for obstructing a bailiff. After some

decades of relative inactivity, while parish priest of Lusmagh he set up Lia Fáil in 1957, a radical populist movement of smallholding farmers, and published a newspaper of the same name to propagate his views, invariably expressed in the most intemperate, vituperative language. Land seizures, cattle driving, and the burning of farm outbuildings inevitably led to arrests and court convictions. By this stage Bishop Philbin's patience with Fahy was exhausted, and in 1959 he demoted him to serve as curate in Abbey. This was the man Philbin's successor intended to reinstate as parish priest, and it was only after strong representations by members of the diocesan clergy that he was dissuaded from doing so.

By the late 1970s the bishop's health was failing, and in September 1979 Mayo-born Fr. Cassidy, who had been on loan to the diocese since 1959, was appointed his coadjutor with right of succession. Following a lengthy battle with cancer, Bishop Thomas Ryan died on 20th August 1983, having retired the previous year.

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A PASSIONATE FAMILY MAN

The parish of Clontuskert lost one of its best known residents with the passing of **Martin Feury**, Lismany. A member of a very popular family, over many generations, his sad passing at the age of 73, caused widespread regret.

Born and raised in Lismany, Marty had a great passion for sport, especially hurling where he could often "be heard before he was seen." But most of all he was a real community person, calling in on neighbours, helping them out with chores and keeping up with the "latest news." He was renowned for protecting and supporting the people he loved in life, while never forgetting his roots.

Growing up in an era where mobile phones were non-existent, Marty would arrive unexpectedly at relatives houses, often hitching lifts, even in cattle lorries to his brother's house in Kerry. A dedicated farmer, he also loved the bog and instilled in his family the belief that there was no training like the bog. A man of great faith, Marty was



a loving family man and left behind so many legacies, always emphasising the importance of family, helping others, having faith and showing gratitude.

He leaves behind his loving wife of almost 38 years,

Carmel; sons Joseph, Conor, Martin, Shane, Colm and daughter Catherine as well as brothers John and Michael, sisters Mary, Bridget, Bernie and Carmel, aunt Kathleen (Babby) as well as many other relatives and friends.

A DEDICATED MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER



Mary Dempsey (nee Quinn) came to Ballinasloe, from New Inn, when she was only 17 years old but was to leave an indelible mark on the social and business life of her adopted town for well over a half century.

Firstly employed in Portiuncula Hospital, she later met her husband, Jack and settled down in St. Grellan's where they had five children. She later was employed by the ESB in St. Michael's Square before joining the staff of the local Health centre, where she worked for 25 years.

Mary Dempsey was an outgoing lady, blessed with a sense of humour and was a very caring and friendly neighbour. Most of all she was a loving mother and grandmother who, only late in life, discovered that she had a sister, Peggy, who is living in England.

In a eulogy at her funeral mass, Mary was described as having "this maternal knack of being exactly what you needed her to be, for you, in particular. She was a strong, loyal and independent woman who hadn't the easiest start in life-but it never held her back."

Her children and grandchildren learned over the years that Mary Dempsey was held in very high regard and made you more employable. "It made you hard working, loyal, trustworthy and honest-it just gave us a leg up" said one of her granddaughters.

"What made her brave is how she never stopped being there for other people, even

when she was struggling with her own issues. She was being our confidant, keeping our secrets, giving us advice and dishing out 'sneaky twenties and fifties' when she knew any of us were a bit stuck or had something costly coming up. She was fighting for her life and still stepping up and showing up for us, while never saying a word about the war she was losing. She never asked 'why me' while we were always asking 'why her'

Mary Dempsey left St. Michael's Church to the chords of Shay Healy's "When you become stardust too" to her final resting place in Creagh Cemetery. She is survived by three daughters, two sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as her sister Peggy and many more relatives and friends.

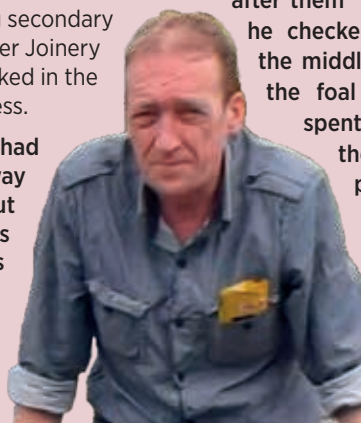
A LOVER OF SPORT AND HORSES

The untimely death of **Padraic Hardiman**, The Pines, Creagh, came as a big shock to his family and friends and the community of Creagh and Ballinasloe. He had been ill only for a short time and his passing was sudden.

Padraic, eldest son of Hubie and Mary Hardiman, had lived in The Pines for almost 30 years. Prior to that he lived with his parents in Brackernagh. On finishing secondary school he went on to train as a carpenter with his father's company, Moher Joinery Ltd., under the direction of Jackie Kennedy from Kiltormer. He later worked in the joinery part of the business making furniture etc for the building business.

He married Yvonne Hoban in 1988 and they settled in Creagh. They had four children, Kieran, Chris, Eoin and Eilish. Sadly Yvonne passed away in 2008. Padraic was devoted to his family and was rarely seen without one of them by his side. For the past two years his companion was his grandson Mason, who brought great joy and fun to his life and was often spotted out and about with his grandad.

Padraic had a big interest in sport particularly GAA and had an encyclopedic knowledge of teams and past matches. He was also a faithful Liverpool fan and rarely missed watching a game on the TV.



His other hobby was working with the horses bred by his father and in a neighbouring stables. He had a great interest in and awareness of horses and would visit the stables to look after them almost every day. Often he checked on a mare in foal in the middle of the night and when the foal sales came around he spent long hours preparing them to look the best for prospective buyers.

A kind and gentle man he was a good neighbour and friend and will be missed in his community.

92-year-old **Eileen Connolly** of Main Street, Ballinasloe was a member of a well-known business family in the area. Originally from Togher, Taughmaconnell, she worked with an accountancy firm in Dublin, for many years, prior to her marriage to Ballinasloe butcher, Paddy Connolly. They operated a very successful business in the town, which is now carried on by their eldest son, Sean, in Church St., Creagh.

Though of a quiet disposition, the late Mrs. Connolly was known for her affability and good nature. A valued member of the local golf and bridge clubs, she was also an avid reader and enjoyed gardening. Though predeceased by her husband, Paddy, 24 years ago, she was devoted to immediate and extended family and was regarded as an obliging neighbour and a trustworthy friend.

Eileen Connolly is survived by her sons, Sean (Ballinasloe), Tom (Birdhill), Aidan



(Oranmore) and daughter Barbara (Ballinasloe), 12 grandchildren, one great grandchild and many other relatives and friends. She also leaves behind her brothers Right Rev. Mons. John Killeen, retired (Ballinasloe), Tom (Togher) and sister Mrs. Bridie Costello, Rockland, Taughmaconnell, who are all predeceased by their sister, Kay Killeen (Ballinasloe).

BUSINESS WOMAN AND DANCING ENTHUSIAST

The passing of **Sarah (Sally) Kelly (nee O'Donnell)** of Duneeda, in her 101st year, marked the end of an era for one of Ballinasloe's most progressive business ladies. A native of Kilkerrin, she met her future husband, Tommy, when attending the Vocational School in Ballinasloe and later played a major part in the development of Kellys' paint, furniture, wallpaper and undertaking business in Dunlo Street.

Born during the War of Independence in 1921, Sally was married during the Second World War in 1941 and passed to her eternal reward in 2021. She was predeceased by her husband Tommy, who was a native of Clonfad, Moore, 41 years ago, but still continued to pursue her interests in business, sport, Irish dancing and current affairs.

The mother of nine children-three sons and six daughters, Sally saw four of her girls excel at Feiseanna and Dancing competitions all over the country. While members of the Cunniffe School of Dancing, Norrie won world and Irish dancing titles while Maureen, Brenda and Olivia captured many trophies, providing formidable opposition n at the height of the Irish Dancing era.

While helping out in the family business, Mrs. Kelly and her husband formed close relations with the Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood nuns, supplying them with household furniture, flooring, paints and household goods both in Mountpleasant and later in Portiuncula. As a result, they helped in many fund-raising events for the Brackernagh Hospital and forged a strong bond with members of the community.

A quiet and unassuming lady, Sally loved the company of neighbours and friends for regular card games in her home. She was a big tennis fan and on her 90th birthday, in 2011, she made the trip to Wimbledon to see her No. 1 fan, Roger Federer, in action whilst enjoying



her strawberries and cream. She was also very proud of her sons' achievements in sports, especially rugby, football and golf.

Predeceased by her husband Tommy and daughters Maureen (Ryan), Aine, Norrie (Delaney) and baby

Thomasina. She is survived by sons Gerry, Tony and Mark (Galway) as well as her daughters Brenda (Keenan, Dublin) and Olivia (Loughnane, Ennis), her 27 grandchildren and 42 great-grandchildren together with very many more relatives, neighbours and friends.

Following the funeral mass in St. Michael's Church, Sally was laid to rest alongside her husband in Kilbegley Cemetery.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER PASS AWAY



Tragedy struck twice inside a few weeks for a Ballydangan family with the deaths of a mother and daughter. Retired psychiatric nurse **Mary Tumulty**, a native of Tanvey, Ballydangan passed away unexpectedly in mid August while her 103-year-old mother, **Nellie Tumulty** died less than a month later.

Born in 1918, Nellie was the second eldest of seven children and is predeceased by her husband Tom who passed away sixteen years ago, and was a well-known community worker in the parish of

Moore. She was also a former psychiatric nurse and had celebrated her 103rd birthday on April six, 2021.

Her daughter, Mary, was a volunteer nurse with the Clonfert Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes for the past 20 years and was a former nurse in St. Brigid's Hospital. Regarded as a very obliging and helpful neighbour, Mary lived in The Pines and was very popular among her colleagues during her years in St. Brigid's.

Both mother and daughter are survived by Mary's sister, Cathy, as well as many other relatives and parishoners. They were both buried in Kilbegley Cemetery.



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IT for Farmers

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETb) are delivering this fully funded course aimed at upskilling those in Farming and improve digital skills in the farming community.

This 8 week part time course will equip farmers to improve the management of the business electronically and includes many key topics such as;

- Record keeping
- Advertising livestock on apps such as donedeal.ie
- Preparing safety statements
- Herd registration through Dept of Agriculture website.
- GRETB have also teamed up with Bank of Ireland and also cover "Digital Financial Wellbeing" including how to use the banking app for Online banking, cyber security and online banking safety.

This course is FULLY FUNDED and will be running in centres across Galway and Roscommon.

Contact Anne-Maria Egan, Skills for Work Coordinator for further details
Tel: 086 0755269 Email: annemaria.egan@gretb.ie



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News of the death of a very popular and generous Antrim man, who made Ballinasloe his home and business base for over five decades, shocked and saddened many.

Seamus Doherty of Eagle Lodge (Domac Founder) passed away peacefully on the 6th of Sept.

Seamus was a force for good in the community. As an astute business man he pioneered his plant and tool hire business across sites in Athlone and Roscommon, he then found outlets for his talent, time and generosity of spirit with various local organisations-Fianna Fail, The GAA, The Chamber of Commerce, Town Twinning Committee, Community Games, St. Patrick's Day Parades, The Three Fairs, but especially in the 80s, 90s and for a lot of the noughties until health and advancing years prevented, he was a stalwart Committee Member of the Ballinasloe Fair and Festival.

Moving plant, hanging shelves in offices, organising lights for the street tug-o'-war, stages, platforms generators, barriers and signs and countless rounds of fundraising - he was a powerhouse.

He always loved the conviviality of good company and a quiet drink or two, or betimes more musical ones in the company of Northern friends, visitors from France, Kerry or wherever; it did not matter to Seamus - the gentleman.

There are very few community organisations, schools, sports clubs in a 25km radius of St. Michael's Square and perhaps wider that did not benefit from his steadfast and regular sponsorship or support.

In the days before Motorways - a trip to Belfast or Ballycastle was a 7 hour camel ride but Seamus could have a breakfast in Gullane's of a Monday and have visited the Glens of Antrim with his beloved late wife Bridie, called to a few neighbours and be back down to Ballinasloe - picking up three machines; by closing in the Dunlo Tavern of a Wednesday night.

He had boundless energy, business acumen, craft skills of the machinist, carpenter and engineer/mechanic and hid all these accomplishments under a quiet, cheery, and

folksy disposition.

He did more than many who signed the Belfast Accords in forging understanding between the oft time estranged Unionist and Nationalists Folks but was held in high esteem by all shades of opinion especially when it came to encouraging the Ballycastle, Puck and Ballinasloe tribes into an uneasy but encouraging alliance.

He loved youth and sports of all types.

Whilst his later years were not without their health issues that took him off the rounds of some friends and conviviality and the death of his wife Bridie and premature death of son Ciaran took their tolls - he still delighted and enjoyed the companionship of his grandchildren and wider family circle.

To Colin, Eamon, Aiden, Maurice and Ann Marie, daughters in law, 14 grandchildren, sister Mary and all his extended family we offer our sincerest condolences.

Ni Bheidh a leithead an aris.



BETTY McGUINNESS

Born 31st May 1932, to parents Joe and Kathleen McGuinness, Betty lived in Dunlo Street with her parents and her siblings Kathleen and Seamus.

As a young girl, Betty worked in Nellie Jenkin's drapery shop on Main Street, where customers have very fond memories of Betty as a very helpful and caring lady.

In later years, she ran the Parish shop where she sold a large assortment of religious items.

Betty had a great devotion to the saints especially St Joseph & St Anthony. She often talked about St Anthony, "Finder of lost articles" being the richest of all saints as people pledged money to him.

A lady with great faith and was a member of St. Michael's choir for many years, she lived a very happy independent life in her family home in Dunlo Street but in 2014 her health deteriorated, and she moved to Mill Race Nursing Home. There she received exceptional care from the nurses and carers where she enjoyed the daily activities and was always ready for a game of bingo or a sing song.

Betty passed away peacefully on the evening of 14th July 2021 in Portiuncula Hospital.

Predeceased by her parents, Joe & Kathleen, her sister Kathleen and brother Seamus. Betty is survived by her nieces and nephews, relatives, and many friends.

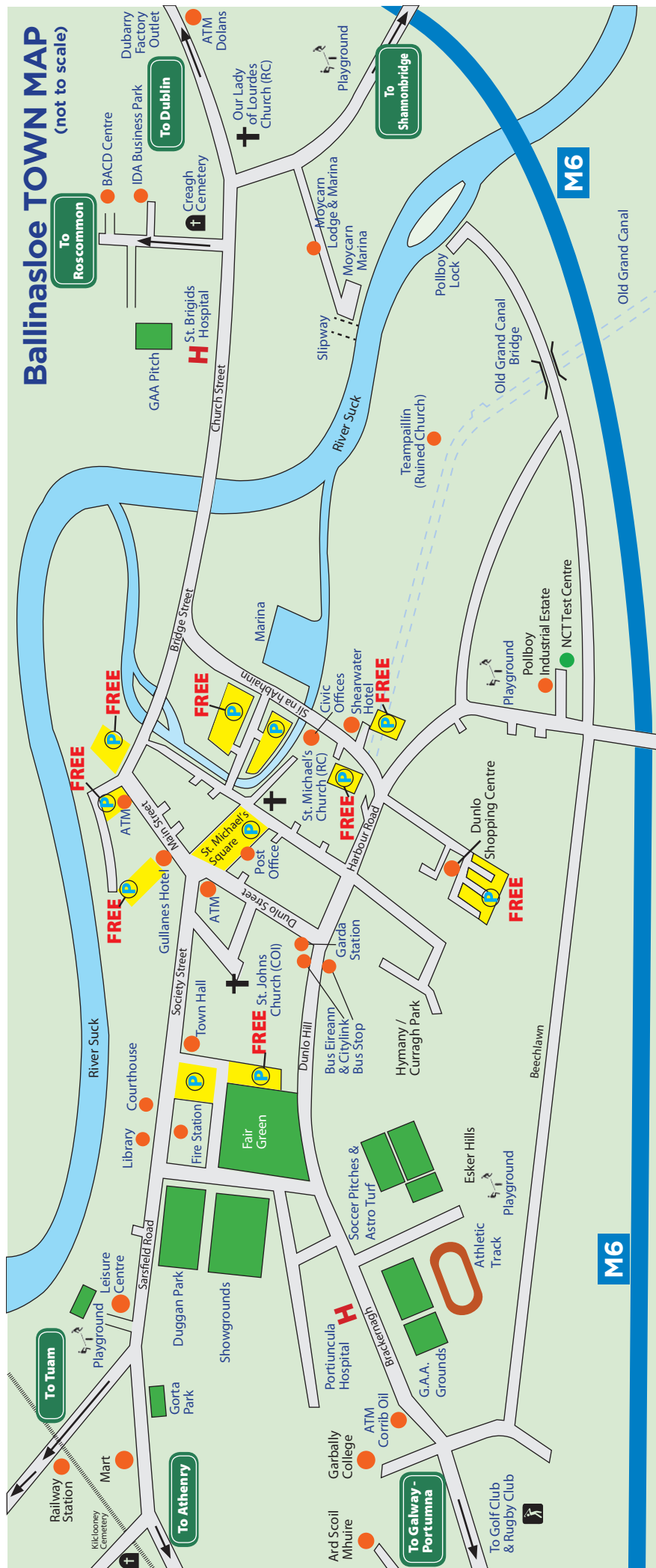


PARISH DEATHS - MID JULY TO LATE SEPTEMBER

1. Ann O'Connor, St Brendan's Terrace,. Died on 16th July 2021.
2. Betty McGuinness, Dunlo Street,. Died on 14th July, 2021.
3. Eileen Connolly, Min Street, Died on 23rd July, 2021.
4. Pdraic Hardiman, The Pines, Died on 25th July, 2021
5. Olga Barrett, Glentaun, Creagh,. Died on 10th August, 2021.
6. Philomena Higgins, Garbally Demesne, Brackernagh, Died on 14th August, 2021.
7. Mary Dempsey, Hymany Park,. Died on 20th August, 2021.
8. John (Sean) Kenny, Glentaun View, Glentaun Village. Died on 31st August, 2021.
9. Sally Kelly, Duneeda,. Died on 31st August, 2021.
10. Treasa Dolan, Cleaghmore,. Died on 3rd Sept. 2021.
11. Mary Lohan, Hawthorn Road, Creagh,. Died on 3rd Sept, 2021.
12. Seamus Doherty, Eagle Lodge, Brackernagh,. Died on 6th Sept 2021.
13. Stephen Carrig, 46, St. Joseph's Place, Died on 6th Sept. 2021.
14. Michael (Mick) Enright, Meadowbrook Close, Passed away on 12th Sept 2021.
15. Alan Hickey, Derrymullen, Passed away on 12th Sept. 2021.
16. Tony Keogh, Upper Brackernagh, Passed away on 16th Sept. 2021.
17. James Curran, Deerpark,. Passed away on 16th Sept. 2021.
18. June Murphy, Greenhills View, the Pines, Passed away on 17th Sept. 2021.

Ballinasloe TOWN MAP

(not to scale)



Ballinasloe History Walk

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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