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AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Issue 01 April/May 2011



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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Issue 01 April/May 2011

RÉAMHRÁ

Welcome to the Ballinasloe Life. As the Magazine is a work in progress, we welcome your comments and suggestions. We intend to improve subsequent editions to reflect the interests of our core readership..

A hundred years ago this month, Ireland was a different place – Casement was knighted, the Titanic was launched in Belfast and the fifth Earl of Clancarty was born. One wonders how the citizens of Ballinasloe envisaged the future and their town in 20, 50 or even 100 years.

Eoghan O’Tuairisc, the famous bilingual poet of this town and the first member to join Aosdana, wrote movingly of his longing for Ballinasloe and what it meant to him as an exile in Na Boithre Bana in 1940 “Sior thar coim na má moiré, go leithsciul ladránach ar strae” (westward across the lazy centre plain). We are by nature of this place; always gazing back fondly, remembering times past. Yet for many, we have lost much knowledge of our lore, traditions and understanding of the heritage, born of some 850 years of stubborn but successful existence on the banks of a fordable river. We hope to spotlight these things in this and future editions – elements of our significant past and people.

However, we find it difficult as a community to dream, map, articulate and agree on a shared future. Much of our last 15 years’ commentary has been about closing, downsizing, scaling back, changing consumer patterns, flooding – our story of the Celtic Tiger. Perhaps it may not be as shiny as the stories of other places, yet we too have made many advances, and are simply less sure about how to articulate or showcase them. Too often the mirror we hold to ourselves in print media is seen only through the prism of Court Reports, Council Reports and various groups trying to have their story heard. To quote the first Taoiseach from the West, Enda Kenny, Ballinasloe must for the next few years “fly our brightest colours”.

This magazine will be a vehicle to address that gap, to provide a platform to assist us, as a community in understanding what is under our feet and why we have much to be resilient and proud about. In time, it will also help to provide our visitors or new residents with an insight into what the town has to offer and what there is to do and to see on business or leisure breaks.

There is a huge amount of marvellous work being undertaken by over 180 voluntary organisations and groups locally, who are always looking for engagement and profile. We will try and help them with that.

There is a resilient business community which employs over 2,500 people – quality advertising rates are available to them, to help maintain and grow market share and we will be glad to profile successful new businesses.

We hold it as an editorial policy to offer anyone or any organisation the right of reply, but we will be guarding the space to eliminate mischief and spin. Hope springs eternal and we as a team, will endeavour to keep advertising to a maximum content limit of 45% to make for an enjoyable read. We sincerely hope that all of us, as a community, will embrace the concept and ethos of what we are attempting.

Please feedback !

Le gach Dea Ghuí
Colm Croffy, Editor

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Ballinasloe's First Citizen Cllr. Pat O'Sullivan

Writes Ruairi Moore



Pat arrived to town in 1972 as a National School Teacher. He was first elected to the town Council in 1979, was elected to Galway County Council as an Area Councillor for Fianna Fail from 1991 to 2004.

During his 32 years of active service on the Town Council he has served as Mayor on four previous occasions. He retired from Teaching in 2009 – as Principal of St. Catherine's N.S. in Aughrim. Amongst changes seen, in that time Pat would cite the loss of all the manufacturing jobs (1800), the demise of St. Bridgids as the biggest negatives but sees the ease of access with the new road, the huge investment of over €25 million in Educational Buildings, the €10 million in new sporting and leisure facilities and development of quality new housing estates, the growth of staff and services in Portiuncula, the investment in the Hospitality sector and the arrival of Dunlo Shopping Centre - as huge positive changes .

He also thinks that EU grant aided re-development of the Town Square and the artistic feature of the plinth was one of the best things the Council did in recent times.

His personal focus as Mayor has been to press for the continuation of the town centre enhancement programme that was started in the Square in 2000 and to revitalise the heart of the town. "We have to make the town more attractive for citizens, shoppers and visitors and we are fortunate that we will see almost €4 million invested in upgrading of all our streets, paths and furniture; which should give the town a more welcoming appeal".

He is keen to see the old Convent Buildings and Grounds utilised fully for the development of the town once the County Library Service decides on what elements of the buildings they can use. "We had wonderful biodiversity project undertaken in the last few months by NUI Galway students and they were very encouraging on the potential for this facility which the town bought about 5 years ago."

He also wants to see the €1.4 million Dunlo Recreation Park Running Track and Sports Pitches opened as soon as it can be finished, later this year with agreement from all the user groups on how it is to be managed.

Pat believes the future prospects are bright - we have to position the town as an attractive spot for tourists stopping off enroute to Connemara or heading to the Cliffs. We need to encourage more young people with families to come and make a home in town, we also need to do more to get those that are more involved

in community, we need to safeguard and invest in Portiuncula. "With our long history of healthcare in town - a modest bio-medical plant located in the Business Park would give us all a tremendous boost and I sincerely hope that the decommissioned grounds and premises of St. Brigids Hospital complex will eventually be used for the benefit of the people of the town".

"We are a welcoming, hospitable town - the Gateway to the West and I would encourage anyone stopping to consider coming back for a short break - between the River, the ecclesiastical heritage, the amenities and leisure facilities there is quite a lot to do for couples and families".

As to potential investors or businesses thinking of Ballinasloe, Pat believes that centrality of location with an hour and forty minutes to Shannon and Dublin Airports, good quality facilities ,a business park and plenty of zoned land - the town is well situated to compete with most. "We have a very progressive entrepreneurial spirit in town with groups such as BACD and the facilities of the Enterprise Centre operating and indeed our own Council Executive - who will fast track any proposals that have the ability to create jobs".

He also wishes the "Ballinasloe Life" Magazine all the very best as worthwhile and much needed platform for the community. 🌱

Introduction



At the Annual General meeting of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd., we discussed the need to try to bring together an umbrella organisation to promote all the positive activities that are happening in our community. This gelled with similar ideas being discussed in other organizations and from these "green shoots" Ballinasloe Life has been born.

Our board is comprised of voluntary members. The sub-committee that has brought this together, namely Brendan Kelly, Colm Croffy, Paul Hargadon, Helen Kelly and myself, Seamus Duffy, are doing so on a voluntary basis.

The fixed costs associated with this quality publication are being funded by the company and our founding subscribers. Without hesitation these people have come on board and I ask you to support them.

The town and its catchment area have a very historic past. Many famous residents have made their mark all over the world. Ballinasloe has a very vibrant and energetic population and wonderful amenities, and our aim is to bring you articles from these and many more areas in our bi-monthly magazine.

I see this as your community voice and encourage you to provide articles, pictures etc. and call on the many organisations out there to share your successes with us.

While hard copies will be available locally you will also be able to view Ballinasloe Life online via the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre Website, at this web address www.ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie.

This is about your town, its people, and the community you live in. Please help us a little, and it will help the town a lot.

**Seamus Duffy, Chairman
Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd.**

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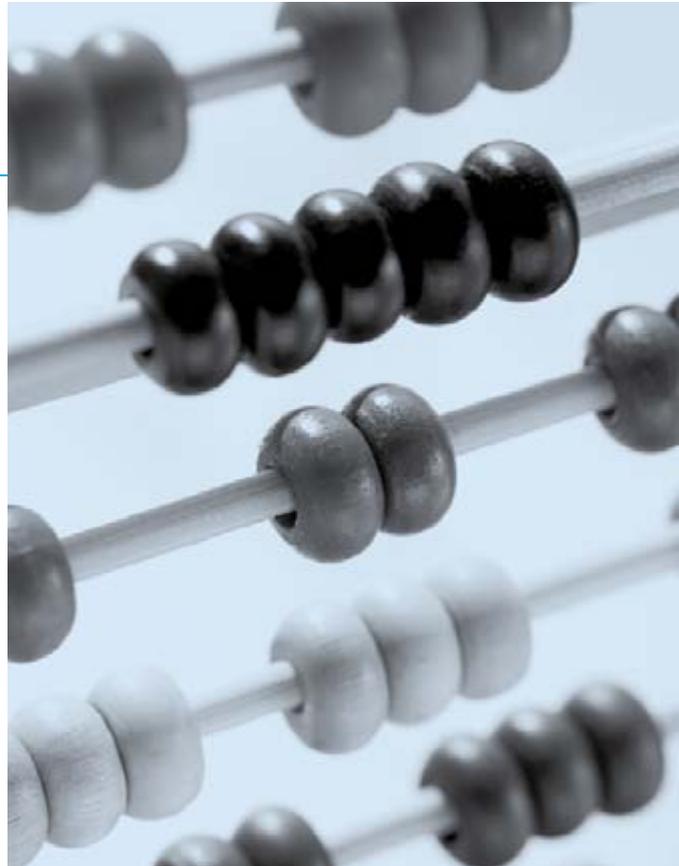
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Top Engineering Firm Employs 30 at the Enterprise Centre



Writes Ruairi Moore

Based in the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, Irish engineering company Mota-Engil Ireland Construction Limited is a subsidiary of the Mota-Engil Group, one of Europe's leading engineering and environmental service providers with a projected turnover of €2 billion and a staff of 19,500 in 2010.

Opening in October 2007, MEIC Ltd. is one of the longest-running of the various companies operating out of the Enterprise Centre, and with the stated goal of providing a higher standard of service to the Irish construction market, the company specialises in providing civil engineering, construction and environmental services to clients throughout the country.

Working out of the same offices is the water management company Glan Agua, which commenced business in February 2008. Offering design, construction and maintenance services to the water and wastewater industries, and under the same managerial umbrella, Glan Agua acts as a sister enterprise to MEIC and the companies often work in tandem to provide clients with a full package.

But why Ballinasloe? When asked why the town was chosen as a base for the Irish branch of the Mota-Engil Group,

talent. "Mostly graduates," says Gerry. "We have the accountants and human resources, but then the rest would be mechanical or civil engineering graduates from NUIG, LIT, UL and so on. We have a pretty varied bunch."

Listing such well-known names as Iarnrod Eireann, Cadburys Ireland, several County Councils and even the Department of the Environment among its clients, MEIC and Glan Agua are responsible for a wide range of development projects around Ireland, and the overlap between the two grants them a rare edge in the current market. But neither company is reliant on the other, Gerry explains.

"There are few water management companies that also offer an engineering wing, so we aim to be self-contained that way. But both companies do have independent projects." Just last year MEIC was responsible for the remedial works on the Annaholty Bog section of the M7 Nenagh to Limerick Motorway.

"The construction works included remedial action to a pile-supported embankment through a section of the M7 motorway located across from the Annaholty bog, with up to 30m of peat and underlying yielding ground. Prior to the MEIC contract, a number of the piles supporting the embankment failed in isolated locations, thus increasing the

Finance Director Gerry Fahy - a Portumna man - laughs. "I'll be honest with you. It's close." He continues. "No, I suppose the Enterprise Centre, as well as the infrastructure of the town itself. The new motorway has really opened it up, so you're only an hour and twenty minutes from Dublin now."

Both MEIC and Glan Agua boast a staff of over 30 people, many of them young local





load on the remaining piles. The key objective of the remedial works was to rectify the failed piles, and put in place measures to ensure that the remaining embankment and piles were secure. All works were completed on program and on budget." MEIC's speedy and efficient efforts contributed to the punctual opening of the motorway to the public by the October deadline.

Meanwhile, Glan Agua Ltd is currently completing a project which comprises of the design, construction and operation of 23 water treatment plants in Counties Galway, Roscommon and Leitrim.

Both companies have achieved ISO accreditation in the past three years, a notable achievement, and Director Fahy cites this success to both companies' flexibility. "We saw a niche in the market,

and we took advantage. It worked at the time. Obviously, the market has changed."

But MEIC and Glan Agua's track record might suggest that such change is nothing that cannot be dealt with when a company is willing to adapt and endure.

Head Office: Glan Agua Ltd., Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, Creagh Road, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, Ireland - Tel: 090 963 0301 Fax: 090 963 0300 Email: info@glanagua.ie Web: www.glanagua.ie



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Encouraging Entrepreneurship in Next Generation

Writes Ruairi Moore

The third annual Ballinasloe Entrepreneurial Skills Tournament – or, the BEST competition, received over 80 applications this year. Organised by The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, the aim of BEST is to promote an entrepreneurial spirit in the youth of Ballinasloe, the next generation of entrepreneurs. The competition is open to all students in

both secondary schools, Ardscoil Mhuire and St Joseph's College, Garbally Park.

All 80 entrants attended a workshop on the 7th February 2011 in Ardscoil Mhuire led by the judges of the competition, John Power, Chris Armstrong and Mary Molloy. At the end of the workshop 13 Finalists were announced. The list is as follows: Lisa Brady, Bronagh Deane, Eleanor Duncan, Nicole Flynn, Emily



Brewer, Aishling Kelly, Rachel Kelly, Nicola Kelly, Kate Croffy, Meadhb Egan, Jacob Walshe, Emer Connolly, Sinead Mila, Jade Kelly, Colin Lyons, Shane O'Hara, Jake Curley, Daniel Walsh and Dylan Ryan .

The judges report that they were very impressed with the calibre of ideas from the students, which included projects from the technology, sports, farming, and music industries.

In March 2011 the finalists will pitch their projects to the judges on the 'Dragons Den' stage, and all participants are invited to an awards ceremony in April 2011 where the winners will be announced and hear a speech from a prominent entrepreneur.

The BEST Winner will receive a cash prize of €1,500 with runners up prizes totalling €1,000. The competition is sponsored by the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, the Ballinasloe Credit Union, and the winning school also wins a laptop sponsored by the Galway City & County Enterprise Board.

The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre is an initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd (BACD) and is now home to 15 enterprises employing in excess of 180 people. The Enterprise Centre is on hand offering affordable, quality enterprise space to individual enterprises, companies and community groups with viable business ideas who wish to become part of the Ballinasloe business community. Visit www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie for more info, or email ballinasloeenterprise@eircom.net

Developing Your Online Potential

Writes Ruairi Moore

Based out of a small office in the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, Creagh, Nicecube Design specialises in website design and development. With over 10 year's experience freelancing with various companies around the country, owner Paul Higgins caters to businesses in need of advice and guidance when having a website designed. "Mostly small businesses," Paul says.

In regard to the genesis of his company, Paul explains the niche he saw in the market. "When I started out it was all brochure like-sites, where people just wanted the equivalent of a printed brochure. I suppose the internet was still pretty new in Ireland, people were reluctant to pay out for it. Big companies were charging serious money for what would now be a very basic website." Paul maintains that his company's aim is to guide customers through the necessary steps in getting a website designed so that

they can benefit from advertising online, but also to show them the necessary skills that might allow them to maintain their own website; skills which have now been made reasonably simple to gain with the advent of simplified software and rising computer-literacy.

When asked why he chose Ballinasloe as the base for his company, Paul praises the Enterprise Centre. "I was very lucky to find this place, and I've been here three years since. For me it's perfect, all I really need is some space, a telephone and an internet connection." And the key to a good website? "Keep it current, it's not enough to just go in and refresh it every three or four years."

Reflecting on the benefits and drawbacks inherent with running such a small business in an unstable economy, Paul is optimistic. "It's much easier to see what's coming round the corner. I suppose I have much greater control over my own destiny."

Paul Higgins
of Nicecube



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Tidy Towns Making A Difference

Writes Ruairi Moore

Until recently, the term “Tidy Town” would not have been one immediately associated with Ballinasloe. Far from its onetime “Best Large Town” victory, the Celtic Tiger years saw the town banished to the bottom of the national rankings, suffering a dismal forty-three of fifty in the IBAL (Irish Businesses Against Litter) league as recently as four years ago.

However, the last two years seem to have signalled a change in this trend. The devastation caused by the flooding of just two years ago brought around a groundswell of community action that manifested itself in many ways, but certainly many veterans of the Tidy Towns movement believe it is a key factor – in delivering over 60 interested people to their AGM this year.

Under the inspirational leadership of Councillors Carmel Greally and Cathal Concannon, coupled with the Council Executive and various dedicated volunteers from all corners of the community, the hard work of the Tidy Town’s committee seems to have paid off; to see Ballinasloe rise steadily in the ranks to its current position of thirty-one. Last year’s adjudicator gave the town’s progress a glowing report, praising volunteers and stating that the committee “have made great strides in developing a sound approach to the contest and this lays the route to future success”.

Currently in the midst of an ambitious five year plan set in place in 2009 and spanning until 2014, the initiative brings together a number of different organizations in its annual programme, namely Ballinasloe Town Council, Galway County Council, Ballinasloe Tidy Towns Committee, Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce, FAS, Canal House Training Centre, and the Ballinasloe Probation Service, all of whom meet on a regular basis to discuss current projects and allocation of funds received through grants and donations.

The plan has already yielded some results in the locality, such as the installation of automatic public toilets in Society Street, the refurbishment of the Town Clock in St. John’s Church, the opening of the swimming pool and leisure centre play ground and many of the national school Green flag projects.

“We are making good progress, with wonderful co-operation from our Gardener, Engineer, Town Clerk and the outdoor staff as well as the many trainees on FAS schemes but we would love for more support especially from the business sector.” stated Cllr. Carmel Greally, Chairperson of the Committee. She pointed out that she has seen huge civic pride connected with the way our town looks and believes that the projects in the schools and with the youth has radically transformed attitudes to public spaces. “In the past Tidy towns was sometime seen as for visitors but we all as a community share a sense of pride when you see people bringing their trash home after a picnic at the landscaped marina or by the Fair Green”.

For future projects, the committee’s plans are vast and varied. Firstly the committee hopes that the streets of Ballinasloe will benefit from extra planting, with plans to place more trees and shrubbery on Society, Harris and Dunlo Street, as well as on several of the approaches into the town. There are also plans to sow new flower beds along the Dublin and Galway roads and M6 roundabouts.

The marina is another of the town’s features which the committee feel could benefit Ballinasloe greatly in its Tidy Town campaign. Waterways Ireland has already carried out work to make the River Suck more navigable, and maintenance along the riverside has been scaled down to allow natural fauna and flora to flourish. The committee also hopes to take cuttings from the willows along the river’s northern bank and plant them to create shaped sculptures. All landscaping efforts along the river and, indeed, anywhere in the area are designed to be wildlife friendly, with the committee encouraging the planting of berried trees and shrubs

to promote the natural feeding of birds and other animals. Wildlife information points will also be installed, complete with ecological facts about the marina area and reports from local schoolchildren.

The minimization and management of waste is another big feature of the committee’s five-year plan, with 1,200 organic waste bins having been distributed throughout the town, last years adjudicator careful to point out that “recycling is only the third best option after reducing and reusing”. To aid this reduction, plans have been set in place for the tackling of junk mail and the encouragement of the use of reusable containers.

The committee also continues to rely on the support of local schools, with students of all ages taking part in the campaign to make the town tidier. Schools have been encouraged to take part in the “Adopt A Flower bed” programme, where the maintenance of a certain plot will be left to students, and many transition year students are responsible for the various bird feeders and bat boxes seen around the town. These students are encouraged to take an even more active role in the process, with the possibility of the establishment of a Junior Tidy Towns Committee in the works.

As well as organizing and implementing these measures in the hopes of advancing the town’s performance on a national



scale, the Town Council also organize and sponsor a local Tidy Town's competition. The Awards acknowledge the outstanding efforts put in by people and organisations within the town which play a significant role in contributing towards the overall tidy town's effort, including categories from business through to tidy estates . The full category and application forms for these awards are available from the Ballinasloe town council official website www.ballinaslooe.ie

A sub-committee for town centre development & small landscaping of key iconic approaches and access points to the town was formed this year under the leadership of Cllr. Cathal Concannon. The group received some welcome assistance from Galway Rural Development to appoint a professional Landscape company - Radharc (who designed the business park planting on the Creagh Road) to create some planting features . The transformation by planting will begin with three pilot areas - The Harris Road, the Rutheford Monument and The Grand Canal Roundabout. Further projects are earmarked for the entrance park at Creagh Cemetery, Plane Trees for Harbour Road and screening of recycling banks.

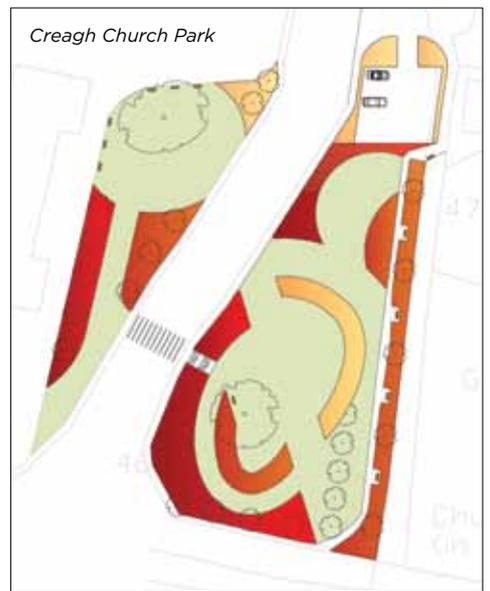
"Being involved in the Tidy Towns should be a natural for anyone in business in town" says Cllr. Concannon - "we want more

business, more shoppers more visitors but we have to get our basics right - and that means having well maintained public parks and spaces as well as attractive roundabouts and streetscapes. I think the positive contribution this project is making to our town is hugely important and we will in the short and medium term get a real return on our investment".

The Town Centre Enhancement group hopes to get more EU and Leader Grant aid for a variety of programmes and projects that it wants finished as quickly as possible.

"the bio diversity report has thrown up huge possibilities for our town the river bank from the 16 acre Convent grounds all the way at the back of main street and into the Marina - has huge potential for amenity and leisure and we will be developing this exciting agenda over the next few years", says Cathal.

In short, though the joint efforts of various community bodies have contributed to a great boost to the Ballinasloe's Tidy Town actions, there is still much more to be done to avoid slipping back into sub-par performances of the past. The committee are always looking for more helping hands, and encourage any local individuals or organizations to get involved and improve the town for the better. 🌱



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Town Addiction Response Group

Writes Ruairi Moore

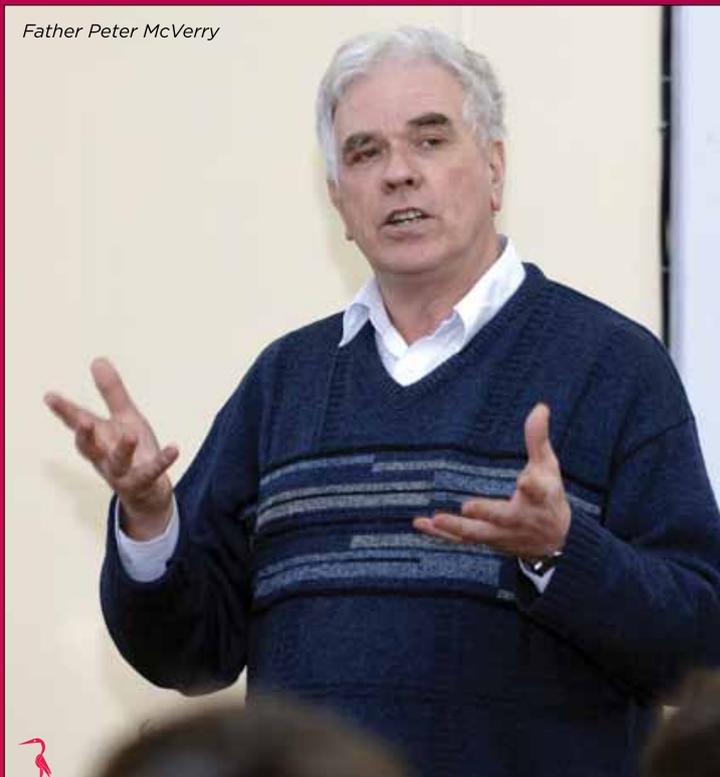
The misery and trauma caused to victims and families of substance abuse is a depressing theme for every locality on the island, but finding constructive and compassionate ways to help is not. Justice advocate and guest speaker Father Peter McVerry launched the inaugural session of the Ballinasloe Substance Misuse Response Group in early March to community leaders and public representatives at a well-attended meeting in Hayden's Hotel.

Established in early 2011 with the support of Western Region Drugs Task Force to combat substance abuse issues in the area, the Ballinasloe Substance Misuse Response Group aims to develop and deliver a community response to substance misuse in the environs of Ballinasloe, and any issues arising from this abuse. The BSMRG provides information and a point of contact for those affected by these issues, as well as raising awareness and encouraging positive alternatives to substance use.

Plans for the group this year include the aim to establish a weekly meeting place for the public to receive information and support, as well as developing a family support group, publishing a group newsletter and obtaining official training for the group. The BSMRG also aims to enlist local sports clubs to aid in raising awareness, and plans to campaign for a local detox facility.

The BSMRG provide a weekly service every Thursday at the Ballinasloe Social Services Centre in Brackernagh, with the information service running from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm and the Family Support Group commencing at 8 pm and ending at 9 pm. Membership of the group is open to any and all individuals.

Father Peter McVerry



Enquiries about joining should be directed to chairperson Pdraig Lyons at 085 817 0677 or ballinasloebsmrg@gmail.com. All enquiries will be dealt with in confidentiality. For more information about the BSMRG, its members, aims or meetings, visit www.ballinasloebsmrg.com.

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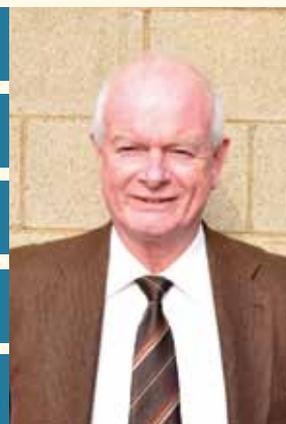
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Snapshot: Newly Elected TD's



Ciaran Cannon FINE GAEL

Email: ciarancannontd@gmail.com

1) What are your priorities over your term of office for Ballinasloe?

I will work closely with leaders from the voluntary and business sectors in Ballinasloe to facilitate sustainable growth for the town, to protect and enhance health services at Portiuncula and create a Health Campus incorporating mental health services on the grounds of Portiuncula.

2) What are your proposed actions concerning Ballinasloe?

I will establish strong links with the Ballinasloe business community and liaise with the IDA and Enterprise Ireland on their behalf. I will work to grow visitor numbers for the Mid Summer festival which has the potential to match the success of the Horse Fair.

3) What are your activities for Ballinasloe over the next 100 days?

I have already sought a meeting with the Chamber. I will then meet with the IDA and EI. I will meet senior HSE managers and the Health Minister, as well as the organisers of both Ballinasloe Festivals and Tourism Ireland to seek their views on how we can grow visitors to the town.



Paul Connaughton FINE GAEL

Email: connaughtonpaul1@hotmail.com

1) What are your priorities over your term of office for Ballinasloe?

I want to see the retention of all services in Portiuncula Hospital, Job creation is extremely important in this country at the moment but in Ballinasloe we need to replace the companies that closed over the last number of years. Also we need to protect the many small to medium businesses that are in the town.

2) What are your proposed actions concerning Ballinasloe?

I want to highlight the very good aspects of this town and it how it can help in relation to job creation but also the role it can play in bringing tourists to this region which is very important to our national recovery.

3) What are your activities for Ballinasloe over the next 100 days?

I will be opening an office in the town so that I can give 110% commitment to the town and its residents.



Colm Keaveney LABOUR

Tel: 087 677 6812 Email: pressck@gmail.com

1) What are your priorities over your term of office for Ballinasloe?

Core is the protection of ALL services to Portiuncula & to protect the little that we have left in Public Services like homehelps, community care service assistants.

2) What are your proposed actions concerning Ballinasloe?

Maintain effective communications with each relevant Department and Govt. Minister to ensure the commitments given in the campaign and in the programme for government are honoured in full - again like the prevention of any downgrading of Portiuncula.

3) What are your activities for Ballinasloe over the next 100 days?

To secure practical development from our programme for Govt. to support S.M.E's to obtain re training and re-skilling for the long term unemployed and to liaise regularly with the Line Minister Rosin Shorthall on support and delivery locally on primary community care services.



Michael Kitt FIANNA FAIL

Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe - Email: michael.kitt@oireachtas.ie

1) What are your priorities over your term of office for Ballinasloe?

My priorities are to retain services at Portiuncula Hospital and St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe and to tackle unemployment.

2) What are your proposed actions concerning Ballinasloe?

To encourage visitors to the area including a major promotion to sell the local amenities and leisure facilities. To continue with work in ensuring that flooding does not occur in Ballinasloe.

3) What are your activities for Ballinasloe over the next 100 days?

To seek a meeting with the Minister for Enterprise and the Minister for Trade to discuss the creation of jobs in Ballinasloe. To investigate if a period of free car parking could be made available in Ballinasloe Town.

Massive Town Centre Improvement Underway

Writes Colm Croffy

Ballinasloe Town Council made a strong public commitment on the introduction of pay parking in the town that it would progress an investment programme in the town centre which would be funded from the revenue generated from parking fees.

The annualised revenue for pay parking has averaged slightly in excess of €270,000 for the past two full years of operation, according to the Council Audited Reports.

This Town Enhancement Programme covering Main Street, Dunlo Street and Society Street is now at an advanced stage according to the Council Executive and should be approved for public display under the Part 8 planning procedures in early April 2011. Public display will include the Civic Offices, the Library and indeed some sketches are hoped for *Ballinasloe Life*.

There have been a number of meetings with the Members of Ballinasloe Town Council, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and relevant Departments of Galway County Council in order to take account of varying views in the design of the proposal.

The current national approach to street design is for a focus on the prioritisation of the pedestrian and the restriction of traffic. However, the outcome of consultations to date has resulted in an approach that makes minimal changes to current traffic movement and parking arrangements while assisting the easier movement of pedestrians.



The broad proposal is for the undergrounding of wires and cables, the extension of footpaths in limited areas, the planting of permanent trees, the provision of new lamp standards and street furniture and the overlay of the street surface.

Approval was sought and granted by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government in respect of advance works on the Ballinasloe Main Drainage Scheme to enable the pipe-laying for this project to take place on the three streets at the same time at the same time as the enhancement works which will be more efficient and less disruptive.

The process remaining to be completed includes the finalisation of the design, progression through the planning process, completion of detailed specifications, completion of tendering process and award of tender with a view to commencing construction in January 2012.

Mr. Kevin Kelly Director of Services with Ballinasloe Town Council stated that "we recognise that consultation is an important part of the project and have confirmed that consultation will continue throughout the project, including a public information session during the planning phase. We also recognise that detailed consultation and information exchange will be necessary with the town's traders as the project progresses towards the construction phase".

Kevin believes "This is an exciting multi-million euro investment in the town of Ballinasloe which is very significant in a recessionary environment and we can

expect a very positive outcome with the assistance of all involved."

Mayor of Ballinasloe Cllr. Pat O'Sullivan also welcomed the proposed project "This almost €4 million investment of Dept. of Environment for our underground work and our own share from the ring fenced car parking monies will I believe, give the town centre a huge much needed facelift to make the place more modern, welcoming and distinguishing for consumers, tourists and locals".

He acknowledged that the trading environment has seen set backs with the recession, store closures and other displacement shopping patterns but is adamant that there are few towns in the country currently committed to making such an investment to reverse the decline of activity in our principal streets. .

Cllr. Cathal Concannon a member of the Council/ Chamber liaison group on the design and planning of the project is very welcoming of the project "...Getting broad agreement and approval from all the key stakeholders for this new enhancement scheme is crucial, getting all the design issues correct to position the town's significant features will be key but if we do it right - this has the capacity to re-energise the town."

With many towns in the West and Midwest in the past decade enjoying significant upgrades and facelifts - this once in a generation project can finish out the EU supported project - completed on St. Michael's Square - including the decorative sculpture at the top of the Square.



RAPID Initiative Revitalising Area But No Quick Fix

Writes Kieran Coyne

The RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) Programme is a focused Government initiative designed to target the 51 areas in the country deemed most in need of social revitalisation. The programme aims to ensure that priority attention is given to tackling the concentration of poverty in certain areas and social exclusion through targeting state resources available under the National Development Plan. The programme also calls on Government

Departments and State Agencies to bring about better co-ordination and closer integration in the delivery of services.

Ballinasloe Town was designated as a priority area for the investment of government funds under Strand II of the national RAPID programme in 2001 and an action plan for the development of new initiatives, investment and improved co-ordination between national and local agencies and communities was prepared under the direction of a local Area Implementation Team (AIT).

The programme is built around seven thematic areas:

- Community Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour
- Health
- Family Support
- Physical Environment
- Education
- Youth Support
- Employment & Training

Examples of recent local RAPID programmes include the music project organised by the Brothers of Charity Services Galway, Garbally College and the Active Retirement Association, which aimed to promote greater understanding and co-operation between people of all ages and people with learning disabilities. A week long programme of music workshops took place in Garbally College in November. The programme was organised by Soundscape, a Brothers of Charity group, who offer a variety of music making opportunities. All those that took part enjoyed the workshops, and the Ballinasloe RAPID programme will be involved in many more projects in the months to come.



For More Information Contact: Kieran Coyne, Community & Enterprise Development Officer, Tel: 091 476 507 Fax: 091 779 082 Mob: 087 952 0999 Email: kcoyne@galwaycoco.ie www.galway.ie



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
Gerry Gallen: 087 7773271
Mill Race Nursing Home: 090 9646120
EMAIL: millracenh@yahoo.com

St. Patrick's Day



Ballinasloe's Fair Green saw an early spring bustle as marchers for the town's 2011 St. Patrick's Day parade congregated under a sky that was clear and bright despite warnings of rain in the weather forecast. An affair that typically draws enough of a crowd to throng Society Street as well as the Market Square, this year proved no different as locals drifted from pub snug to sunlight to watch the procession of Ballinasloe's various clubs, businesses, schools and more. The parade wound from Society Street out onto Main Street, across the bridge and back around by the Carlton Shearwater Hotel to come down Dunlo Street and eventually settle into the market square for a few words from Mayor Pat O'Sullivan.

"I would like to thank you all for coming out, and I would like to particularly welcome any visitors to the town. Welcome, and enjoy the hospitality of one of the greatest towns in Ireland." He also thanked the parade committee and all involved with putting the entire event together, calling it a "spectacular presentation of that's good and wonderful about Ballinasloe," which allowed the people of the town to "banish all thoughts of recession and depression from our minds."



Following the Mayor's address, the various prizes (estimated to reach a collective total of €2500) were distributed. There were five categories, one set aside for educational groups, commercial groups, voluntary groups, sporting groups, and cultural groups respectively. The winners in each category were: Eglish National School in the educational category, the Mini-Rugby float for sporting, Madden's School of Motoring for commercial, the Instep Stage School in the cultural category, with the fantastic Family Fun Day float taking the prize for voluntary organisations. Special Merit Awards went to Ballinasloe Civil Defence and Ballinasloe Town Council. The overall winner, receiving the prize for the best float in the entire parade, was the Instep Stage School, taking its second prize of the day and defending its overall title of last year. The ceremony and formalities dispensed with, the crowds filtered off into the various celebrations around the town, rounding off a day's revelries and carrying them on into the night.



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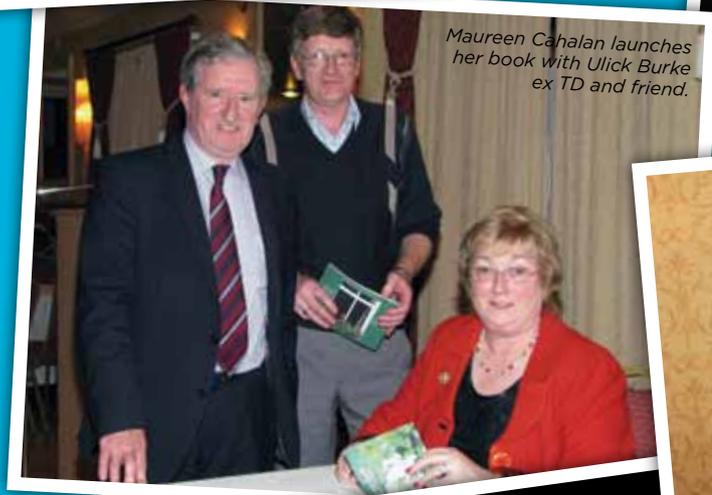
Out and About in Ballinasloe



Ballinasloe GAA Football Panel.



Portiuncula Staff Recent Retirements



Maureen Cahalan launches her book with Ulick Burke ex TD and friend.



New Taoiseach Enda Kenny with Caroline and Tomás Gullane in Gullanes Hotel



Planet Cancer Charity Night



Kerrill Burke (Front Centre) retires from Ballinasloe Fire Brigade Service



1st St Catherine's NS Aughrim, Overall Winners in the Credit Union Quiz U11 Category: Back (l-r): Tom Lucas, Denise Hession, Adrian Ahern and Shane McNeill. Front (l-r): Caolan Scully, Shane Grenham, Jamie Barrett, Nathan Ward.



Scoil Ui Cheithearnaigh Ballinasloe, Overall Winners in the Credit Union Quiz U13 Category: Back (l-r): Michael Mannion, Tom Lucas, Rory Hanlon, Adrian Ahern & Shane McNeill. Front (l-r): Gemma Noone, Daniel Potter, Michael Dolan, Sadhbh Naughton

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April & May Events Guide

Friday, 1st APRIL		
The Dunlo Tavern	Trad Session	9.45pm
Egan's	Martin Higgins	10pm
Maud Millar's	Band: Area Reserved	10pm
Hayden's	Shanna Golden	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music In Bar - Bojangles	9.30pm
The Golf Club	Friday Open Day(Every Week)	All Day
Blakes	Late Bar With Local DJ	11pm
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm Weekly
Pillar House	So You Think You Can Dj	10pm
Saturday, 2nd APRIL		
Blakes	Late Bar with Kieran Sheerin	11pm
East	John McHugh	12am
Killeens (S'bridge)	Joxer	9.30pm
The Pillar House Bar	DJ Lee J	10pm
Hayden's	One to One	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Helium	10pm
Egans	Gerry Flynn	10pm
An Táin	DJ Gavo	10pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar - Suite	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Galway Rose of Tralee Final	8pm
Sunday, 3rd APRIL		
Haydens	Night Owls	9pm
Downeys Bar	The Colin Galligan Show	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Country Night's Dancing with John McNicholl	9.45pm
An Táin	Live Music with Pat Moroney	7-9pm
Maud Millars	Hoppy Bar Stars	10pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 4th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Ballinasloe Mental Health Society Public Speaking	8pm
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 5th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wednesday, 6th APRIL		
An Táin	Traditional Irish Music	10pm
Thursday, 7th APRIL		
Haydens	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
Pillar House	Sean-Nós Dancing Lessons with Emma O' Sullivan	8pm
Friday, 8th APRIL		
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Local DJ	11pm
Gullane's Hotel	Table Quiz in aid of Killure Community	9pm
Hayden's	Buzz the Agent	9.30pm
The Dunlo Tavern	The Ballymahon Ramblers	9.45pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar -Just In Time	9.30pm
Golf Club	Draw for Club Four Ball on Sun 10th	
Maud Millars	Streetwise	10pm
Pillar House	So You Think You Can DJ	10pm
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9.30pm
Saturday, 9th APRIL		
Haydens	Pete Jones	9.30pm
The Pillar House	Band: Danger Mice	10pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Band: Last Chance	9.30pm
Blakes	Late Bar with the Coyles	11pm
East	DJ Trolley Sligo	12am
Maud Millars	Al O'Connor	10pm
Seales (Aughrim)	One 2 One	9.30pm
Egans	Mike Carthy	10pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar - Something Different	9.30pm
An Táin	DJ Pete	10pm
Sunday, 10th APRIL		
Haydens	Last Man Standing	9pm
Downeys	Live Music	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Country Nights Dancing with Gerry Guthrie	9.45pm
An Táin	Music with Dew Drop from	7-9pm
Maud Millars	Duke Box Gypsy	9pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 11th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 12th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wednesday, 13th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Flower and Garden Club	8pm
An Táin	Trad Irish Music	10pm
Thursday, 14th APRIL		
The Dunlo Tavern	Singers Circle	9pm
Hayden's	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
Gullane's Hotel	Bruno Goering Circle of Friends	8pm
Pillar House	Sean-Nós Dancing Lessons with Emma O' Sullivan	8pm
Friday, 15th APRIL		
Blakes	Late Bar w/ local DJ	11pm
Carlton Shearwater	All Ireland Junior Chess	All Day
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm

Friday, 15th APRIL		
Haydens	Dave McGuire	9.30pm
The Dunlo Tavern	The Sons of Erin	9.45pm
Maud Millars	Kiwi Paddy	10pm
Seales (Aughrim)	De Dannan	9pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in The Bar - Paschal Brennan	9.30pm
Pillar House	So You Think You Can DJ	
Saturday, 16th APRIL		
Carlton Shearwater	All Ireland Junior Chess	All Day
The Dunlo Tavern	80s Night	9.30pm
Haydens	Country Comfort	9.30pm
The Pillar House	DJ Alan	10pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Just in Time	9.30pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Buzz the Agent	10pm
East	DJ Byrno	12am
Carlton Shearwater	Music in the bar - Brian O'Sullivan	9.30pm
An Táin	DJ Lee J	10pm
Golf Club	Mens 18H S. Stroke	All Day
Maud Millars	Riveulettes	10pm
Egans	Martin Higgins	10pm
Sunday, 17th APRIL		
Carlton Shearwater	All Ireland Junior Chess	All Day
Haydens	Buzz the Agent	9pm
Downeys	Live Music	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Country Nights Dancing with Robert Mizzell	9.45pm
Golf Club	Mens 18H S. Stroke	All Day
An Táin	Live Music with Peter Jones	7-9pm
Maud Millars	Hoppy Bar Stars	9pm
Carlton Shearwater	Ballinasloe 10k Fun Run	Noon
St. Michaels Church	"The Passion and Glory of the Risen Christ" - Michaelian Ensemble	7.30pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Tuesday, 19th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wed, 20th APRIL		
An Táin Trad Music	Trad Irish Music	10pm
Thursday, 21st APRIL		
Haydens	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
Gullane's Hotel	Bruno Goering and Friends	8pm
Pillar House	Sean-Nós Dancing Lessons with Emma O'Sullivan	8pm
Friday, 22nd APRIL		
Haydens	Pete Jones	9.30pm
Pillar House	So You Think You Can DJ	
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm
Saturday, 23rd APRIL		
Carlton Shearwater	Glee Concert	8pm
Maud Millars	Riveulettes	10pm
Golf Club	Open Classics	All Day
An Táin	DJ Corky	10pm
Egans	Terry Benson	10pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar - Michael Burke	9.30pm
Haydens	Shanna Golden	9.30pm
The Dunlo Tavern	Annmarie McLoughlin	9.30pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/Chill Out	10pm
East	DJ FrankJez and DJ Tando	11.30
Killeens (S'bridge)	Claymore	9.30pm
The Pillar House	Band: Pacifica	10pm
Sunday, 24th APRIL		
Golf Club	Open Classic	All Day
An Táin	Live Music with Last Man Standing	7-9pm
Haydens	One 2 One	9pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in the Bar - Willie Claymore	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Country Nights Dancing with Mick Flavin	9.45pm
Downeys	Dollar Daly	9.30pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/Macey South	11pm
East	DJ Ferg Darcy	12am
The Pillar House	DJ Lee J	10pm
Maud Millars	The Skillet Pot	10pm
Dunlo	Live Music	9.30pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 25th APRIL		
Maud Millars	Acoustic Session	9pm
Golf Club	Open Classic	All Day
An Táin	Live mUsic with Tony Mac	7-9pm
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 26th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wednesday, 27th APRIL		
An Táin	Trad Irish Music	10pm
Thursday, 28th APRIL		
Gullane's Hotel	Art Exhibition Day 1 of 3	All Day
Haydens	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
The Pillar House	Sean-Nós Dancing Lessons with Emma O' Sullivan	8pm

Friday, 29th APRIL		
Maud Millars	Hickory Wind	10pm
Gullane's Hotel	Art Exhibiton Day 2 of 3	All Day
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar with Angie Bannon	9.30pm
Haydens	Last Man Standing	9.30pm
The Dunlo Tavern	Buzz the Agent	9.30pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Local DJ	11pm
Pillar House	So You Think You Can Dj	10pm
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm
Saturday, 30th APRIL		
Carlton Shearwater	Music in the bar with Newgrange	9.30pm
Haydens	Night Owls	9pm
Gullane's Hotel	Art Exhibition Day 3	All Day
Egans	Live Music	10pm
Maud Millars	Al O' Connor	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar with Trevor Kavanagh	11pm
East	DJ Muzzy G	12am
The Pillar House	DJ Keith	10pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Skint	9.30pm
An Tain	Live Music with DJ Gavó	10pm
Sunday, 1st MAY		
The Dunlo Tavern	Done & Dusted	9.45pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar - the Suite	9.30pm
Haydens	One 2One	9pm
An Tain	Live Music with Pat Moroney	7-9pm
Downeys	The Mac	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Hoppy Bar Stars	10pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Clint White	9.3
The Pillar House	Band Kensey 3	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ the Coyles	11pm
East	DJ John McHugh	12am
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 2nd MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 3rd MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wednesday, 4th MAY		
An Tain	Trad Irish Music	10pm
Thursday, 5th MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar w/ Paul Griffen (Golden Oldies)	9.30pm
Haydens	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
Friday, 6th MAY		
The Dunlo Tavern	Trad Session	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in bar - Bojangles	9.30pm
Haydens	Shanna Golden	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Kiwi Paddy	10pm
Golf Club	Draw for Mens Singles	8pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Local DJ	11pm
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm
Saturday, 7th MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar - Tir na nÓg	9.30pm
Haydens	Last Man Standing	9.30pm
An Tain	DJ Harte	10pm
Maud Millars	Rivelettes	10pm
Egans	Mike Carthy	10pm
Gullane's Hotel	Rugby Disco Fundraiser	11pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Bojangles	9.30pm
The Pillar House	DJ Alan	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar with the Sheerins	11pm
East	DJ Byrno	12am
Sunday, 8th MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Country Nights Dancing with Jimmy Buckley	9.45pm
Haydens	Buzz the Agent	9pm
An Tain	Live Music with Dave McGuire	7-9pm
Downeys	Aimee Brennan	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Skillet Pot	9pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Brendan Treacy	10pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 9th MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 10th MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wednesday, 11th MAY		
An Tain	Trad Irish Music	10pm
Gullane's Hotel	Flower and Garden Club Demo	8pm
Thursday, 12th MAY		
The Dunlo Tavern	Singers Circle	9pm
Haydens	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
Golf Club	Ladies Open Day	All Day
Gullane's Hotel	Bruno Groening Circle of Friends	8pm
Friday, 13th MAY		
The Dunlo Tavern	The Ballymahon Ramblers	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music Bar with David Maguire	9.30pm
Haydens	Night Owls	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Helium	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Local Dj	11pm
Saturday, 14th MAY		
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar - Something Different	9.30pm

Saturday, 14th MAY (Cont.)		
Haydens	One to One	9.30pm
An Tain	DJ Pete	10pm
Maud Millars	Al O' Connor	10pm
Egans	Live Music	10pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Joxer	9.30pm
The Pillar House	Dj Gavó	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Mike Carthy	11pm
East	DJ Trolley-Sligo	12am
Sunday, 15th MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Country Nights Dancing Patrick Feeney	9.45pm
Haydens	Pete Jones	9pm
An Tain	Live Music with Dave McGuire	7-9pm
Downeys	One 2 One	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Hoppy Bar Stars	9pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Dew Drop	9.30pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 16th MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Irish Country Music Awards	8pm
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 17th MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wednesday, 18th MAY		
An Tain	Traditional Irish Music	10pm
Thursday, 19th MAY		
Haydens	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
Friday, 20th MAY		
The Dunlo Tavern	The Sons of Erin	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in bar - Angela Bannon	9.30pm
Haydens	Buzz the Agent	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Hickory Wind	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Local DJ	11pm
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm
Saturday, 21st MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Music in bar - Top Note	9.30pm
Haydens	Country Comfort	9.30pm
An Tain	DJ Lee J	10pm
Maud Millars	Streetwise	10pm
Egans	Live Band	10pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Just in Time	9.30pm
The Pillar House	Rachel, Ben and McGuires Band	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ The Coyles	11pm
East	DJ Flip & Foreign Legion	12am
Sunday, 22nd MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Country Nights Dancing with Tony Stephens	9.45pm
Haydens	Night Owls	9pm
An Tain	Last Man Standing	7-9pm
Downeys	Paschal Brennan Plays Joe Dolan	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Skillet Pot	10pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 23rd MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 24th MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
Wednesday, 25th MAY		
An Tain	Trad Irish Music	10pm
Thursday, 26th MAY		
Haydens	Kevin Rohan and Friends	9.45pm
Friday, 27th MAY		
The Dunlo Tavern	One to One	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Music in Bar - Bojangles	9.30pm
Haydens	Last Man Standing	9.30pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Local DJ	11pm
Maud Millars	Hickory Wind	10pm
Emerald Bar	Comhaltas	9pm
Saturday, 28th MAY		
The Dunlo Tavern	Buzz the Agent	9.30pm
Haydens	Shanna Golden	9.30pm
An Tain	DJ Corky	10pm
Egans	Live Music	10pm
Killeens (S'bridge)	Nashville	9.30pm
The Pillar House	DJ Lee J	10pm
Blakes	Late Bar w/ Macey South	11pm
East	DJ Byrno	12am
Maud Millars	Rivelettes	10pm
Sunday, 29th MAY		
Carlton Shearwater	Country Nights Dancing with Nathan Carter	9.45pm
Haydens	Pete Jones	9pm
An Tain	Dew Drop	7-9pm
Downeys	Live Band	9.30pm
Maud Millars	Amber Moons	9pm
Seales (Aughrim)	Trad Session	7-9pm
Monday, 30th MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Tuesday, 31st MAY		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm

Choral & Orchestral Manoeuvres Again in St. Michaels

Writes Ruairi Moore

Fresh, from the resounding success that was their premier performance in St. Michael's Church last year, the Michaellian Ensemble returns with a stunning and evocative interpretation of, "The Passion and Glory of the Risen Christ" by Jack Schrade.

While blessed with strong choral, church and indeed musical traditions spanning from the town band, the various choirs and indeed the famed Dunlo Singers - a new group was added to the pantheon of cultural and musical merit, in April 2009,

The Michaellian Ensemble came into being with the intention of producing The Crucifixion by John Stainer the following year. At the inaugural meeting, where members had the opportunity to listen to the music as well as see the score for the first time, it was decided that the performance would take place on Passion Sunday, of last year. Putting the

performance together involved much organisation and many practice sessions, as well as an advertising campaign throughout the town.

The Crucifixion was written in the Victorian era, and the music bears all the hallmarks of the strict hymnal makeup of the time. Working as the organist in St Paul's in London, Stainer wrote the piece especially to be accompanied by the grand organ which the Church of England were installing at the time. A friend of Stainer's wrote the libretto, and

the inspired collaboration between the two is hailed as one of the reasons The Crucifixion is regarded as such an iconic work and played to a full and appreciative house in the wonderful setting of St. Michaels.

The choir of 51 members, pride themselves in their exacting harmony, and coupled with an orchestra of 23 - marks this performance as by far the biggest production ever held in St Michael's. A project of such proportions could not have come to fruition without the solid and spirited cooperation of Fr. John Garvey and his financial assistance.

The second annual performance on April 17th at 7.30 sharp with basses, baritones, sopranos and altos, as well as the perennially energetic producer and conductor (Michael McCullagh) all expecting to draw a gathering in excess of a thousand. Admission on the night is FREE.



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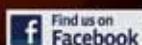
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(Almost) Behind the Scenes at Ballinasloe Musical Society



Writes Ruairi Moore

The Ballinasloe Musical Society came into being following a choir practice and discussion between the then choir mistress and parish priest in 1923. A committee was formed under Lavinia “Breezy” Sheridan and musicals were staged annually in what would become the Town Hall Theatre, the very first of these being ‘Trial by Jury’.

The Society’s mission has always been to promote and produce live musical theatre in the town, and with many locals treading the boards down through the years, the members of the society have helped in keeping live amateur theatre alive and well in Ballinasloe, and hopefully will for a long time to come.

The latest production to hit the boards of the Town Hall Theatre was *South Pacific*, world-famed musical based on the works of writer James A. Michener. Considered by many to be among the greatest Broadway musicals of all time, the 2011 production marks the third time that the Ballinasloe Musical Society has brought classic songs such as “Some Enchanted Evening” and “Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair” to a local audience in over fifty years. The show also sees the return of director Paul Norton, in collaboration with musical arranger Shane Farrell and choreographer Fiona O’ Leary.

I was lucky enough to be accepted to help out backstage during the week-long run of the show, which premiered with a

matinee on Sunday the 27th of February and packed the theatre for its closing night the following Saturday.

On entering, the foyer area of the theatre was decked in various props to create an appropriately tropical atmosphere, while the front of house staff, volunteers all, were helpful and enthusiastic. Beneath the hubbub of the gathering audience, the strains of the orchestra could be heard as they tuned their instruments and settled in for the evening.

Once backstage, however, this relaxed attitude quickly dissipated, replaced with a pace jacked up to a steady ninety-miles-an-hour as crew rushed around making last minute adjustments, actors warmed up vocal cords and paced through their lines, and volunteers such as myself very quickly found there were few places to escape the rush.

The entire cast and crew were very welcoming, many of them shooting quick, friendly greetings in my direction as I hopped over cables and dodged moving props. Beneath the general air of haste and nerves, a hint of barely-suppressed excitement was easy to detect. This production had been a labour of months for much of the cast and crew, and as an outsider looking in the pride many took in seeing this work finally come to fruition was evident.

Backstage, you’re not permitted the luxury of an outsider’s perspective for long; after being bounced around various different stage departments (though not make-up, luckily for everyone) I ended up cloistered in the crow’s nest, the lighting box above the crowd. Remaining there, for the entirety of the shows run, with the

privilege of a bird’s-eye view of the action. Best seat in the house, once your stomach gets used to the tremors brought on each night by the thunderous applause below.

The show drew good crowds the entire week, no doubt because of the incongruous amount of talent packed onto that small stage. Leading the production were veteran actors Seamus Feerick and Louise Colohan as Emile De Becque and Ensign Nellie Furbish respectively. Both were spot-on in their roles, providing powerful vocals, excellent accents and believably delivering the heart of the story with a lot of laughs on the way. Fiona O’Leary was a crowd favourite in her turn as the hilarious Bloody Mary, and Patrick Byrne’s Luther Billis stole every single scene he was in. The first scene of the second act was a particularly memorable performance on Byrne’s part, his appearance as Billis’ wig-wearing, coconut-bra-toting alter-ego “Lutherina” one that will be forever ingrained on my mind whether I like it or not.

Not a single member of the cast let the performance down, all numbers performed with such energy that it’s a wonder many were able to stay standing by the end of the three hours. Their professionalism never cracked in any situation, even against the efforts of one particularly persistent resident butterfly (the limelight-loving soul of some past performer, one crew member sagely informed me), which spent so much time on stage I was half-surprised not to see it take a bow at the end.

South Pacific also marked the stage debut for primary school students Jack Delaney and Blaithnaid Fenton, and if their performances here are anything to

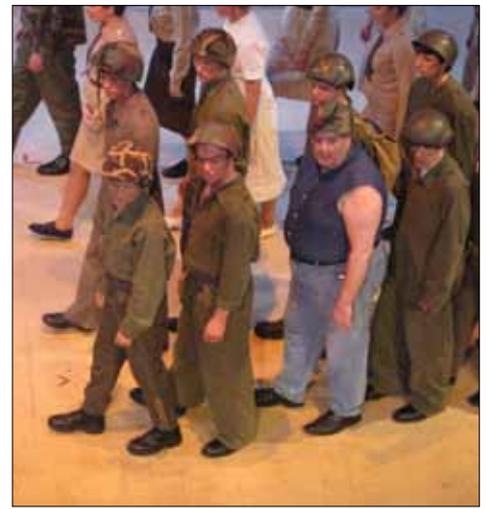


go by, audiences will be seeing a lot more of them in the years to come!

But the successful performances of the cast cannot be praised without also commenting on the work of the backstage crew. Just as every string and drum was essential to the excellent score provided from the orchestra pit, so too would any production fail without the collaboration of a number of individuals towards a much greater whole. From lighting to props to make-up and beyond, an incredible amount of work went into this performance, and it is evident in

the quality of the sets and costuming, much of which has been in the works long before the musical's premiere. Crew rolled with the punches every night, dealing with the hiccups which arise in every production with professionalism and a pride in their work, from adjusting simple set malfunctions to reviewing each performance and ensuring it ran much more smoothly the next night out.

Lurking in the wings, watching cast and crew alike celebrate with a mixture of pride, relief, and faint longing for one more encore as the curtain slid closed



one final time, that *South Pacific* was a resounding success cannot be doubted. But if initial impressions are anything to go by, resting on their laurels will be far from the mind of any member of the BMS. For those as dedicated and addicted to the process as they, there is always another show to put on, another cue to be met, and another night to fill the seats of the Town Hall Theatre and take it somewhere else entirely. We're fortunate to have such people in our midst!

For more information or to book tickets visit our Booking Office at Ballinasloe Credit Union, Main Street, Ballinasloe, call us on Tel: 086 1221123 or visit our website www.ballinasloems.ie

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Horsing Around: Serious Business in Ballinasloe



Writes Charlene Bloe

Each October Ballinasloe attracts many visitors from near and far to its International Horse Fair & Festival, and this year will be no different. The Ballinasloe Fair & Festival will take place from Saturday 1st to Sunday 9th October inclusive featuring popular events such as the lunging competitions, tug o'war, dog show, singing pubs competition and plenty of entertainment.

The reviews of the 2010 fair were extremely positive, and the event's success was attributed to the local authorities, with the Fair & Festival committee, Ballinasloe Town Council and Ballinasloe Gardai praised for their assistance. The equestrian events held attracted good interest and saw many quality animals competing for the title of Ballinasloe Credit Union Horse of the Fair, Hayden's Hotel Cob of the Fair, AIB Pony of the Fair and Ollie Colohan & Sons Foal of the Fair.

Another popular event continuing to grow from strength to strength is the Domac Tug o'War, which this year attracted

more than thirty teams and moved underground to the Carlton Shearwater Hotel for the opening round, and the finale was concluded by a Supermacs Monster Fireworks Display at the Marina.

This year a new project coordinated by Kay Croffy hosted the first fashion entrepreneur competition and saw many local talented designers enter their wares. An enjoyable night was had by all the ladies (and gents!). The closing weekend was very successful with two jam packed days including Music on the East Nightclub and Venue Soundstage, Ballinasloe Vintners La Gaelach, Premier Proteins Open Dog Show and the Gullanes Hotel Vintage Day (run by the Ballinasloe & District Vintage Club).

Two people who continue their roles until this year's event are Hannah Kelly, Carlton Shearwater Hotel Queen of the Fair and Barry O'Connor, King of the Fair. Hannah will represent Ballinasloe Fair & Festival shortly in the Galway Rose competition and we wish her every success. The King of the Fair is an amazing opportunity for our local clubs and societies to conduct fundraisers with a difference. Barry represented the Ballinasloe AFC in 2010, defeating Timmy Broderick for Social Services and Cathal Croffy for the Ballinasloe GAA club. If your club or

society is interested in putting a candidate forward for 2011, please contact us on 087 1339054.

The programme of events for the Ballinasloe Horse Fair & Festival is your programme, the community of Ballinasloe, so now is your time to put your event proposal forward. Ballinasloe have many active events throughout the year, so why not help to develop a horse themed event. If you have an event you'd like to suggest or if you'd like to organise, let us know. Each year we are looking for new blood to join our committee, so whether you've an interest in horses, carnival or community development, why not join our committee?

The Fair & Festival Committee have no means of revenue, drawing from sponsorship, associates, patrons & friends, and this sponsorship is vital if the Fair and Festival is to survive and keep events alive and flourishing.

If you would like a unique Ballinasloe present, then why not send someone a Ballinasloe Horse Fair & Festival jacket, body warmer, t-shirt or cap! To keep up to date follow us on Facebook and online at www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com

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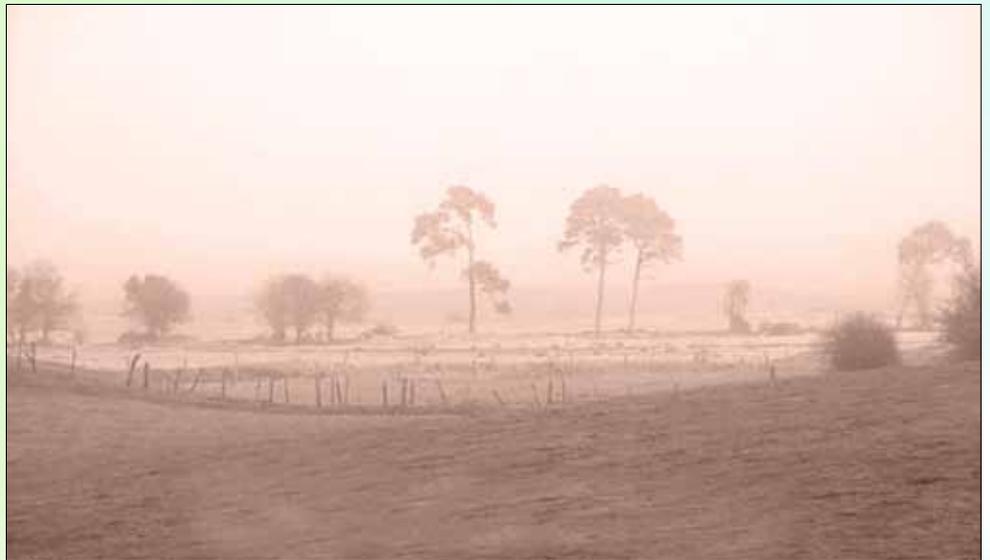
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Group 8 Theming Art for Aughrim



Writes Nuala Ní Chonchúir

Group 8, a “non-profit, professional arts group, united in the belief that art worthy of exposure can express the vitality of a community, and foster awareness, imagination and co-operative learning between the artist and their community”, will launch their second annual exhibition early this year.

Founded in August of 2009, Group 8 is a Ballinasloe-based professional artists' collective. The group was founded with a

view to bringing their work to the people of Ballinasloe, in order to add to the cultural interest of the town. The collective is comprised of five visual artists, two writers and one singer: these are visual and multimedia artist Joyce Little, sculptor Tommy Campbell, visual artists Grellan Ganly, Úna Spain and Brendan Grealy, writers Nuala Ní Chonchúir and Zara Little-Campbell, and singer Lee Ní Chinnéide.

Following the success of their first exhibition in March of 2010, this year the

group launched their second exhibition, Ten Mile2, the result of collaborative work the group undertook as a response to the Battle of Aughrim, the decisive conflict of the Jacobite/Williamite War. Taking place in 1691 in an area of ten square miles and five miles from Ballinasloe, it is thought that up to 9,000 people were killed during the course of the battle. 

For more information or to contact any of the members of Group 8, please refer queries to <http://thegroup8.blogspot.com>



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Inaugural Ada English Symposium Planned

Writes Ruairi Moore

The Soroptomists International Ballinasloe & District Branch is to establish an early summer school dedicated to exploring the themes invoked by the lifetime of one of the town's forgotten historical giants.

Dr. Ada English is still remembered locally by many of certain generation as the onetime War of Independence patriot, early Dáil TD, and deputy RMS of St. Brigid's Hospital for over 20 years. In recent years a number of studies into Cumman na mBan's role in the Rising and War of Independence and, critically, their professional legacy to their medical fields, has sparked an upsurge of interest.

A Mullingar native, she was educated at the Loreto Convent and graduated from the Royal University Dublin in 1903 as one of the earliest Catholic Doctors. One of the first female psychiatrists in Ireland, Ada worked in the Mater, Richmond & Temple Street hospitals before joining the staff of Ballinasloe Mental Hospital.

She was strongly influenced by the Suffragette Movement, and together with Dr. Kirwan, R.M.S. at the time, she led a campaign to promote "Deanta in Eireann", the use of Irish manufactured goods in the hospital. She was a friendly associate with many of the leading Irish patriots of the day; Padraic Pearse, Arthur Griffith, Liam Mellows, Joseph McDonagh and many others.

A medical officer with the Irish Volunteers from their inception, she worked with Mellows in Athenry during the 1916 Rebellion in West Galway. She was active in Cumann na mBan and was arrested by Crown forces in 1920, serving six months in Galway jail. She was elected to the first and second Dáil, and during the Treaty Debates she sided with DeValera on the anti-treaty side with her friends Mary MacSwiney and Countess Markeivicz.

Although offered promotion to Sligo Mental Hospital, she preferred to remain in Ballinasloe and eventually became R.M.S. in St. Brigid's only two years before her death. During her 38-year career with St. Brigid's, she was a leading pioneer of promoting the value of physical exercise in psychiatric treatment, as well as a staunch active supporter of the G.A.A., the hospital's camogie team and Conradh na Gaeilge.

She died in Mount Pleasant Nursing Home in 1944 and is buried in Creagh Cemetery, not far from the Matt Harris Grave.

Though the Fianna Fail Party established a Cumman in her name and the Sinn Fein party locally include her grave ceremonies for deceased volunteers on Easter Sunday morning, sadly there is no commemorative plaque or indeed local monument to such a notable and commanding figure, who was so central to the tumultuous struggle of the State and its people.

With most towns blessed with the ability to showcase their heritage to visitors and



Ada English

locals alike, this will be the first attempt by the town to platform such a significant past resident to a myriad of interests, and to explore the huge relationship of the Mental Hospital with the evolution of the town.

"After a presentation on her life and times by Dr. Brendan Kelly in the town library some months ago, there has been renewed interest in her and in particular what the women she represented in the early years of the State might have to offer to the current generation of Irish women and their role and contribution to public life", commented Jane Rothwell, President "We hope that the many people who have stories or memorabilia of her, or indeed of her time in the first four decades at the hospital might come forward and help us to better understand the past".

A one day symposium will be held on the 28th May at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel to plan for the summer school, and a host of historians, academics, gender studies specialists and medical enthusiasts will be specially invited to explore what themes and issues should be debated in the inaugural school. A full and varied cultural programme of walks, talks and entertainment will run alongside the lectures and debates.

Further Information please contact Jane Rothwell President at John Woods & Co., Main Street, Ballinasloe



Ada English Centre with 1928 Hospital Staff Camogie Team

A Broken Jaw - The Price of All-Ireland Football Glory

Writes Ken Kelly

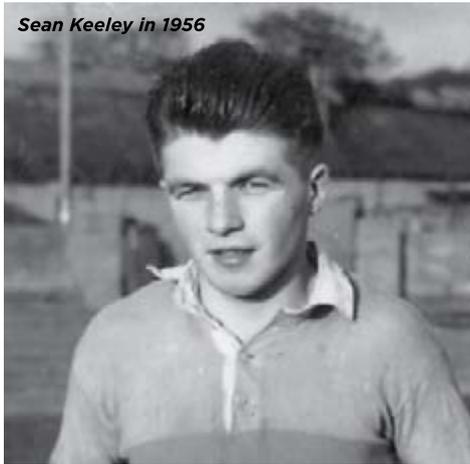
Sean Keeley of Cleaghmore, Ballinasloe won an All-Ireland senior football medal with Galway in 1956 but spent the following two weeks in hospital after sustaining a broken jaw. "It happened within seconds of the throw-in and there were parts of the game I could not remember" the former P&T official told me at his home.

The youngest member of an All-Ballinasloe full-back line, Sean (20) was partnered by Dublin-based garda Gerry Daly (from St. Michael's Square) and Eglis, Ahascragh farmer, Tom "Pook" Dillon at No. 4. The fourth Ballinasloe man on the victorious team that defeated Cork at Croke Park was the Army-based Gerry Kirwan, who hailed from Dunlo Street and lined out at corner-forward..

Born in the "heartland of Ballinasloe football"- Derrymullen - Sean Keeley was captain of the Ballinasloe Under 16 team who won the first ever county title by defeating St. Ignatius College, Galway to take the John Hynes Cup in 1952.

Sean first donned the county jersey in 1954 when he came on the minor team which were beaten by Mayo in the Connacht final at Tuam. He was drafted onto the Galway senior football panel in 1955 and his first game was against Wicklow, which was played at Aughrim in Co. Wicklow. From then until his retirement from the game in 1963, at the early age of twenty-

Sean Keeley in 1956



seven, the Derrymullen defender was a regular member of the senior team, winning an All-Ireland senior medal in 1956, a National Football League medal in 1957, beating Kerry in the final before travelling to New York and winning the St. Brendan's Cup there as well as six Connacht SF championship medals.

"I got a few lucky breaks, both in the half-back and full-back line and I played against some of the greatest footballers ever but when you have had the pleasure of playing on the same team as "the terrible twins" Sean Purcell and Frank Stockwell, then you can say you were a footballer. What a pity we hadn't television then to see these men in action. They were pure genius-their likes will never be seen again" lamented Sean.

Turning back to the 1956 All-Ireland game, Sean said Cork were favourites to take the title. "They broke from the throw-in, charged down on our goal and as I went for a high ball I got a crack on the jaw

and was floored. As John Dunne and Fr. Paddy Mahon came to my assistance I said I was alright. I didn't know then I had lost two teeth and sustained a broken jaw. At half-time it was very sore but I was determined to play on. I was brought to hospital in Galway the following day, had a plate inserted and was kept for two weeks. So much for the match celebrations" he added.

In 1993 Sean was honoured by the Galway Football Board when he was guest at the Co. senior football final and received an inscribed memento while in 1998 he was selected by his home club, St. Grellan's, for a Hall of Fame Award which was presented to him by the GAA President, Joe McDonagh.

Sean was elected captain of the Ballinasloe golf club in 1979, was Secretary in 1980 and 1981 and became President in 1991. He was a member of the Ballinasloe team which won the Connacht Junior Guinness Foursomes in 1969 and later teamed up with his wife Ronnie, to win the Furlong Cup in the club's mixed foursomes competition. He also won the President's (Val Martin) prize in 1984 and the AT Cross intermediate scratch cup in 1988 and 1989.

A hero of yesteryear-a model for our youth of today-that's Sean Keeley.

Below, The Ballinasloe Juvenile Football team who won the first ever County Juvenile title in 1952. Front row, l to r: Martin Beckett, Sean Grealy, George Geraghty, Johnny Reilly, Sean Keeley (capt.), Sean Meade, David Duignam, P.B. Ryan, John Finn. Back row, l to r: Patsy Geraghty (Manager), Miko Kelly, Eddie Hogarty, Leo McMorrough, Noel McCann, Ollie Farnon, Sean Mullins, Mike Madden, Paddy Grealy, Johnny Geraghty and Fr. Peter Dunne, club chairman.





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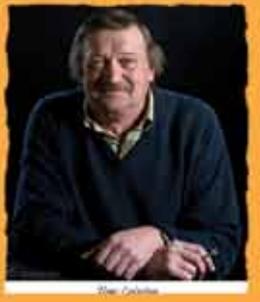
John Wilson



Mike Moran



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Tom Collins

10 Beauty Tips to get that Fresh Spring Glow!

Carlton Spa Therapist Annette Hendry walks us through some spring beauty tips.

- 1 Always cleanse your Face and neck thoroughly. At night it's even more important to remove the dirt that accumulated through the day as this is when the skin repairs and rejuvenates itself. Skin experts estimate that your skin ages eight days for each night that you don't remove your make up.
- 2 Drink plenty of water. It you skins most important beauty treatment. About 2 litres a day will keep your skin hydrated, plump out fine lines and flush toxins out of your system. You'll notice a difference within hours.
- 3 Take a sauna -They're great for circulation , relaxation and gently removing any toxins from both the skin and body,
- 4 To soothe puffy eyes, apply ice or frozen teaspoons. Wrap a cube of ice in cling film and smooth round and over your bags. -Supermodel Linda

Evangelista's favourite trick, or do the same with tea spoons, chilled in a freezer.

- 5 To brighten a dull complexion, treat yourself to a face mask. Choose a moisturising Mask,(Elemis Exotic Moisturising mask) which doesn't set on the skin rather than a clay based mask, which will dry out already dehydrated skins.
- 6 A rosy Blush will instantly add a glow to skin that has lost its colour and pigment over the years. This is particularly important in the winter when skin loses it's natural lustre.
- 7 To prep hands or feet for the party season use almond oil instead of hand cream. Apply it last thing at night then put on a pair of cotton gloves or socks and go to bed. You'll be amazed how soft your hands feel in the morning.
- 8 Make like Cleopatra ,add a handful of powered milk to your bath. Your skin will be softened and smoothed by the lactic acid in the milk, which gently exfoliates dead skin cells.

9 Increase your intake of fruit and veg as their anti oxidants will protect you against alcohols aging properties. Plus take a supplement with a high dose of Vitamin C and B to help detoxify and boost your immune system.

10 Smile and be confident. There's no surer way to shine.

Carlton Spa Therapist,
Annette Hendry



Spring Lamb Shearwater Style

Carlton Head Chef,
Andrew Ryan



Carlton Executive Head Chef Andrew Ryan tells us the secret to perfect Spring Lamb.

April is the month of the year when vegetables and fruits first blossom and become ready for eating. The same principle applies to spring lamb. In Christian cultures, it's the traditional roast to serve on Easter Day. Spring lamb has small, slender bones with rosy flesh that is much more tender and subtle than darker-fleshed summer or autumn lamb. Legs of new season lamb are beautiful when simply roasted and flavoured with

rosemary, another herb that's at its best during this month. I hope you enjoy this very simple recipe. If you have any questions you would like answered please do not hesitate to contact me at aryan@carlton.ie. Bon Appetite!

Ingredients

- 1 leg new season lamb bone in, approx 2kg/4½lb
- Large handful of lean lamb trimmings or small bones (ask butcher)
- 6 garlic cloves sliced roughly
- 1 bunch fresh rosemary chopped finely
- 1 handful sea salt
- Zest of 2 lemons
- Olive oil
- 1 carrot
- 1 stick of celery
- 1 small onion
- Glass of white wine

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220C/Gas 7
2. Roughly chop the onion, carrot, celery and half the garlic and along with lamb trimmings, scatter across bottom of roasting tray.

3. Rub lamb with olive oil.

4. Chop rosemary finely and mix with lemon zest and sea salt. Use this mixture to liberally season your lamb. Sprinkle with remaining garlic.

5. Place the lamb on top of veg and roast in the for approx 1¼ - 1½ hours.

6. When cooked, remove carefully from roasting tray and be sure to allow it to rest for at least 20 minutes.

7. To make gravy, place the roasting pan over high heat and when mixture starts to stick pour in the white wine. Using a wooden spoon scrape sugars off the bottom of the tray as this is the flavour for the gravy. Add a small glass of water if mixture is too thick. Simmer for 3-4 minutes. Strain through sieve, pushing all juices through with the back of wooden spoon. Serve the lamb with gravy, crisp roast potatoes and seasonal veg (roast carrots recommended)

Tip: if you like your gravy a little bit thick just reduce until you have your desired consistency. And enjoy!

Mountain Rescue Challenge for the Rosway Walker's Club

Writes Frances Leahy

One of the most vibrant and energetic groups in the locality is the ROSWAY WALKERS CLUB with over 150 members to date. As we are located on the Roscommon/Galway border, the club has members from both sides of the county border – hence the name Rosway (keeps everyone happy!)

The club has a walk/climb every weekend – from 2 hour local flat walks to

Carrantouhill/Ben Nevis and everything in between. Over the past few years the club have explored walks in the local area – from Culligh to Poolboy, enjoyed the many forest walks available from Portumna to Mountbellew and the Slieve Bloom Mountains, always a favourite. Many of Ireland's highest peaks have been climbed by the members – from Mount Errigal in Donegal to Slieve Donard in the Mourne Mountains and of course Carrantouhill in Co Kerry. No two walks are the same but all walks give the members

the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the countryside, get some exercise and fresh air while enjoying the company of others along the way. (All for free!). The club founded in November 2006 chooses one charity each year to support, this year the club are planning an event to raise money for Mountain Rescue. The Club is planning a '32 County Challenge', on May 28th. The aim of this challenge is to have members of the club climbing the highest peaks in the 32 counties on that day and raise funds for the wonderful work of the Mountain Rescue. Members of the club will be in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel on the day in contact with the various members around the country and monitoring the progress of everyone as the summit of each mountain is reached on the day.



For further details of this wonderful event or should you wish to donate to this worthy cause please visit - roswaywalkingclub.blog.com or see local press closer to the date. Further information is also available from Tommy Costelloe, Event Organiser on Tel: 087 641 1530, Club Secretary, Frances Leahy on Tel: 086 225 0793 or by email roswaywalkingclub@gmail.com

Marathon Man of Brackernagh

Writes Ruairi Moore

Ever wished you could do something for a worthwhile cause in your community? Then stick on your running shoes to support Ballinasloe man Fergal Dunne.

The thirty-eight year old shop manager will be lining out on May 2nd in Belfast to run the city marathon in aid of Tír Na nÓg Autistic Unit and Irish Autism Action.

“My initial reason was to raise funds for a very underfunded organisation, but it's also a good way to motivate yourself during the winter to have a goal for early summer. When the nights start at 4.30pm and its freezing cold outside the easiest thing to do is to sit in and relax, but when you have a 26 mile run to do in May, the easy option no longer is an option. I also saw the marathon as an excellent way to get friends, work colleagues and family involved.”

But involved in what, exactly? “I picked these organisations because I have two sons that have autism. We get huge support from Keelan & Orans Development, and this is my way of giving some support back to them in raising well needed money because I know the benefits it will give.”



*Marathon Man
Fergal Dunne*

“The idea came when my sons were initially diagnosed. Myself and a friend ran the 32 marathon in 32 counties, doing a half marathon in Offaly and we decided that this year we would try and run the full marathon.”

Fergal, a veteran of the Dublin City Marathon, knows the strict training and discipline required for such an endeavour, but he cites the support of friends and family as his greatest motivation. “It's not always easy to get the time, but I am very lucky in that I have a very understanding manager with whose help I can create the time it takes to do the training. A group

of my work colleagues are organising a couple of group runs where we have to run 25k and 30k so we have decided to keep each other company.”

But Fergal is careful to stress that it is not what he is doing that is important, but the reason he is doing it.

“This is more than just me running the marathon. What started out as just two friends discussing over a pint how we could raise a few bob for an underfunded cause has now gained momentum. We now have a group of 30 people running either half- or full marathons.”

Having relocated to be closer to the facilities his sons need, Fergal seems genuinely touched by the response his campaign has received. “It really has become infectious. My wife and I have been bowled over by how it has gained such support.”

“I would like to thank all who have supported me during the training for the race, from all the management and staff in Supervalu Ballinasloe, to my own family and friends who have helped me keep the energy levels and enthusiasm for the training going strong.”

So why not sponsor a good cause and help him cross the line on the day? Best of luck to Fergal and all running at his side on the 2nd of May!

135 Years On and Rugby Continues to Thrive and Engage

Writes Liam Courtney

Its founding dating back to the mid-1870's, Ballinasloe boasts of one of the oldest rugby clubs in rural Ireland.

An original member club of the Connacht Branch, it was elected a member of the IRFU in 1885, and despite many changes over the decades the club remains as vibrant as ever. Ballinasloe RFC moved to its present headquarters at Graigueawoneen in the mid 1970s a century after its foundation and has been happily ensconced there since.

Renowned for its caring and friendly atmosphere, the club is continually welcomes new members, be they local or newly arrived to the area and membership is available at a fee of €85 for families, €60 for an individual, or €25 for a student; (rather modest charges by the average club membership standards of today).

The club places great emphasis in developing young local talent and in bringing them through the grades to senior level. The current first team squad includes ten players who have come through the underage structures and are beginning to establish themselves at senior level. In a recent review of his squad, senior coach Noel Mannion

commented that while he welcomed all new players to his squad, it was especially satisfying to see players making the breakthrough from underage teams, testimony to the hard work being put in at that level.

Two adult sides from the club compete in the Connacht Junior League, and the underage sides (U13s to U19s) compete in provincial cup and league fixtures. Every Saturday morning also sees expert coaching for even younger players. Who knows but that it might be the breeding ground for some future internationals, following in the footsteps of the McLaughlin brothers and Noel Mannion, all of whom went on to represent Ireland at the highest international level. The club has also produced players to don the green of Ireland at youth level in recent seasons; Conor Finn, a member of the club's U19s, is presently involved with the Irish Schoolboy's squad. The club has two well maintained pitches which have been upgraded recently with a new drainage system as well as new floodlights, at a total cost of €220, 000 approx. The club is always willing to assist other clubs and associations by putting facilities at their disposal when possible. Some groups to have availed of the grounds in recent times include the Welsh U20s, the Connacht Ladies and the Aironi Magners League squad from Italy.

There is also an active social side to the club and many an enjoyable function and event has been held in the club rooms, whether organised by the club's social committee or members holding parties there. The homely and intimate atmosphere of the lounge bar and function room has been the setting for many a fun occasion over recent seasons. The clubhouse can be made available to members and their guests on request.

The club's annual dinner dance, to be held in Gullane's Hotel on Saturday night the 9th of April, has proven to be one of the gala events in the town over the years and is open to all comers to enjoy the craic. Various club awards are presented on the night. This year the club's 2000 Ticket Draw will be made at the dinner. These are currently being sold by members and friends of the club with a holiday and spending money as well as prize monies on offer.

The mini kiddies fundraising cycle event takes place on Sunday May 8th, and the Michael Fitzpatrick Memorial Golf Classic has been provisionally set for July. 

Should anyone wish to obtain further information or details about Ballinasloe RFC then contact may be made with one of the following committee personnel: Club Secretary: Geraldine Kelly on 087 2504189. Football Officer: Declan Quinn on mobile 086 2508952. Or search "Ballinasloe Rugby Club" on Facebook.



Ballinasloe GAA

25 Teams in Three Codes



North Board Junior A Football Champions

Writes Ruairi Moore

Ballinasloe GAA Club boasts a long-standing tradition of producing quality teams and players, fielding sides in both hurling and football at all ages from under 10 to adult. With a new state-of-the-art clubhouse and facilities as a home for this talent, the future looks bright for local GAA club. The following is a round-up of the club's most recent news and activities.

Football

Men's football has been going from strength to strength in the town over the past few years, with the club currently fielding 10 teams from Under- 6's up to adult level. Coaching for young boys and girls from 5 to 8 takes place on Sunday morning from half ten to half eleven, in our new complex opposite the hospital and behind SuperValu. All are welcome. We also will provide a cup of tea or coffee for the parents, while the young players are enjoying themselves!

Our adults compete at Junior A level and most of our under-age teams compete at the top grade. The club was proud to congratulate our four players on the County Minor panel (James Shaughnessy, Conor Kelly, Marcus Kelly, Paraic Cunningham, with two players - James and Marcus lining out in Croke Park for the All Ireland Final last year. We also had Michael Colohan and Keith Kelly securing places on the Junior County team.

While success is important, the priority is that all our children take part and enjoy the sport while developing their skill levels. It is now GAA policy that all children up to the age of 12 take part in the non-competitive "Go-Games", blitzes with other clubs; designed to develop

skills and instil a love of the game. All coaches at all levels at the club are fully qualified with ongoing assistance from the Co. Football Board.

Contact John Gillespie on 087 635 7139.
Chairperson: Willie Stankard 087 996 0237.
Secretary: Shane Kenny 086 362 4580

Ladies Football

The aim of Ballinasloe Ladies Football is to develop and promote football to ladies of all ages in the Ballinasloe area and to provide a safe and fun environment in which to enjoy a team sport.

Reformed in the past few years, Ballinasloe Ladies Football Club is now part of the overall Ballinasloe GAA Club. The ladies club started with a small base, but as of 2011 there are seven age groups training and playing football from U8's right up to a new Minor and Junior Ladies Team.

The under 8's and under 10 girls train once a week on Saturday mornings in the GAA Club, and will provide our younger ladies with a fun introduction to the skills and elements of a team game.

Last year our U 12's were unlucky to have been narrowly beaten in the County Championship Semi-Final by Leitir Mor, who went on to win the County Final. Training for U 12's continued from March, and all are welcome to join.

After a hard fought 2010 campaign the U 14's brought home the silverware, winning both the County Championship & League while the U-16's were worthy runners-up in their categories. Well done to all the girls and their mentors.

A number of girls represented the club at county level, with Amy Dempsey, Niamh Loughnane and Orla McDonagh lining out at U 13 while Rebbecca Goode, Ashley Walsh, Eleanor Duncan and Bláithín O'Grady represented their club at the U 15 level. This is a super representation

for a young club and we look forward to seeing more players on the county scene in 2011.

Many of our younger teams are graduating this year, so for the first time the club will have both Minor and Junior teams. Existing players, together with new players joining the club for the first time, will ensure that an exciting football season lies ahead.

The VHI Cuil Camp, which has proved so successful in previous years, will take place in the GAA Club from 18th - 22nd July, and welcomes boys and girls from the age of 6 to 12 years.

If you would like to become involved, whether as a player or helping out on the sidelines, please contact: Kathryn Gibbons or Níoclás MacDonnacha.

Hurling

Ballinasloe Juvenile Hurling caters for children aged 5 up to 16. All our coaching is fun based, in a safe and structured manner. Here they will learn all the basic skills of the greatest field sport in the world and make some new friends along the way. Our under 6, 8, 10 and 12's have hurling training every Saturday afternoon at 12pm at the Ballinasloe GAA Pitch. In May and June, our under 8 and 10 players will take part in a "Play N' Stay" hurling development, which allows all players to take part in fun games against other hurling clubs in east Galway. During the Easter week Ballinasloe GAA host a hurling and football camp, which will run from the 19th to the 21st April.

As for the older age grades, our under 14 hurling team are currently taking part in the Suck Valley Hurling League and train every Monday and Wednesday at 7pm in Ballinasloe GAA Pitch, while our under 16 team begin training in April.

For information on any of our under-age teams or upcoming events, please contact Ronan on 087 236 9665.

Ballinasloe Town AFC - Serving the Community For 60 Years

Writes Ruairi Moore

Ballinasloe Town A.F.C is one of the most successful, progressive and established sports clubs in Ballinasloe.

Visitors to the town and, indeed, new residents of the area are most welcome to visit our club headquarters (located at Brackernagh Development Park) at any time to get a tour of the tremendous sporting facilities on offer. They include 2 floodlit, ultra-modern, state-of-the-art 5-a-side Astroturf pitches. These pitches are available for hire to the general public on a daily and nightly basis with the last booking slot being 10pm each night.

The club today boasts of a development worth in excess of €1.5 million which includes enclosed grounds, a spectator stand, a clubhouse with dressing rooms, a storage building, 2 floodlit Astroturf pitches, 2 full-sized grass playing pitches (one floodlit and one newly-developed youth pitch). The club also has a lease on an extra youth pitch at the St. Brigid's Hospital Grounds where training floodlights have been erected. The entire development is virtually debt-free, with just a single small moiety to be repaid.



The club have ambitious plans for the future and planning permission has been secured for a new 400 seater spectator stand which will incorporate extra dressing-rooms and a small gymnasium. An extension to the current clubhouse has also been approved which will include a raised viewing area.

“We have been very fortunate as a sporting organisation in our community, that we enjoy great support from players, parents and also the business people who continually help us with our fundraising efforts and none of our 60 years of achievement would have really been feasible without all those strands pulling together”, said Johnny Walsh Chairman.

The club have an intensive youth policy and cater teams at Under 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 18, as well as two adult teams. The facilities are also made available to local primary schools, boys and girls secondary schools, local youth groups and for various charitable fundraising activities.

Any visitors to our town, new residents and indeed existing residents who may be interested in booking the Astroturf pitches or in joining the club can contact Chairperson Johnny Walsh on 087 997 3009, Club Secretary Enda Lang on 087 967 4655 or Club Groundsman Brendan McNally for Astroturf bookings on 087 793 6535.

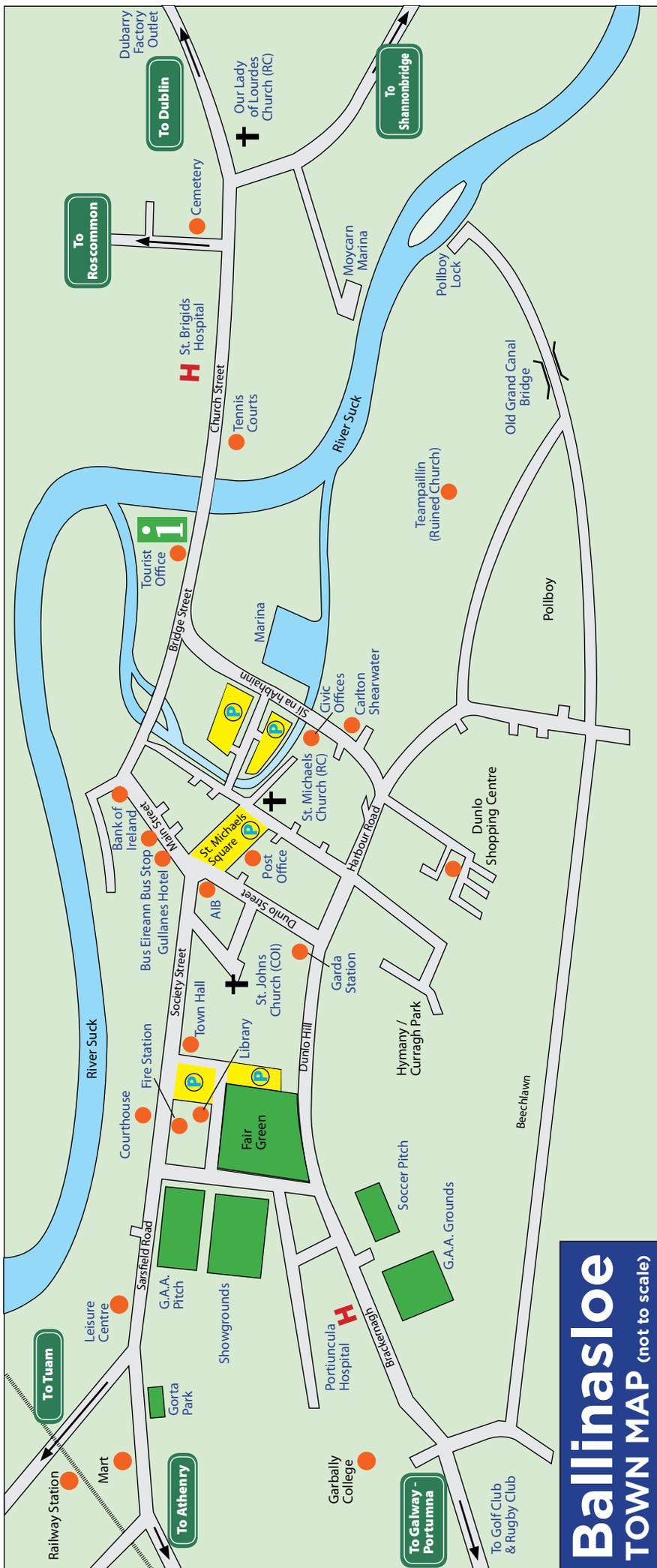
Ballinasloe Junior Camogie

Since their defeat in last years League and Championship Finals, Ballinasloe junior camogie team have started back with high hopes of winning the junior title this coming year. Trainings take place on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. There is great variation each session to keep interest and plenty of challenge matches to be played. With a panel of 31 there is a healthy battle to make a place on the team. This year we have had a wax night and a junior disco which have helped the club to raise much needed funds. The team will be going to Belfast to take part in a tournament where they will face the challenge of 11 Northern teams. This will be used as a building block in preparing for the upcoming league. The junior team would like to thank our main sponsors Blakes, in conjunction with whom we hold our fundraising events. We would also like to thank our other sponsors Adverttees and Crumbs & Cream. Our next event will be a Circus themed junior disco, to take place in East Niteclub on the 15th of April from 8.30 - 12.00. We would appreciate your support both at this event and on the pitch, as we hope to bring an overdue title back to Ballinasloe.



The Cumann Camogiachta Beal Atha Na Slua Junior B team who recently Defeated Shamrocks Junior A team in the Summer League Final. Ballinasloe are proudly sponsored by Blakes of Ballinasloe.

Back row (l-r) Sheena Kelly, Aileen Dillon, Lauren Dooley, Lisa O' Neill. Middle Row (l-r) Paula Earls, Laura Cawley, John Mulvihill, Jacinta Mc Hugh, Aoife Doherty, Sinead Kennedy, Olivia Walsh, Rhona Black, Sinead Carey, Jacinta Kennedy (Trainer), Siobhan Carey (Hiding), Rachel Kelly, Harriet Bruce, John Cawley, Grainne Daly. Front Row (l-r) Stephanie Kelly, Elaine Caulfield, Ciara Hession, Emily Brewer, Aisling Kelly, Seamus Kelly (Selector). Front Aisling Brannelly and Michelle O' Neill (Co Captains). Missing from photo: Elena Minton, Ciara Jennings, Paula Mc Grath, Caroline Walsh, Claire Deane.



Kilconnell Abbey

7miles/11km west of Ballinasloe on the R348 stand the ruins of the Franciscan Friary of Kilconnell Abbey. Founded in 1353, the church is a fine example of Gothic architecture, with its slender and graceful tower over the crossing. Around the church are conventional buildings with numerous masons' marks.

Clonfert Cathedral

On the road to Banagher about 12 miles from Ballinasloe, one can find one of the most highly developed examples of Irish Romanesque Architecture in the form of a magnificent doorway. Originally established by Saint Brendan in 563AD as part of a monastic community, the oldest part of the surviving structure dates from about 1180. None of the monastic buildings survive.

Aughrim Interpretative Centre

Situated within Aughrim Village on the old Dublin - Galway road, this award-winning centre commemorates a forgotten day of Irish history - the Battle of Aughrim, "Ireland's Gettysburg" which was fought on 12th July 1691, in the closing stages of a war that divides Ireland to this day. The site opens from 10am - 6pm daily.

Clonmacnoise Monastic Site

20km from Ballinasloe (signposted from the R357), Clonmacnoise was founded in 548 by St. Ciaran, the son of a master craftsman. The settlement soon became a major centre of religion, learning, trade, craftsmanship and politics, and benefited from the patronage of powerful provincial kings. It was designated a national monument in 1877.

Clontuskert Abbey

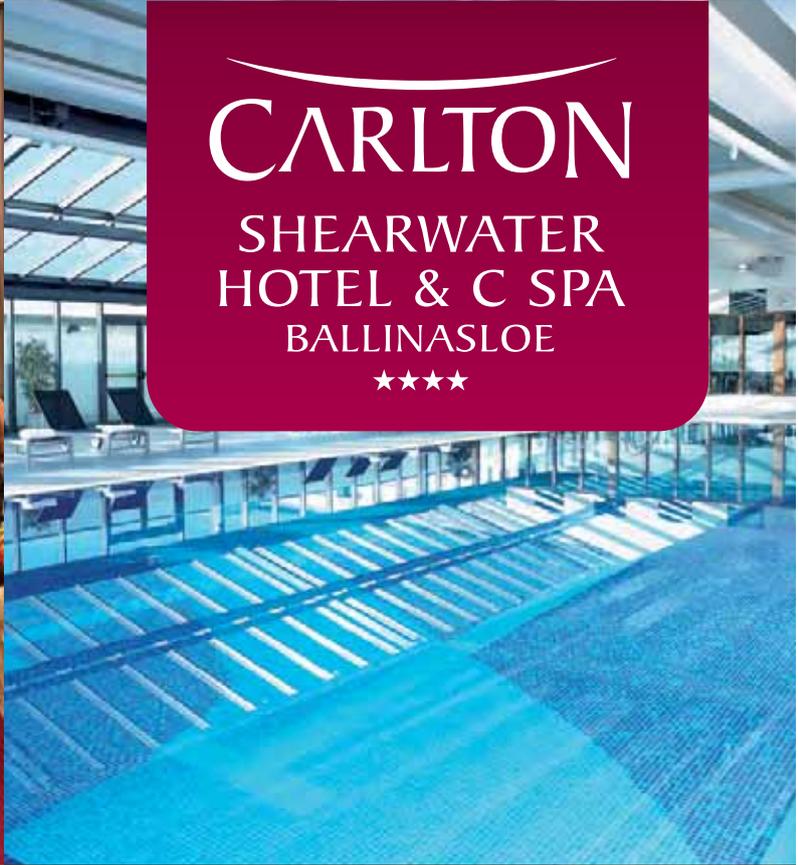
Lying 7km south of Ballinasloe on the R355, the Augustinian Priory of St. Mary in Clontuskert was reputedly built on the site of St. Baetan's earlier Celtic monastery. Built in the late 1100s, it survived as a monastic settlement until the early part of the 17th century, having undergone several reconstructions and additions during those years.

Can't See Your Club / Organisation / School?

News to share about your local club organisation , but can't see it listed anywhere? Fix it! Please forward any local club or society news for inclusion in the June/July addition to ballinasloelife@hotmail.com by 13th May.

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Left: *Carra* jacket in Red and *Chamomile* blouse in White
Right: *Skerrit* Jacket in Chocolate and *Kirwan* zip neck sweater in Stone
Centre Top: *Storm* crew jacket in Flag Red/Grey and Dubarry Cap in Dark Navy
Centre Middle: *Madeira* and *Menorca* deck shoes in assorted colours
Centre Bottom: Alpaca Socks in Sky and Baby Pink with *Galway* Boots in Brown and Walnut



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