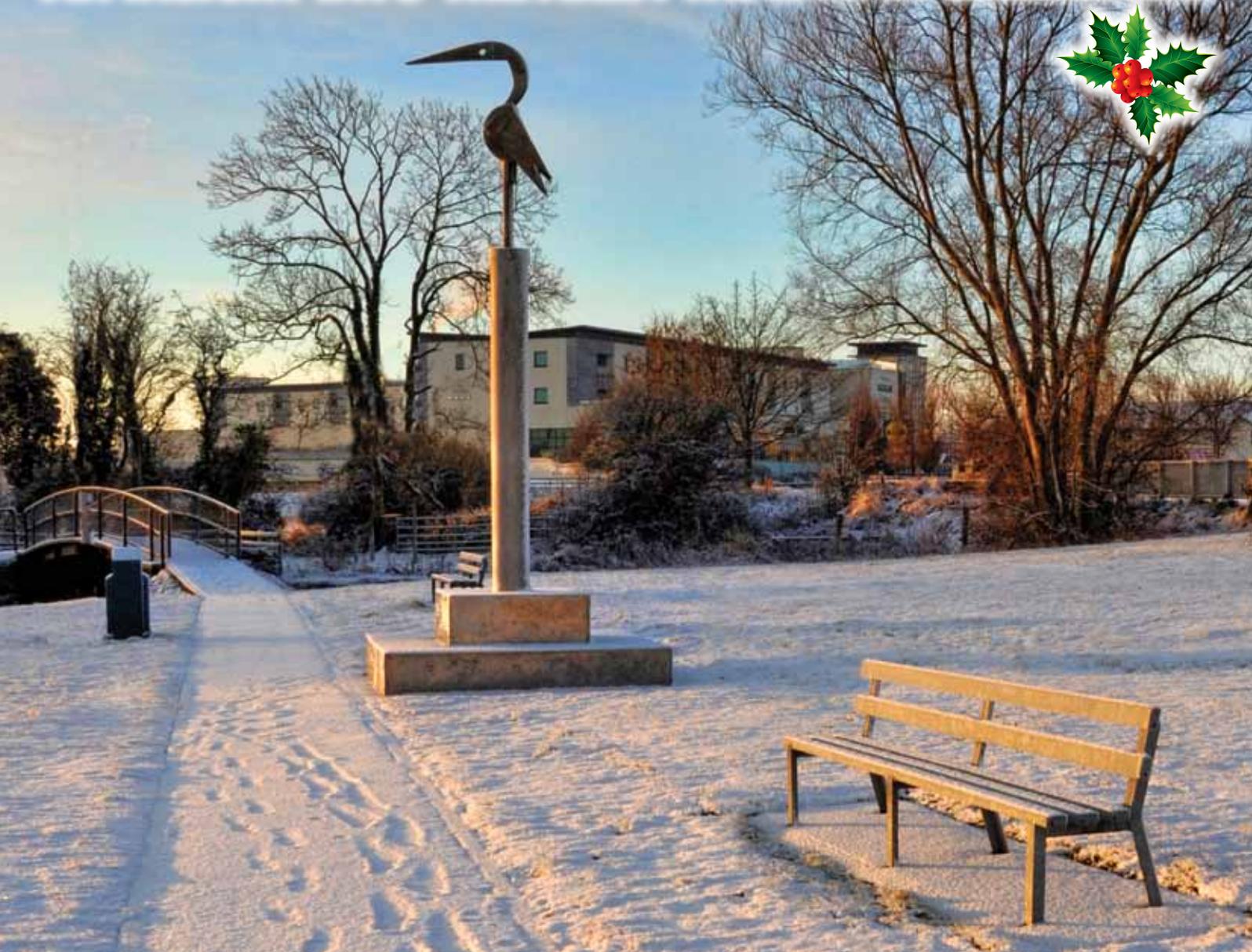


# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 2 Issue 5: Dec '12/Jan '13



**BALLINASLOE JUNIORS  
CONNACHT CHAMPIONS**



**PANTO TIME AGAIN, BOUND  
FOR TREASURE ISLAND**



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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 2 Issue 5: Dec '12/Jan '13

## REAMHRÁ



Welcome again to the Christmas/ New Year bumper edition, packed with articles, features, photos and tales that should bring us all up to date on all matters Sucksie. Looking back it has been cataclysmic year for the town, balkanised into a new constituency of Roscommon/East Galway in Spring and now for Winter our latest gift from the Dept. of Environment – the abolishment of the Town Council. The Annals will record 2012 as a significant year, for most of independence we toiled under an independent Council that controlled a local budget and fees and looked west for Dail constituency champions.

Whilst there are few keening the perceived loss of local democracy and can argue that towns like Clifden with strong community councils did far more than towns like us. There are still a lot of questions that neither Minister Hogan or his Department or Government colleagues seem able to answer. This community and others like it who have built up assets, facilities, responsibilities, staff, traditions, partnerships and events; need to have much stronger assurances that the gains of 170 years won't be squandered over a few short years, to subsidise plans of the career ambitions of Uber Borough Authority officials, like in most market and provincial towns in the UK.

Our Minister has perhaps read the public mood correctly in sending to the scrap heap the "Ballymagash" type talking shops but he is less clearer on what, how and who they are to be replaced by. Whilst no one has a crystal ball, the communities that foster pride, engage civic spirit and assist each other, tend to be the ones that survive and thrive, irrespective of whether it's a Tribal Council or Village Elders political system. That remains our challenge for 2013. What can we work together to achieve? Our GAA club set out midway through the last decade with a plan and after serious graft (as detailed within) have had a bumper year in all their codes and most grades.

Spare a thought this season for all the families with the gap at the festive table, it's always a tough time for them, especially if the passing is recent.

Beannachtai na Nollaig agus Ath Bliain Nua faoi mhaise daoibh go Leir.

Le gach Dea Ghuí, Colm Croffy, Editor



Sponsorship is on the agenda of most clubs and organisations. 99% of this sponsorship comes from local business and retailers. You cannot blame these same Business people to reconsider who they provide support to if they are not being supported in return. It's not unrealistic to expect you to support our local shops and we in "Ballinasloe Life" are 100% behind the **Think Local, Shop Local** campaign.

A big effort is being put in to extended opening hours by the majority of business for the run in to Christmas i.e Friday nights up to 8 pm min and 1-5 on Sundays. They see the benefit of working together more than ever before as the bigger the footfall away from the multinationals the better the chances of a reinvigorated town centre.

The Town Council have also come on board and have provided free parking after 4 pm up to the 7th December and free from 11 am daily from the 8th December. It is not all about what "your shops can do for you", you all need to consider "What you can do for your shops." So please get out there and support our advertisers without whom there would be no "Ballinasloe Life" or many of the other thriving community groups in your area. A Very Merry Christmas and Peaceful New Year,

Seamus Duffy, Chairman,  
Ballinasloe Area Community Development

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# BEC

Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre  
An Initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community

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E: [info@ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie](mailto:info@ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie)  
[www.ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie](http://www.ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie)





# Christmas Greetings



## MAYOR CARMEL GREALLY

Is mór an onóir domsa mar Mhaora Beál Átha Na Slua, Beannachtaí na Nollaig agus Ath Bhlian Nua faoi Mhaise agaibh go leir. I want to wish all our readers, locals and especially our families and relatives away from home at this special time of year, a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. We are still battling with the recession but the community spirit remains positive for our future and we will continue to build on this, we have come through previous recessions and we will come through this one also.

In the past year our town opened our €1.3 million track and leisure facility at Brackernagh, expanded and enhanced numerous playgrounds and amenity areas, made significant progress on the €3.5m Convent Redevelopment in getting the part 8 passed. Made substantial progress on the Town enhancement scheme which will begin after the Fair in 2013 and consultants have been contracted for the new link road at the rear of Main St. The Council has been hugely supportive of a variety of local initiatives that continue to build our community and enhance jobs and investment.

For us all it was a great Gaelic Games year, firstly with our County hurlers doing so well in Croke Park, giving us a wonderful summer and then our wonderful young Junior Footballers winning both County and Provincial honours. I want to congratulate the officers, management and players led by Keith Kelly for building up pride and enthusiasm in the town's colours again and I have great expectations on what they can go on and achieve. Their success on the field underpins for me again the role local authorities can play in providing practical support to all sports in our community.

Finally, for the coming weeks I would appeal to us all to where we can to support our local businesses, with our spending. When we support local retailers, we underwrite the enterprise, the jobs in the sector, we support our community and sustain a future for our town.

## MARY McGEE President Ballinasloe & District Soroptomists

As President of the Ballinasloe & Districts Soroptomists, I wish all my fellow sister soroptomists and all the readers of this wonderful magazine a joyous Christmas and prosperous New Year. We've had a busy and positive year - Our Schools Public Speaking Competition was well received, the ADA English Summer School was a great success, we had an enjoyable Dinner in Gullanes, our Golf Fundraiser was a great success and all our proceeds raised go to local charities - with more projects and fundraisers being planned. Many thanks to all who helped make it all possible.

## BRIAN DERRANE Ballinasloe Lions Club President

On behalf of Ballinasloe Lions Club I would like to wish the people of Ballinasloe and its environs a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a New Year of promise and good fortune. I would like to thank you for your loyal and generous support of our fundraiser efforts which finance our Annual Christmas Food Appeal, Community Suicide Awareness courses ASIST and SAFETALK, Carer Respite Weekend, support for our elderly, the needy and those in crisis and many other worthy local causes. New Members are welcome. Lions meeting in Shearwater Hotel the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

## FR. JOHN GARVEY ADM

A mother and father and their newly born child were part of the first Christmas. May all of those who are struggling to pay bills and make ends meet be supported over the Christmas and through the coming New Year. May you all have a very happy, peaceful and holy Christmas. Best Wishes to all locals and visitors for the New Year.

## RECTOR GEORGE FLYNN Aughrim and Creagh Parishes

Best wishes to all as we all prepare for the Christmas season this year under difficult circumstances: recession, unemployment, illness, bereavement. We face the future with strength and hope and faith enriching our lives at such time. At this season of Christmas and as a New Year approaches, it is my wish that you will all have a very peaceful and blessed time with your family and friends. Please also remember that many will be lonely at this time living alone and when at all possible give them some time, a visit to brighten their day. We in the Church of Ireland love to see visitors coming to our churches and in the calendar are some events that will take place during December that may be of some interest to the people of Ballinasloe and its surrounding areas.

## REV. BERNIE COSTELLO Chaplain

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself and the Pastoral Care Departments in Portiuncula and St. Brigid's Hospitals to wish you all the peace and joy of this coming Christmas. Christmas can best be described as a great moment. It stirs something special within all of us. Families have various traditions in and around this time of year. They are faithfully kept each year and collectively they make the time of Christmas special. We celebrate the birth of Jesus each Christmas. Everything revolves around this. It is indeed a great moment but its greatness can easily be missed.

Why did God choose to come into this world just like one of us? Why did God choose a simple stable on the outskirts of a busy town? Why was it done quietly and without fuss? Nothing has changed for Christmas 2012. God still comes into our lives quietly and without fuss. We could so easily miss it. What a pity if we were to let such a great moment slip us by. In wishing you all that is good and God's blessing for 2013, I would like to close with the words of Boris Pasternak. 'When a great moment knocks on the door of your life, it is often no louder than the beating of your heart and it is very easy to miss it.'

## CAITRIONA MORGAN Town Clerk

As we approach Christmas I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been a busy year in a difficult economic situation. While available resources are much less than in recent years much was still achieved. I would like to acknowledge the staff of the Town Council who have responded positively to the challenge of scarce resources and have displayed flexibility in the continued delivery of services to the town and surrounding area. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the elected members for their work and assistance in 2012 and I look forward to working with the members, the staff and the wider community to achieve the best of Ballinasloe in 2013 and the years ahead. On behalf of the town manager, Mr Kevin Kelly, myself and all the staff, may I wish you and your families a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year."

## DONAL SCANNELL Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of the Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce and its members, I would like to wish all citizens of Ballinasloe and the surrounding area a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. While our Government has concerns over billions of Euro, locally many are worried about tens of Euro, but working together we can help each other. When shopping this Christmas I would urge you to think how you can help your community and your country. Spend your money in Ballinasloe when possible and buy Irish when you can. Many businesses need your support to stay open and if smaller shops close, they will not easily be replaced. There's great value to be had in Ballinasloe and I would ask you to come into town have a look and help to keep your shops and jobs local. Keep your business in your community and your community in business.

# Town in Top 100 Best Towns & City Retail Excellence Survey

QUARTILE 1	QUARTILE 2	QUARTILE 3	QUARTILE 4
GALWAY CITY	ATHLONE	MULLINGAR	BALLINASLOE
TULLAMORE	BIRR	NENAGH	LONGFORD
CARRICK-ON-SHANNON	ROSCOMMON	TUAM	LOUGHREA

## Writes Seamus Duffy

In a recent Retail Excellence Survey, the good news is that Ballinasloe is in the top 100, however we are in the bottom quartile. The following is a summary of how some towns in close proximity performed.

The key message from the survey is that to perform well there must be a "Heart" to the town. For a heart to beat successfully is totally dependant on like minded retailers working together. The survey found that when you have co-operation between retailers and local authorities this can help attract further Business. Another key finding was the fact was that towns with a strong community spirit who had pride in their location tended to get the "ordinary people" to do their bit to support local initiatives and the whole area benefits.

It is acknowledged that communities cannot expect to have all the shops and services they need on their doorstep if they do not do their best to shop locally. The general feeling is that if the



recession has done anything for local communities, it has taught us the value of supporting each other and doing what we can to ensure local business is in a position to reinvest in an area.

Through *Ballinasloe Life* we are asking you to play your part in helping our town to help itself. We all acknowledge

that there are gaps in meeting all your requests but in identifying these gaps you are helping to create an opportunity for some local indigenous entrepreneur to fill that gap, whether it be in children's requirements, in clothing or the service industry etc.

You will see the *Think Local, Shop Local* Stickers on nearly all shop fronts and most retailers are opening longer hours at time to suit you the buyer in the run in to Xmas, so give them first shot at what you want to buy. The local Town Council has approved extended free parking from 1st November to 31st December (see separate details).

We are more than doubling the circulation of our magazine and aim for it to get into the majority of households in the catchment area in order to make people aware of the effort put into the "think local, shop local" campaign.

Everyone has a part to play, it will not happen without a big team effort and you as a reader of *Ballinasloe Life* are a panel member.

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Society Street,  
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Tel: 090 965 0000

Ballygar Road,  
Mountbellew, Co. Galway  
[mountbellew@fair-murtagh.ie](mailto:mountbellew@fair-murtagh.ie)  
Tel: 090 967 9680

## Ballinasloe Christmas Craft Fair

This year's Ballinasloe Christmas Craft Fair is widely anticipated as it has been very popular for the past 2 years, each year there are locals who love getting the opportunity to pick up unique, handcrafted gifts and foods. The fair will take place on Sunday Dec 2nd, 11am-5pm, in The Carlton Shearwater Hotel. The bonus of the bigger venue this year means that there will be plenty of new

crafts people and artisan food producers. Products available will range from a selection of homemade and artisan foods, pottery, jewellery, textiles, wood crafts, knitted and crocheted items, pictures and photography prints, cards, fairies, items personalised while you wait and much, much more. More great news is that there will also be a children's art and craft workshop running from 1-4pm.

A mix of paint, glitter and imagination promises to keep children very happy while mum and dad can browse the wonderful stands. The art workshop is free but will taking donations as fundraising for the local Karate Club in hope of sending the talented team to Japan next year. In conjunction with the Christmas Craft Fair, Carlton Shearwater are hosting their annual *Santa at The Carlton* event. Santa will be arriving at 2 and will be in residence until 4.30.

## Ballinasloe Town Council

Comhairle Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe



CIVIC OFFICES, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY.

Tel: 090 9642263 Fax: 090 9642689 Email: [townclerk@ballinasloetc.ie](mailto:townclerk@ballinasloetc.ie)  
[www.ballinasloe.ie](http://www.ballinasloe.ie) | You can also Follow us on Twitter  @ballinasloetc



# Christmas Opening & Parking

UNTIL 8pm FRIDAYS, 1-5pm SUNDAYS FOR DECEMBER

COMPANY	ADDRESS
TOPAZ/CORRIB OIL	Brackernagh
SUPERVALU	Brackernagh
GOODE DRY CLEANERS	Dunlo Street
BILLY'S DISCOUNT STORE	Dunlo Street
CARRY OUT OFF LICENCE	Dunlo Street
CLARKE'S CYCLES	Dunlo Street
SUPERMAC'S	Main St./Sarsfield Rd/Society St.
VINEYARD OFF LICENSE	Main Street
MURPHY'S PHARMACY	Main Street
MICHAEL WARD'S CLOTHING	Main Street
KELLER'S	Main Street
SALMON'S DEPARTMENT STORE	Main Street
EURO 2	Main Street
STRONGE'S & EIRCOM STORE	Main Street
CH COMPUTER & OFFICE SUPPLIES	Main Street
MANNION'S SPORTSWEAR	Marina Point
PAUL BYRON SHOES	Marina Point
BARRY'S CYCLES	Sarsfield Road
DOWNEY'S BAR & RESTAURANT	Society Street
KARIBA'S	Society Street
BRODERICK'S PHARMACY	Society Street
HOGAN'S MENSWEAR	Society Street
MANNING'S MENSWEAR	Society Street
CONCANNON'S SPAR	Society Street
FLETCHER'S	Society Street
DONNELLY'S FLORIST	Society Street
J&S PHOTOS	Society Street
JORENA'S	Society Street
UTAH	Society Street
THE BREAD BASKET	St. Michael's Square
SHERIDAN'S STORE	St. Michael's Square
DOLAN'S GARAGE	Athlone Road

From 1st November to 7th December, All Town Centre car parks are FREE from 4pm onwards.

From 8th December 2012 to New Year's Eve all car parks and on street parking are FREE from 11am onwards.

## FESTIVE GATHERING TOWN HERALDS CHRISTMAS

Live Entertainment on the Gig Rig from 4-7pm Saturday, 1st December.

MC: Billy Bones (Treasure Island)

### Performers

- Scoil an Croi Naoifa
- Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal Creagh
- Scoil Ui Chearnaigh Gaelscoil
- Newtown NS
- Junior Sean Nos Dancers
- Pirates from Penzance
- Ballinasloe Folk Group
- In Step Stage School
- Treasure Island Dancers

Santa Arrives, Christmas Lights are switched on at 5.30pm. All finished by approx 6.30pm

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# Thoughts of Festive Retailers

## Shop Local This Christmas



**SEAN FLETCHER**

On the 8th of December Fletchers Expert Electrical will see some celebrities brighten its doorstep as it holds a Christmas Shopping day till 6pm that evening. Sean believes there will be great interest in some of their most popular products such as the Ipad Mini, Beats by Dr Dre, iPods etc. He will have each of these notable products on promotion as well as the new 3D Smart TV, so Fletcher's is not be one to forget to visit this Christmas.

**BILL KELLER**

During the busy Christmas shopping season Kellers will be dropping its prices on all Christmas decorations and Christmas trees by a generous 25% which will make the Christmas necessities quite a bit cheaper on the pocket.

**DERMOT SALMON**

On December 7th Salmons will be having a very special day that will see the children of the town very impressed. Salmon's will be holding a Toy Night and all pieces marked will have 20% Off between the hours of 6-8pm. The shop will also be dropping the price of its pet centre stock, as all accessories and other bits will be reduced by 20%.

**VAL COLLERAN**

Val can reveal that two days during the Christmas shopping season UTAH will bring two days that will have even greater bargains and reductions than those already in store at the moment.

**NIALL CLARKE**

Clarke Cycles will be dropping some prices over the coming weeks as all adult bicycles will be reduced by 25% and all travel assistance items will also be reduced by 10%.

**FERGAL DUNNE**

Here's an idea: let's buy Christmas presents from small local businesses and self-employed people. For example, from your neighbour who sells online, the local crafts person who makes jewellery, the girl who has a stunning florist, the local gift store, your friend who runs a shop, the local bakers who make handmade cakes and buns or the guy who has a stall on the market. The guys that run a Café or Salon. Let's make sure that money goes to individual people and not multinational companies. This way more LOCAL people will have a better Christmas. If you think it's a good suggestion please pass on this idea to your friends we all to support the real people this Christmas. 🍀



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# Do You Know Ballinasloe?

Author Gerry Devlin with his wife Olive and John Donnelly who launched the book in Hayden's Hotel, Ballinasloe.



## Writes Ken Kelly

A book produced by local man, Gerry Devlin, about the characters, customs, buildings and institutions of his native town could become a best seller. The 80 page illustrated book which deals with much of the history of the town over the past two centuries, is entitled "Ballinasloe-Did Ya Know" with part of the proceeds from the sale of the book going to East Galway Cancer Support.

Gerry Devlin became involved with East Galway Cancer Support after being diagnosed with prostate cancer and holds the position of Fundraising Chairman, as well as being a member

of the 22-strong Prostate Support Group that the EGCS runs on the 4th Tuesday of every month. He feels that by donating €1 from the sale of the book, he is helping a vital support group that aided him through his cancer journey.

While in recovery, Gerry went on long walks and taking his camera along, casually took pictures around town. "I then realised that every photo I took had a story and then I tried to tell the history and background. There were far too many photos for the book, so I included them on a DVD which accompanies *Did Ya Know*. I don't claim to be an expert on Ballinasloe's history or folklore and I cannot guarantee that everything in

the book is 100% correct. However, I hope to create enough curiosity in you, the reader, to want to learn more about Ballinasloe" he said.

Gerry went on to say that most of the stories in the book were related to him by his late mother, Verdun Devlin (Browne). "She got the nickname 'Verdun' because her father, Gussie Browne, fought at the Battle of Verdun in 1917 and as a baby she was called Verdun by her older brother. The nickname stuck, just like it did to many Ballinasloe people over the years, some of which are mentioned in the book" he explained.

Launching the Book, in Hayden's Hotel, John Donnelly, the former President of the IFA and a Director of Cancer Care West, congratulated the author on the production and forecast it would be in big demand by many exiles as well as locals. Commenting on one of the stories in the Book, about a network of turnpike roads, Mr. Donnelly told the assembly that when he was in office in the IFA, revenue from the exporting of rabbits was higher than the revenue from dairy exports in Ireland.

Jacqueline Daly who is Deputy Chairperson and PRO for East Galway Cancer Support, congratulated Mr. Devlin on his publication and his generosity in donating part of the proceeds from the sale of the book to EGCS. "I hope it will be a best seller for you and I also believe it will be an ideal Christmas gift" she concluded.

The Book is now on sale at most of the town's newsagents or directly from the author at 087 9325524. Did Ya Know you might even be mentioned in it! 

# What's Out there for Cautious Investor?



## Writes Donal Scannell

With all the bad economic news of the last few years, people only wanted to have their money in guaranteed deposit accounts, but with interest rates falling more month by month people need to re-examine their investment strategy. To get any sort of return on a deposit account you will need to be committing your money for longer and longer. If you are like a lot of people and are just putting your money on deposit simply because you don't know what else to do or who to ask, you need take action. Get more "interested" in your savings.

There are a lot of places that you can put your money where your money is guaranteed and where you can make some decent returns. All the leading life assurance and investment companies have products that people should

be having a look at. Such as capital guaranteed bonds that offer both high deposit rates plus the opportunity of separate growth from equities and commodities. You can also get higher returns from equity funds that only invest in the highest quality companies and with potential losses limited by guarantees.

Investment companies have reacted to public demand and are offering quality investment opportunities at little or no risk. For the longer term you really need to investigate these opportunities. Seek advice from an Independent Financial Broker that can give you the broadest range of choices and at a level you understand and accept. Any good broker would be happy to meet and chat to you free and without obligation. If their product suits you then great, if not you have lost nothing only a few minutes of your time.



# Dubarry Opens First Flagship Store in College Green, Dublin

**Writes Síofra Mannion**

**Footwear and clothing firm Dubarry have opened a new flagship store opposite Trinity College at 35 College Green in Dublin's city centre.**

Dubarry is best known in Ireland for its footwear and in particular its 'Dubes' range of deck shoes. However most of its income comes from international sales of clothing, bags and accessories. Last year the company had a turnover of €22 million, of which €17.3 million was generated outside Ireland.

"What we are selling internationally is slightly different to what we sell in the domestic market," said Michael Walsh, Marketing Director of Dubarry. "We have historically built up our Irish business with shoe shops and would also have dealt with independent department stores such as Roches or Arnotts, whose business models have changed

very significantly in recent years. We saw a gap in Dublin and felt we needed to take a big step by opening our own flagship store to communicate our full international story."

The opening of the store marks a change of strategy for Dubarry, which has so far defied the downturn through an international expansion programme, which has focused on selling through high-end retailers in several countries, including Harrods in London.

Walsh hopes the College Green store will be a blueprint for other developments in international markets, possibly on a partnership or franchise basis. "The interior of the store is rustic and traditional," he said "and we feel that is the environment in which we can best communicate the range and values of our brand. The clothing offering isn't going head to head with Abercrombie and Fitch - it is aimed at their customer's parents, and people in their mid-20s and above." According to Walsh, the

company has just had its best year selling Dubes deck shoes into the Irish market. It has also recently secured a license to include GORE-TEX fabric in its Autumn Winter 2012 clothing range.

"The top and bottom ends of the retail market are doing reasonably well; it is the middle of the market that is being squeezed," he said. "We have found that people are still prepared to pay for quality both here and throughout Europe."

Dubarry, which has its headquarters in Ballinasloe, was established in 1937 as a co-op to provide local employment. The company wound down its manufacturing in Galway in 2004 after shifting the manufacturing operation to work with overseas sub-contract manufacturers. Today in Ballinasloe there are 38 people employed in Design, Quality Assurance, Finance, Administration, Warehousing, and Sales and Marketing. There are a further 10 people in Dubarry UK and 11 personnel in Dubarry USA. 

# Launch of BEST Competition Expansion to 3 New Schools

**Writes Síofra Mannion**

The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre has recently launched the fifth annual BEST Competition – Ballinasloe Entrepreneurial Skills Tournament. 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 students in Ardscoil Mhuire and St Joseph's College, Garbally Park as per the previous four years with the competition being opened to St Cuan's, Castleblakeney, Holy Rosary and Colaiste an Creggan, Mountbellew for the first time this year.

The judges for this year's competition are

**Mr. Gerry Kelly B.A. H. Dip**

Former Connacht Rugby CEO. Wide commercial and business experience with a particular interest in Branding and Marketing. Gerry was a Maths teacher prior to his role at Connacht Rugby.

**Mr. John M. Power (Chair) B.Com., D.P.A., DCA, F.C.C.A.**

Currently Operates a successful Management Company specialising in Start up business ventures. Has worked with about 50 start up businesses and continues to work with a number small/medium sized businesses.

**Mr. Chris Armstrong B.Sc Physics, Dip RandD Stanford**

Serial entrepreneur, he has founded and developed a number of business in the Tech area such as 2PM Technologies, Porto Media, Digital Weekly and others.

A presentation on the competition was given at each school recently by the competition judges along with Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre Manager Lyn Donnelly

Michael Staunton, a previous chairperson of BACD Ltd came up with the idea of the competition where the students are encouraged to focus on creativity for a new business idea and closing date for applications is the 14th December



L-R: Gerry Kelly, Lyn Donnelly, Chris Armstrong and John Power.

2012. Application forms are available from the BEST Coordinator in each school or can be downloaded from [www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie](http://www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie). The judges will evaluate each application and choose a number of finalists to pitch their 'BEST Idea' to them in a Dragon's Den style presentation during the final stage of the competition. All participants are then invited to an awards ceremony in March 2013 where the winners will be announced and a prominent entrepreneur will give a speech to the students and their parents.

The BEST Winner receives a Cash Prize of €1,000 and runners up totaling €1,500. The competition is sponsored by The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre and The Ballinasloe Credit Union.

The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre is an initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd (BACD) and is now home to 14 enterprises employing in excess of 180 people. If you are in business or thinking of starting a business in Ballinasloe 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. For further information call 090 9646516 or visit the website at: [www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie](http://www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie)

# BEC

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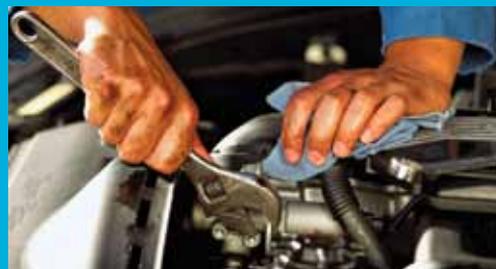
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# 170 Years of Town Council Independence Now Finished?



**Writes Colm Croffy**

## **The Government's Decision to abolish the 140 Town Councils and the 48 Town Commissions brings to an end over 170 years of local governance in Ballinasloe.**

Under the plan, the existing 114 councils across the State will be rationalised into 31 bodies, with a total of 80 town councils to be merged into new "Municipal Districts".

Earl Clancarty was one of the first Landlords in Ireland to have a Town Council Established in 1841. Commissioners, not Councillors sat in monthly petty sessions and theirs and the proceedings of the Board of Governors for St. Bridgid's Hospital have proved a timeless backdrop to the development of the town over practically two centuries in their leather bound minute books.

This structure has evolved from Commissioners to Urban District Council was delegated to a full Town Council, with powers to strike a rate, raise their own finance and spend the localities rates and development fees money, determine the Development Plan and Planning issues for the town and engage in national or EU development schemes.

The current nine member Town Council will presumably be abolished prior to the local elections at County Council level in 2014. Its functions, assets, land banks, staff and funds entrusted for community development (including the balance of the €22m on special deposit for remediation works on the landfill) will all be vested in Galway County Council. What took over 170 years to build in this

town and countless others like it have seen removed by a stroke of a pen and it seems it's only the local politicians that are critical.

What is being proposed for the next layer of local governance in Minister Hogan's paper is a Municipal District loosely based on the Area Committees already in Council Authorities. The Dept of Environment has until late March to come up with the Electoral Districts by central edict and they don't have to stick with the old demarcation lines. It is conceivable that we could end up as the Municipal District of Cappataggle?

What is not debatable is that these Districts (with the possibility one extra County Councillor elected) will not be able to raise their own rates, control their own budget, decide on how resources are allocated and will not be able to shape or control Development plans - Aras An Chontae (effectively the Dept of Environment) will control all that.

"They've some idea of the roof of the new structure, the Department wants but they are very shy on details for the foundation and walls that will underpin this Reform structure" observes Town Mayor Carmel Greally.

"It's easy to say we need less politicians, scrap us all, but who will now be responsible for the 438 units of local authority housing in our community and the €750,000 of rental income each year? Who will people go to now for problems with the 40 housing estates dotted around the town that the Council has taken in charge? How will our educational, voluntary and sporting bodies engage with a Municipal District, that will be subservient to the County Manager, when they want land

or planning permissions for extensions?

In the past five years as a Council with its own budget the Council has invested over €800,000 in supporting grants to a host of Associations, Sports Clubs, Voluntary and Community Groups busy building a community for now and the future. They will all now have to apply directly to Galway County Council as the District talking shop will have no budgetary or controlling powers. What about local democracy? A further detachment and isolation of rural Ireland from central Government." claims Carmel.

"The key issue remains the rates. Prudent Estimate's policies of the past 15 years have continually seen the town operate it's rating system as the third lowest in the Country. Currently Loughrea, Tuam and Roscommon would be at an average of €71.30 in the euro, Ballinasloe's is €52. The new reform talks of the levelling out of all RATES consistent with the County average that means that from 2015 rate payers can expect increases in the order of 26%!

How will that enhance the town centre viability? The current €200,000 per annum a year parking charges, agreed under great strife, to be ring fenced for town centre development, will just be hovered into the central fund for the County. "For the nine of us elected now while we need reform and change, our current system allowed a functioning rateable authority to make long term commitments and hold officials to account over the budgetary process. A Talking Shop of a Municipal Council is what we are getting in return with County Hall calling all and every shot" exclaims Carmel.

"We are holding briefings, meetings with Ministers and TD's and even they can't give us answers but what we need to know is (in the next 18 months or so) how can our community be able to maintain our core services, support the capital projects we have planned for, continue with the tidy towns, sports, community, leisure and voluntary support and the Xmas lights and big events like Fair week if all that local democratic decision making process is denied to us."

"All our excellent indoor and outdoor staff who have contributed to the building up of our town have now a huge shadow hanging over the continuity of services we provide with this current recipe for confusion which could cripple us" said Mayor Greally.



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The Cover price is €2 each and all the proceeds go towards the production costs. The Board of BACD and the Subscribers will continue deliver 3500 copies into every local homestead, flat and business within the Ballinasloe Urban Area. The Magazine can also be read online at [www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie](http://www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie)

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**FINE GAEL**

# Town Hosts 5th Festival and Event Organisers Conference

**Writes Síofra Mannion**

The Association of Irish Festival Events Annual (AOIFE) Conference had a very successful 19th Annual Convention in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel with over 260 delegates in attendance over two days.

Themed *The Gathering for the Business of Fun*, Guest of honour was Minister of State for Tourism and Sport Michael Ring TD, who officially opened proceedings and launched the first ever Annual Review publication for the sector. He also had some good news for the delegates in spelling out the mechanics of the IPBI €2 million private sponsorship fund which is being administered by local authorities and should help support Gathering events.

Leas Cathairleach of the Dail Michael Kitt TD, Denis Naughton T.D. Senator Michael Mullins along with countless Councillors from all over the island including Mayor Carmel Greally and Cllr Mike Kelly, were in attendance. The Conference received praise from its 260 plus attendee list that included Festivals, Corporate Suppliers, Leader Officers, Arts Officers and Students, from all over the Island and included a visiting Student delegation from Holland. It was the fifth time the conference has been held in Ballinasloe and is estimated to be worth €100,000 locally.

It's an affair that contains workshops and keynote speeches from renowned individuals in the festivals and community event sector. This year the Deputy Director of the London Cultural Olympiad, and the Director of Marketing and Innovation at Festivals Edinburgh and Mrs Sylvia Allen a leading sponsorship consultant from the U.S were the keynote international speakers. Nationally, The Gathering, Failite Ireland, the Arts Council and The Wheel and many more brilliant speakers engaged all the delegates with many valuable lessons about the current state of the Festival Event sector.



There were representatives from festivals as far off as Derry, Dublin, West Cork, Waterford and Kerry that made the journey just to experience the high quality programme of events. Minister Ring also presented the Donal O'Driscoll Media Award to Mark Graham for his outstanding work in promoting and publicising Ireland's diverse festivals and events to a huge print and broadcast audience.

Ireland's 2012 Festival and Events Year in Review is a new project undertaken by AOIFE to profile a festival or event from every county as well as add articles that captured the sector's eye in 2012. Clifden Arts was profiled as part of the Galway entry and Castlerea Rose Festival as the Roscommon entry. Festival Events Northern Ireland was also launched at the conference which sees a new pilot partnership between VAI and AOIFE working to bring festival and event organisers in the north and south closer together.

The Conference concluded with the Dinner and Best of Carlton Marketing Awards which salute Marketing and Innovative Design in promoting Festivals and Events. In eight categories there was only one West of Ireland shortlist, with the Boyle Arts Festival being nominated for best Poster. In the end the Fastnett Short Film Festival scooped the Overall Best Marketing Award.



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# Sourcing of Local Producers Made Easier with new *Made in Galway* Website Initiative



## Writes Kieran Coyne

With Christmas only a few short weeks away most of us are thinking about what gifts to buy and where to get the ham and turkey. With plenty of great reasons to source these locally now there is a new initiative called *Made in Galway* to help you do just that. Shopping locally helps keep businesses in your community strong and generally has a lower environmental impact as goods

have not travelled as far. The website [www.madeingalway.ie](http://www.madeingalway.ie) is a directory which is 'free to list' and user driven which means each producer lists and manages its own business profile. Each business profile has its own page featuring their information, contact details, map location and image gallery and can be edited as the user requires.

There are already over 150 food and craft producers from all around Galway

featuring on the site but there are plenty more yet to list. Locally in Ballinasloe there are several producers to the Ballinasloe country market for example who would be well placed to promote their wares on the website. So for this years' Christmas Dinner and Gifts why not consider buying your vegetables from a local farmer such as Beechlawn Organic Farm, a gift from Coolbawn Woodcraft, or your gift cards from P.S Card Designs. You could commission a painting of a pet from Leonie Sutton Equine artist or perhaps a felted hat or jumper from Bombyx Mori. These are just some of the Ballinasloe businesses who have already listed on the website. For more just go to [www.madeingalway.ie](http://www.madeingalway.ie)

The *Made in Galway* initiative was developed by Galway Co. Council during 2012 to support and promote Galway businesses both locally and nationally as well as internationally at various fairs and events throughout the year.

For further information on *Made in Galway*, contact Caitriona in the CEED unit of Galway County Council by Email, [caitrona.scully13@gmail.com](mailto:caitrona.scully13@gmail.com) or Phone 091 476400. *Made in Galway* is also on twitter @madeingalway0 and on Facebook at [facebook/madeingalway](https://www.facebook.com/madeingalway).

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# SUAS Supporting People to Live the Lives They Want

Members of the SUAS Team  
 Back (L-R): Sharon Donnell, Tracy Moriarty, Jesse Albertini, Mary O'Connell and Verona McGivern  
 Front (L-R): Clare Kelly, Hazel Moore and Trisha Donohue.

Below: Deputy Mayor Cllr Johnny Walsh and John Turley following their speeches



The highlight of the launch was the very positive presentations by some of the people that access SUAS services, supporting them to have greater social opportunities, links with other community services, respite services to families and access to volunteers. Members of the team works alongside other resources within the Brothers of Charity including home-Sharing, Employ Ability Services and Volunteers, all of whom attended and shared information about their service. SUAS were delighted with the attendance at the launch and it was of great benefit to share information with other local community services to develop joint working relationships. The organisation thanked Community Hearts, Maureen Cahalan for her recent fundraising evening in Karibas and other community agencies that have made offers of support.

## Writes Mary O'Connell

SUAS service provides multi-disciplinary support to adults with an intellectual disability living in the community in East Galway. Deputy Mayor Cllr. Johnny Walsh launched SUAS Services in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, recently.

The launch was attended by individuals using the service, family, friends, community groups and local services. The service aims to promote well-being and prioritises people's independence, choice, safety and opportunities using a person centred approach.

SUAS is an acronym reflecting the key tenets of our service Support, Upskill, Advocate and Socialise. Its aim is to work with people to meet their individual

needs. They provide information on local services, rights and entitlements and link individuals with community services and resources as appropriate. The main aim is to promote positive mental health and to support individuals to achieve their personal goals, develop independence skills and to live the life they choose. By supporting individuals to enhance their relationships and to develop new friendships through providing social opportunities, lives improve.

The small team is located in 10, Church Hill in the town centre of Ballinasloe. It provides Community Supports, Counselling, Psychology, Social Work, Psychiatry (outpatients), Speech and Language Therapy, a drop in service, information and advice.

For further information, please contact SUAS Service Manager on: Tel: 090 9646400. Email: [suas@galway.brothersofcharity.ie](mailto:suas@galway.brothersofcharity.ie)



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B-MAX 1.4	€19,107 <sup>1</sup>	€5,733	€13,374	€223.96	37 months	€6,739	€1,491.05	4.9% Fixed

# Ballinasloe Credit Union & YOU



**Writes Noel Madden, Manager BCU**

**The Credit Union difference is encapsulated in the Credit Union motto: Not for Profit, Not For Charity, But For Service.**

A credit union is a financial services organisation set up to assist you and not to profit from your needs. But it is not a charitable organisation. It must be run in a business-like manner so that it is of real benefit to its members. Based on the Co-Operative Principles of Equality, Equity and Mutuality, a credit union exists only to provide financial services to its members, on a not-for-profit basis.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Credit Unions were first formed in Germany (1850) in the town of Delitzze by a man called Hermann Schultz. At that time the guilds of artisans (craftsmen) found that they were being overtaken by the industrial revolution and that their livelihoods were being slowly destroyed through changed work practices and mechanisation. The reliance on the local "Lord of the Manor" (as in Downton Abbey) was no longer an option and workers were forced to find different methods of organisation - and this forced them to find different sources of finance. So the credit union movement came about. People, by co-operating in money matters, helped themselves to become economically self sufficient. The movement spread to Italy then to Canada and America before returning back across the Atlantic to Ireland. The first credit union in Ireland was formed in Donore Avenue, Dublin in 1958.

Ballinasloe Credit Union was set up in 1967. Over a period of 45 years the entity has grown to €92 million in assets. A credit union confines its activities to a "common bond" area. It takes in savings from the membership in this common bond and lends out the savings to borrowers, also within the common bond. Borrowers pay interest on the loans and the income from the loans pays the credit union's operational expenses and capital reserves. Any surplus remaining is returned to the members. Credit Unions do not source funds from the financial markets. Consequently the global upheaval in the financial markets has left credit unions largely unscathed except where members have borrowed from the credit union during the Celtic Tiger years and now find themselves in financial difficulty due to job loss, part time working or reductions in pay due to taxation measures.

## **COMMON BOND**

Credit Unions are formed by members - usually of a local community (i.e. BCU which has a common bond of 15 miles radius from the credit union office) or of a particular profession (i.e. An Garda Siochana). BCU is a community credit union. As such its focus is on the local community via the members of the credit union.

Today 2.9 million Irish people enjoy the benefits of credit union membership. All Credit Unions are based in local communities and built on trust. Each credit union is owned and independently governed by its members - by electing Directors to run its affairs. It is people just like you, who save with their credit union and borrow from it, who govern it and share in its success.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

One of the central Credit Union Operating Principles relates to Social Responsibility. This principle underpins everything the credit union does within its local community in that it obliges the credit union to "seek to bring about human and social development" within that community. The credit unions "vision of social justice extends to the individual member as well as to the community at large within which the member exists." Your credit union is here to assist you and not to profit from your misfortune.

## **SERVICES**

BCU has provided a savings and loan facility for its members during its lifetime. Many members have availed of these facilities and at year end 30 September 2012 the credit union had nearly 18,000 active members with €69 million in savings and it had reserves of €23 million. Loans to members at year end stood at €44 million.

Services include a share account, a deposit account, a current account, loan account, foreign exchange facility and we are also agents for Axa insurances, household, car etc. In this era of electronic access to accounts BCU has also made an online facility available to its members. CUonline allows access to your accounts to transfer monies between financial institutions or to make electronic payments to service providers such as electricity, gas, telephone etc. Billpay is also a service provided for members use.

The utility bills that you want to pay can now be processed by the credit union for you at the counter. Paypath can also be used and you can have your pay, pension or social welfare payment credited to your account electronically weekly, fortnightly or monthly. For the farming community annual grant aid can also be sent directly to your account by the Dept of Agriculture and Food.

To date none of these services attract any charges and we will maintain these accounts "charge free" for as long as possible. Ballinasloe Credit Unions focus is To Be of Service to its members. It serves no other function in life. When members do not use us we will be finished and we are not finished yet!

## **CAN WE BE OF SERVICE TO YOU?**

The World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) is a body that represents 177ml credit union members worldwide with assets of \$1000 billion (a trillion) in 96 countries in 50,000 credit unions. WOCCU advocates for credit unions around the world and also assists fledgling credit unions in the third world countries. Through its affiliation to the Irish League of Credit Unions and its association with WOCCU Ballinasloe Credit Union is also aligned with its sister credit union worldwide.

The Credit Union's financial year ends on 30th September and the 2012 AGM will be held before Christmas. To keep up to date on all news visit [www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie](http://www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie)

# Delaney's Home Furnishings 35 Years of Customer Service

Writes Siofra Mannion

This family owned local gem holds the entire town's home furnishing needs and once you purchase an item there no other furnishing store will do. Delaney's has been operating for thirty five years and has spent those years building on and expanding till it has reached an impressive 20,000 sq feet in 2012 with a number of new vital departments.

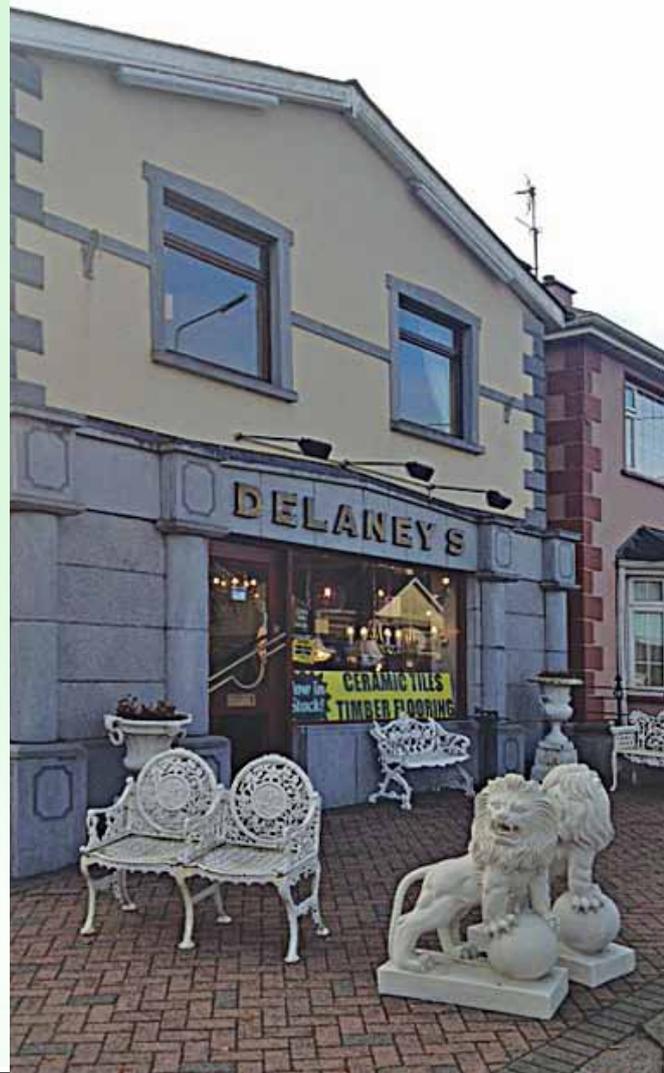
For the last three years, Paddy Delaney and the other members of his team, have been revamping and renovating to add a new lighting department, wallpaper department and bed linen department. Its flooring department now includes ceramic tiles, timber flooring, oriental rugs, vinyl flooring and carpets. Its lighting department has a wide range of outdoor and indoor lights. The store expects to be busy for the upcoming Christmas rush and is no stranger to having busy showrooms.

They value their attention to detail and do not hesitate to aid their customers in any way they can. Paddy says "we have a very good relationship with our customers; we have people coming into us from thirty miles away as well as our usual locals. Once a customer does business with us they will come back again and again. Over the years we've seen customer's sons and daughters do business with us after watching their parents do so."

The store employs six staff and some of these employees have been with the family firm for over twenty years. Paddy believes "Keeping his employees happy" is the secret to his store's success. Paddy and Geraldine's son Jack, at the age of 11 has already started taking over the reins from his father as he helps out whenever he can.

Paddy and his team will order in any item a customer needs. It's no problem to them and they also deliver most furniture and fit most flooring so they complete the full job for their customers. Paddy, Geraldine and Jack would like to thank all their customers and staff for years of great service and wish everyone the best for 2013.

For more information contact Delaney's on 090 964 2364 or look them up on Facebook on Delaneys Ballinasloe.



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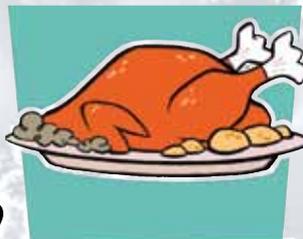
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# Supermac's Founder & Owner McDonagh Buys Limerick Hotel

Writes SÍofra Mannion

Supermac's founder and owner Pat McDonagh is entering the hotel industry after recently striking a deal to buy a 107 bedroom hotel in Limerick for an estimated €3.5m.

It is widely believed in business that in buying the four-star hotel, Mr McDonagh beat off competition from its original owner, the world-renowned philanthropist, Chuck Feeney, who has donated millions to numerous projects at the nearby University of Limerick, and who opened the Castletroy hotel in 1991.

He eventually sold the hotel for €25m in 2004 to a property company headed by accountant Michael Daly and was interested in buying it back, only for Mr. McDonagh to swoop and agree a deal with the hotel owners, CPH Investments Limited. A total of 90 staff are employed at the hotel and there are no job losses with the takeover.

Mr. McDonagh has said that he has plans to reinvest €500,000 in the hotel complex and grow its business. The Carlton Hotel Group has operated the hotel since 2009 after the previous company in charge of running the hotel, Castletroy Park Management, went into liquidation. A joint statement from the Carlton Hotel Group and Supermac's Ireland said the sale of the hotel had



been agreed. "Once the sale closes, Pat McDonagh will take over the operations of the hotel" the statement read. "There will be no job losses and business will continue as normal at the hotel, with no interruption in trade."

As part of the future management of the hotel, Mr McDonagh will be honouring all customer deposits, bookings, memberships and vouchers. The deal was overseen by Gordon Kearney of Rooney Auctioneers in Limerick city.

"It is one of the largest commercial sales to have taken place in Limerick in recent years and it is a real vote of confidence in the region by Mr McDonagh," said Mr Kearney. He added: "He (Mr

McDonagh) is dipping his toe into the hotel industry, so it is fantastic that a successful businessman is doing so here in Limerick."

"I had never really considered going into the hotel sector but it was a good deal and there's potential there, so we decided to go for it. If we weren't approached with it, it probably never have happened" stated Pat. The hotel is located alongside the University of Limerick campus and is also near the National Technological Park.

Supermac's was originally founded by Mr McDonagh in 1978 when he opened the first fast-food outlet opposite Ward's Menswear in Main Street, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. Originally Pat had got into business to run a pool and gaming arcade in the town centre location. He met his wife Una whilst operating the store and they have continued in a dynamic partnership, developing one of Ireland's most successful indigenous businesses.

Since then, the company has grown to become the country's biggest fast-food chain, with over 100 restaurants across the island and the former teacher is believed to be worth upwards of €120 million with his Claddagh Irish Pubs and Restaurant chain in the U.S. He employs 2,600 people in directly owned and franchised restaurants.

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# Michaellian Festive Fayre



## Writes Micheal McCullagh

The Michaellian Ensemble was started in mid-2009. The first performance was the acclaimed Victorian work called The Crucifixion by John Stainer. At that time (1876) only major churches and cathedrals had grand organs which were the proscribed accompaniment to The Crucifixion. As smaller churches installed Grand organs, Stainer composed this work so that it could be performed the length and breadth of England. He envisaged that the congregation of the parish would sing the entire work.

Over winter 2009 and the spring 2010 practices were held to perfect the choruses and solos and on Passion Sunday 2010 the work was performed in St. Michael's on 28th March at 7.30 to a near packed church and to great acclaim, the entire work was totally sung.

The chorus group were so delighted they wanted another chance to perform. This led to an Irish and European premier of The Passion and Glory of the Risen

Christ by Jack Schrader being performed on Passion Sunday 17th April 2011 at 7.30. This work was accompanied by a full orchestra including strings, wind, percussion, drums and bass and included narrative readings from the Gospels. Again the church was near full.

To show the versatility of the Ensemble it was decided to do a Christmas work. The notable difference between Easter and Christmas music in in the Composition. Christmas is such a joyful period in the liturgy of the Church. So, this year a Christmas work is being practiced called "Celebrate The Season" A Christmas Cantata by Joel Raney. Again there are narrative quotations from the gospels and along with choral and solo numbers convey the story of the birth of Jesus.

Admission is free but a voluntary collection is requested. To date the Ensemble has raised over €9,000 for worthy groups. This year the chosen group is Youthwork Ireland based at the old Canal. This voluntary group is involved in the wellbeing of young

people. The group interacts with the Garda, promotes personal development and a listening service to teens. The Michaellian Ensemble acknowledges the support and generosity of Fr. John Garvey ADM, without whose help the choir would not exist. We are all most grateful to him. The orchestra comes from Music Matters in New Inn and also members of the No. 4 Army Band. All their input is voluntary and again their professionalism is greatly appreciated.

The Michaellian Ensemble is a voluntary and local choir endeavouring to bring quality and popular choral works to the parishioners. There is a constant shortage of male members but all members love being involved for the friendship generated and enjoyed by all.

This year we will remember Una Reilly who sadly passed away recently. It is hoped that the current presentation Celebrate The Season which will be in St Michael's Church Ballinasloe on Sunday 16th December next at 7.30 sharp. New members are always welcome.



## HERE TO SERVE OUR MEMBERS



### Wishing All A Very Happy Christmas and Peaceful 2013



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# Successful Fair Week Bodes Well for The Gathering 2013

**Writes Tim Broderick, Chairman Fair & Festival**

As the curtain closes on the 2012 Fair, our sights are now firmly fixed on the 2013 Fair & Festival. As we head into 2013 and the Gathering, the Fair will present Ballinasloe with the great opportunity to welcome back all our family and friends to what promises to be a great 9 day festival.

Take note of the dates. Next years Fair runs from Saturday, 28th September to Sunday 6th October 2013. I'd like to thank everyone on the 2012 Fair & Festival Committee for their support. On their behalf, I'd like to thank the many people who make the Fair & Festival the success it is. Our main Sponsors: Carlton Shearwater Hotel, Supermac's, Gullanes Hotel, Premier Proteins and Ballinasloe Credit Union and all other Sponsors, Associates, Patrons, Friends, Supporters and the participating Ballinasloe Vintners. Without your generous support, there would be little to enjoy during the 9 day event.

To all who took part in the various competitions and events during the week, from The Tug-O'-war to the Children's Art Competition and Equestrian events to the Busking Competition, win or lose your participation adds to the life of the fair and we hope to see you all again in 2013. Thanks also to Ballinasloe Town Council, Gardaí, Ballinasloe Fire Brigade, Emergency Services and Portiuncula Hospital staff, Civil Defence and the stewards who kept the whole show ticking along smoothly.

Also, a big thanks to the many volunteers who helped out behind the scenes, setting up barriers, stands, marquees, sound and electrical equipment etc. To the lads on the Soundstage and security on the Fairgreen. Thanks to Alison Duffy who was brilliant in representing Ballinasloe as Queen of the Fair and best of luck in her busy year ahead. To finish, thanks to all the traders and horses on the Fairgreen, after all there would be no fair without them and of course, biggest thanks of all to the people of Ballinasloe and surrounding area. It's your Fair and you make it what it is, the biggest and best Horse Fair in The World.



Overall Champion of the Ballinasloe Dog Show. (L-R): Stanley Clarke, Honorary Life Member Fair and Festival Committee, Judge of the Competition, Jean Healy-Joyce; Jacinta Cullinane, Mallow Co. Cork with Champion Dog Collie (Bichon Freise), Noel Ryan, Premier Protein, Sponsor



Taughmaconnell 660kg Team  
Gullane's Hotel Tug-o'-War Champions.



(L-R) Ivan Gardiner, Tommy Bagnell (Co-Owner), Andrew Gardiner, George Bagnell, Adrian Ahern Ballinasloe Credit Union, Clement McMahon and Tommy Brennan.

# Great Fairs First Ever Heritage Day

**Writes Barra O'Crofaigh, Lauren Jackson & Geraldine Abbott**

The October Horse Fair and Festival held its first ever Heritage Day this year at the festival. With such a long history and association with the town, the committee thought it fitting to tell the story of the Fair's long history.

With the help of Transition Year students from Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew, the Heritage Day consisted of re-enactments of Fairs gone by, talks from local historians, memorabilia from past fairs and Old Ballinasloe where the Emerald Ballroom was transformed into a living museum.

The audience were captivated by a special appearance from Napoleon I (aka Patrick Byrne) who told the story of all the horses bought on the Fair Green that were sent to battle, from his era the whole way up until World War One. The Emperor of France even bought his own horse Merango at the great fair. The TY students acted out scenes of Fairs gone by while local historian Barry Lally explained what times would have been like and why Lord Cloncarty set up such a fair in the first place.

Attendees, Mayor of Galway Tom Welby and Heritage officer Marie Mannion gave special praise to the Fair and Festival

Heritage Day committee members Ciara Croffy and Frank Gavin for organising the event and of course the TY students. It was great to see young people being so enthusiastic about history, they stated that heritage and history is very important and this event should be built upon as Ballinasloe and its Fair is very lucky to have such a strong and interesting tradition.

Schools from all over the locality attended the day to learn more about the Great Fair and its history, it is hoped by committee members that this idea can be built upon and that day will grow and expand. To get in touch or learn more 087 6555631

## Ballinasloe Fair & Festival Singing Pub Winners

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BEST FEMALE SINGER

Sarah Corcoran (The Black Pig)

BEST ENTERTAINER

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# JANUARY / DECEMBER Events Guide

DECEMBER 1		
Turning on Christmas lights	St Michael's Sq	4pm
Soroptomists Race Night	Birchgrove Inn	8pm
One to One	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Keith & Johnny	Maud Millar's	10pm
The High Reel	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Shawn & Paul Allen	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
DECEMBER 2		
Christmas Craft Fair	Carlton Shearwater	11am
ICA Dutch Auction	Moore Hall	12.30pm
Pascal Brennan	Downeys	9pm
Country Music & Dance Lisa McHugh	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 3		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
DECEMBER 4		
Uni Slim	Gullane's Hotel	5.15pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
DECEMBER 5		
Senior's Christmas Party	Ballinasloe Golf Club	
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
DECEMBER 6		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 7		
Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am
GAA AGM	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Frankly Buble 'Michael Buble Tribute'	Carlton Shearwater	8pm
Converse All Stars	Maud Millar's	10pm
Done & Dusted	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 8		
E. Galway Cancer Support Fundraiser	9pm	9pm
Ballinasloe's "Take Me Out"	Gibbon's Pillar House	9.30pm
The Rivulettes	Maud Millar's	10pm
Pete Jones	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 9		
Community Hearts Christmas Market	Haydens Hotel	12 - 8pm
Sr Loretta McLoughlin: Book Launch	Gullane's Hotel	2.30pm
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
Country Music & Dance: Mick Flavin	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
The Skillet Pot	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 10		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
DECEMBER 11		
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
DECEMBER 12		
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
DECEMBER 13		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millar's	10pm

DECEMBER 14		
Closing Date for BEST Competition	Enterprise Centre	
Country Market's 1st anniversary	Town Hall Theatre	9am
Ladies Christmas Party	Ballinasloe Golf Club	
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Tommy Tiernan World Tour Concert	Carlton Shearwater	8.30pm
Ballinasloe Seniors: Anniversary Draw		9pm
Steven Blake	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Moon Lighting	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Streetwise	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 15		
Panto Treasure Island Matinee		2.30pm
Christmas Scramble	Ballinasloe Golf Club	
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	7.30pm
Tara Shamrock	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Johnny O'Halloran & Friends	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Chill Out	Maud Millar's	10pm
Too Tall Paul	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 16		
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	3pm
Kids Xmas Party in Aid of Crumlin Hos	Hayden's Hotel	4pm
Christmas Scramble	Ballinasloe Golf Club	
Panto Treasure Island	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Colin Galligan	Downeys	9pm
Country Music & Dance with Patrick Feeney	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 17		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
DECEMBER 18		
Tea Dance - Christmas Party	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
DECEMBER 19		
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
DECEMBER 20		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Country Music Event	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 21		
Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am
Christy & Mike	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
One 2 One	Downeys	9pm
The Rivulettes	Maud Millar's	10pm
Buzz the Agent	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 22		
Last Man Standing	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
The Rye	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millar's	10pm
Gaegan Pagans	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 23		
Actin' the Magot	Downeys	9pm
Country Music & Dance: Derek Ryan	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
The Chillbillies	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Tepid Rewind	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 24		
Children's Mass	St Michael's Church	6pm
Midnight Mass	St Michael's Church	12am
Midnight Mass	St Brigid's Hospital	12am

# JANUARY / DECEMBER Events Guide

DECEMBER 25		
Mass for Christmas Day	St Michael's Church	9am
Mass for Christmas Day	St Brigid's Hospital	10.30am
Mass for Christmas Day	St Michael's Church	11am
Mass for Christmas Day	St Michael's Church	12.15pm
DECEMBER 26		
Sean O'Flynn Rugby Challenge	Rugby Grounds	2pm
The Geagan Pagans	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
DECEMBER 27		
GAA Celebration Social	Carlton Shearwater	8.30pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millar's	10pm
Christmas Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 28		
Kiwi Paddy	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 29		
Night Owls	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Keith & Johnny	Maud Millar's	10pm
Kensey 3	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
DECEMBER 30		
Paul Byrnes	Downeys	9pm
One 2 One	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millar's	10pm
DECEMBER 31		
One 2 One	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
The Rivuletes	Maud Millar's	10pm
New Years Eve Party Night	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
JANUARY 1		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
DJ	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
JANUARY 2		
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
JANUARY 3		
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 4		
Mummers Festival	New Inn Comm. Hall	7.30pm
Kieran Whyte	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
JANUARY 5		
Mummers Festival	New Inn Comm. Hall	7.30pm
Joxer: Folk & Rock & Roll	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Christy & Mike	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 6		
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
One 2 One	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Country Music & Dance	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
JANUARY 7		
Schools Re-open		
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
JANUARY 8		
Tea Dance	9pm	9pm
JANUARY 9		
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
JANUARY 10		
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	10pm

JANUARY 11		
E. Galway Cancer Support Concert	Town Hall Theatre	8.00pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
JANUARY 12		
Johnny O'Halloran & Friends	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Stephen Blake	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 13		
One 2 One	Downeys	9pm
JANUARY 14		
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
JANUARY 15		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 16		
DEADLINE FOR FEB/ MARCH EDITION OF LIFE MAGAZINE		
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
JANUARY 17		
The Grocer's Assistant	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Brendan Grace	Carlton Shearwater	8.30pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 18		
Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am
The Grocer's Assistant	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Buzz the Agent	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
JANUARY 19		
The Grocer's Assistant	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
One 2 One	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Maggie Dunne	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
JANUARY 20		
Pascal Brennan	Downeys	9pm
Country Music & Dance	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
JANUARY 21		
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
JANUARY 22		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 23		
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
JANUARY 24		
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 25		
Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	9am
One 2 One	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
JANUARY 26		
Mary P	Hayden's Hotel	9pm
Geagan Pagans	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Tepid Rewind	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
JANUARY 27		
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
Country Music & Dance	Carlton Shearwater	9.30pm
JANUARY 28		
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
JANUARY 29		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
JANUARY 30		
Trad/ Folk Music Night	An Táin	10pm
JANUARY 31		
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9pm

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# Show Society Enjoy Great Year

Writes John Harney

**Ballinasloe Show Society recently held its 173rd Annual show at its magnificent showgrounds in the town. To everyone connected with the event, this year's show proved to be one of the most successful shows of recent times. During a summer when many local shows had to be cancelled due to inclement weather, the Society was blessed with perfect weather conditions for the opening weekend.**

It was indeed an event of which Ballinasloe can be justly proud. Mr. John Harney, Ballinasloe's long serving show secretary, reported a huge increase in entries in all facets of the show from poultry, donkeys, sheep, cattle and of course horses. With entries from almost all 32 counties there were prize winners from Antrim to Cork and Wexford to Sligo. The huge entries was very evident from the large array of horse boxes that covered the expanse of the Fair Green in the town from early morning.

The wonderful display of trade stands and their variety proved a major attraction for those attending the show. Many of the exhibitors who were unable to exhibit their wares during the summer due to cancellations took advantage of Ballinasloe's wonderful facilities to do some badly needed trading.

As well as its own classes the show hosted All-Ireland Championship Classes in Cattle and Horses. These classes attracted huge audiences with interested parties travelling from all corners of the country as well as from overseas, especially from England. Those experts in these fields were high in their praise of the standard of animal on show and said the animals were of the highest class.

The Chairman of Ballinasloe Show, Fr. Christy McCormack, who without doubt has a direct line to heaven, as he keeps producing wonderful weather for the each year, was delighted with the success of this year's event. He said "The show would not be a success without the endeavours of his hard working committee. He had a special word of thanks for the sponsors, who despite difficult financial times were still willing to kindly support the running of the show. It was great to see so many trade stands and he thanked all those who exhibited at show as without exhibitors there would be no show."

.He said there was great co-operation given to the show by the various organisations in the town, such as the Town Council, the Gardai, Mr. Ml. Mc Carthy and others and he wished to sincerely thank all those bodies and individuals.

This year the Show added a second weekend to its catalogue of events. However unfortunately like other events during the year the weather intervened and programme of jumping scheduled for the second weekend had to be cancelled due to the underlying ground conditions. However, a Craft and Food Fair together with a spectacular Vintage Show proved to be a major attraction. Ballinasloe will truly look on 2012 with pride and look forward to future with renewed hope and expectation. 🍀



**Photo 1 (Top):** The Fairgreen in Ballinasloe full on the first Saturday of Ballinasloe Show. **Photo 2:** Valerie Thornington Fohenagh Ballinasloe and Fiona Donoghue (Parkmore Stables, Sponsor) at the Ballinasloe Show. **Photo 3:** Fr Christy McCormack Chairperson Ballinasloe Show, Colm Colohan Sponsor, Valerie Thornington, Director Ballinasloe Show and John Burke Safety Officer Ballinasloe Show. **Photo 4:** Fr. Christy McCormack (Chairperson Ballinasloe Show), Senator Michael Mullins, John Salmon (Ballinasloe Show) and Cllr. Cathal Concannon Sponsor.

# Aughrim's Holiday Organisers



## Writes Ken Kelly

They have been described as modern-day Florence Nightingales. Two housewives from Aughrim who, for the past twenty years, have been taking groups of friends and neighbours on holiday trips all over Europe.

Helen Mannion and Mary Hynes have been to the forefront of most committees in Aughrim for over a quarter of a century. In the early nineties the "Over 50's" regularly went on social weekends around the country, enjoying the scenic trips, meals and dancing. This gave food for thought to Mary and Helen that some people might like to travel further afield.

In 1993 the dynamic pair organised a Week-end away in the Isle of Man for sixteen people, acting as organisers, carers, nurses, tour operators and advisers. "It was a huge responsibility, taking a group, many of whom had never been abroad before on the trip. We had to prepare them for the tour, ensure they had essential travel requisites, insurance cover and other necessities" said Helen Mannion. "We had singles and couples on the trip, ranging in age from fifty to 75, and Thank God everything went fine. It was a great success" she added.

"When we came back, everybody was so excited they wanted this to be an annual event" explained Mary Hynes. "Helen and I discussed it and said we would continue to organise the overseas trips. In 1994 we went to Llanduno in Wales, the following year it was Blackpool, Edinburgh in 1996, back

to Llanduno in 97 and Bournemouth in 1998. Each of the trips catered for between twenty and forty local people and in 1999 we decided to take a week in the sun and Salou in Spain was the venue.

"We had intended going to Brighton but could not be accommodated because of political conferences so there was a huge response when we announced we were going for a 'week in the sun.' It was beyond the wildest dreams of so many and we had forty on that trip" said Mary.

By 2001 the demand was so great the two ladies could not cope with the large numbers wanting to travel. "We had to get their passports, medical supplies, tickets for people up to 90 years of age and collect them. It was just too much, so Mary and I decided to split the numbers in two and each of us take a group on different dates. We were now dealing with many elderly people that needed attention, some of them were never on a holiday before. Yes, we had the occasional mishap and accident, which often needed hospital treatment, but we were prepared" said Helen.

So with two groups heading off in September each year, having been collected by bus from the Aughrim base, the holidaymakers have basked in the sunshine in such exotic places as the Costa del Sol, Canaries, Algarve, Italy, other centres in Spain and Portugal as well as a Mediterranean Cruise.

"Once they pay their money, we look after everything. They get on the bus at Aughrim, straight to the Airport and then off to the sun. We know the responsibility we are taking but both of us get such enjoyment looking after them" said Helen. "Many of these people are coming on the trips since we started. They wouldn't miss them for the world" she added. And they still find time to organise weekend trips to different parts of Ireland in the Spring for the "over 50's".

One of the many who have experienced the wonderful holidays, paid tribute to the unselfish work of Mary and Helen. The senior citizen said "Where would we be without them. They are so caring and understanding and I don't know where they get the time and energy to help so many people. They are modern-day Florence Nightingales, they have the personal touch and for many of us these ladies have given us a new lease of life. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude."

## Old Log Cabin Reunion Night

During the summer of 2012, Gerry Devlin, Fundraising chairperson for East Galway Cancer Support, ran a "Log Cabin" reunion night. The night was so successful, Gerry was inundated with people wanting a similar night, and so Gerry set about planning "The Old Log Cabin 'Your Second Chance'". On Sunday the 22nd of October all his hard work came to fruition. What made the night so special was the reunion of the original Log Cabin band. Johnny Feehily, Eamonn Devlin, Louis Bourguine, Jack Mannion and Thomas Gullane. Many of the singers from yesteryear were invited to take part on the night. Johnny Feehily, now a world renowned classical guitarist, gave a solo that had everyone spellbound. All monies raised on the night went to East Galway Cancer Support to help fund their new premises located at Cluain Mhuire, Brackernagh.

East Galway Cancer Support provides access to information for people living with cancer, their family and friends. They put people in touch with practical, emotional and social

support, in a relaxed environment where you can discuss your needs and concerns confidentially. All staff and volunteers are trained by Cancer Care West, who also provide East Galway Cancer Support with a psychotherapist. They run a number of support groups every month. Family Support Group, Breast Cancer Support Group and Prostate Cancer Support Group. As well as a range of complementary therapies: Hypnotherapy, Reflexology, Reiki, Mindfulness and Accupuncture. All services offered are free of charge.

On the 11th of January 2013, East Galway Cancer Support, in conjunction with Marty Walsh Music Promotions, will be holding a concert in the Town Hall, Ballinasloe. Confirmed acts: Shaun O'Dowd, Don Stiff, Marc Roberts, Emma O'Sullivan & Johnny O'Halloran, Jimmy Higgins, Heatwave. Tickets €25 each. Can be obtained from Gullanes Hotel. E-Mail: gullaneshotel@eircom.net Phone 090 9642220 or East Galway Cancer Support on 087-984 0304

# Giving Locally This Christmas

Writes Siofra Mannion

As yet another Christmas draws closer many begin to ponder on what to buy all their relatives and friends. Will it be the latest gadget, a box of bath salts, a scented candle or a board game? What if the gifts that we are giving away just get thrown to the back of a wardrobe could the money spent be put to better use?

Ballinasloe's St Vincent de Paul and the Lions Club work tirelessly throughout the year to provide aid to their benefactors but like all those families scrimping and saving at the moment they can find Christmas to be one the toughest times of the year, financially.

The local chapter of St Vincent de Paul do all they can to help people in all sorts of circumstances; from people in financial difficulties, lone parents, people dealing with unexpected pregnancies, elderly people who may be in need of assistance and even people who might not have the money to continue their education.

This year the charity will be publicising all the ways to help with the needy in the surrounding area. The things people can do are make a donation to St Vincent de Paul, Jubilee Street, Ballinasloe, support their church gate collection on 8th and 9th of December, or by donating clothes and other brack & brack Vincent's shop on Jubilee Street as well as visiting the shop and choosing an item while you're there. You can also remember the charity in your will or volunteer and help them in any way you can.

Joe Sammon Chairman and his team of volunteers are looking forward with some trepidation to the next few weeks - matching resources with demand. If you would like to get in touch with St. Vincent de Paul, Ballinasloe you can call their 24 hour Emergency Mobile 086 230 7373 or conference number on 090 9645707 or drop into them at Ozanam House. The Lions Club motto and philosophy is "we serve", they operate closely with other voluntary organisations to give a helping hand to the underprivileged in society. The club offer support

to people who may fall between different support agencies in Ballinasloe, offering assistance to people who may be in need through the advice of the HSE and social services representatives. Every Christmas they run a food appeal where they supply hampers to people who may be in need or who might not be in the position to get out and stock up for themselves over the Christmas period. There will typically be at least one hundred and twenty food parcels dispersed around the immediate area. You can donate to the food appeal by dropping non perishable foods in the Lions Club baskets at selected local stores. The club will also be holding a church gate collection on the 16th of December in all local churches.

The Lions club have been co-ordinating to organise a special two day course called ASSIST that intends to raise awareness of suicide prevention locally. Brian Derrane President of the Lions Club says "it will make people suicide alert and give them the confidence to intervene and seek help for the person in crisis". The previous one was held the 22nd and 23rd of November but they will be repeating this course in the new year. The new year will also see an afternoon safe talk that is also open to the public. All courses that the Lions Club organise are promoted in local church newsletters and if you have any interest in attending or inquiring how you can aid the club contact Brian Derrane on [brian\\_derrane@hotmail.com](mailto:brian_derrane@hotmail.com).



Society of  
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# The Mighty Quinn Fiddles on

Writes Ken Kelly

**Not many people, in their 94th year, can scoop a number of prizes at Tullamore Agricultural Show, still produce flowers and plants as well as entertaining several groups weekly with his fiddle-playing. That all is done by the Mighty Tom Quinn of Upper Brackernagh, Ballinasloe, a man that belies his years in everything he does.**

Born in Athenry in 1919, Tom came to Ballinasloe in 1941 as a trainee nurse in St. Brigid's Hospital. He had got a taste of garden life from his neighbours in Athenry and when the late Pat Fahy retired from the garden in the Ballinasloe Hospital, Tom was invited to take over. "The Hospital that time was self-sufficient. Between patients and staff there were a lot of mouths to feed, so there was a lot of garden produce needed. We grew vegetables of all kinds and some of them were transplanted in the farm at Creggane but we also produced plants and flowers and these were for the wards around the different units of the hospital." explained Tom.

"Paddy Feeney was my boss and we got on very well. I was half a nurse and half a gardener but I loved dealing with nature and see our plants and shrubs mature. I learned a lot there and later took it up as a hobby at home. Then I started exhibiting at shows around the country and was surprised to win so many awards. Myself and the late Charlie Soden were friendly rivals and we often travelled to shows from Nenagh to Longford with our flowers, apples, vegetables, tomatoes etc. We used to do nine shows each year but sometimes if I beat Charlie at the show he wouldn't talk on the way home but we would be all "palsy-walsy" the following day.

"I won Champion of the Show several times at the Ballinasloe and Moate Shows with a variety of garden produce and for the last three years I made a clean sweep of the Tomato Class at the famous Tullamore Show. There were entries there from at least five counties. I had been invited to judge there for many years and when I retired they had to get a judge from Wales to replace me" said the Mighty Quinn.

Recalling his upbringing in Athenry, Tom said he started learning the fiddle at an early age and with the late Willie Reilly on the accordion, they started playing at concerts and house parties. They then progressed to Gaelic League



Concerts and for the princely sum of five shillings they provided the musical entertainment in Monivea, Craughwell and other centres. And of course they never failed to tog out for the Mummies on St. Stephen's Day, even on one occasion hiring a taxi to transport them around the locality. "We were just back in time to play at a Ceili, in Athenry that night" he said.

On his arrival in Ballinasloe, Tom joined the Dorothy Dunne Band, which included the late Pat Corbett and Johnny Furey. "We were a big draw then and we played in Cumber, Headford and even the Hangar in Galway. I spent ten years with the band and the money came in very handy even though it was often daylight when we got home and then had to turn in for work" said Tom.

Getting married in 1951 to a fellow nurse, Lily English from Knockcroghery, Tom settled into his new life at Upper Brackernagh, concentrating on his chosen profession. However his itchy fingers soon saw him getting involved with the Comhaltas Branch and found himself playing at Feiseanna and Mummies' Festivals in Woodford and New Inn. "We just played for the enjoyment and any prizemoney we won then we gave it to local charities. Tom Madden (on the accordion) and myself won the GAA All-Ireland Scor competitions in 1982 and 1989, representing Ballinasloe and myself and Pat Corbett were honoured to provide the music for the All-Ireland step-dancer, Rory O'Connor, at a concert in Ballinasloe when he performed "The Garden of Daisies."

But the talented Tom was in big demand. Various groups such as Conra na Gaeilge, Scoraiocht, An Toastal and the PTAA

sought his contribution. There were many successes but the achievements of the PTAA in capturing three All-Ireland titles, in the seventies, brought him great personal satisfaction. The titles were won at Mullingar, Birr and the Olympia in Dublin and were generally regarded as the forerunners of the "Tops of the Town" competitions.

Tom Quinn retired from St. Brigid's in 1983 but maintained his love of horticulture and music, enriching him with a love of nature and traditional heritage. "I never smoked or drank in my life and I think these pastimes kept me youthful and energetic. Meeting people and seeing the less well-off enjoying themselves does my heart good" said the sprightly Tom, explaining that for the past ten years he spends two hours each week entertaining people at the Social Services Centre in Brackernagh as part of the Comhaltas Group. The group Tom plays with include Tom Forde (Bodhran and MC), Frank Hession (Accordion), Pete Lyons (Accordion), Jim Troy (Fiddle), Eamon Devlin (Vocalist), Bobbie Kilkenny (Flute and Banjo), John Scully (Guitar and Vocals), Kieran Greaney (Vocals). And for good measure the evergreen Tom plays every Friday night with his Comhaltas colleagues in Burke's Emerald Bar.

He recalls with pride travelling on the famous "Abbey Pepper Bus" to Croke Park, seeing Galway winning their three-in-a-row in the 60's and was present at each of his home parish (Athenry) three All-Ireland club hurling finals. Tom now lives on his own, his beloved wife having passed away two years ago. He still drives his motorcar, loves to "dabble" around the garden and possesses an uncanny vivid memory of so many events over the last ninety years. Fully abreast of the happenings in today's world, Tom's sense of humour and wit is a joy to behold.

He is a modest, sprightly man. His God-given talents have given enjoyment to thousands. His hands are those that have nurtured life in many aspects, both in his nursing profession and as a grower. His mind is clear, concise and bewitching. He is truly one of "Nature's Gentlemen" so accommodating, so helpful and so generous in all that he does.

When I asked if he intended to stop fiddling soon, he replied "As long as the Good Lord spares me and I have the use of my hands, I will keep playing the fiddle. It's part of me for over eighty years, how could I leave it down now" he said. **We've seen nothing like the Mighty Quinn!**

# A Dedicated Educator & Gaeilgeoir: Maureen O'Tuairisc

Writes Pat Johnson

**When Maureen Feeney from An Spidéal married Tom Waters from Indreabháin and settled in Ballinasloe in 1972, they brought a rich vein of public service, culture and community service that has continued to enrich their adopted town.**

Maureen's family home in An Spidéal was a hive of industry. Her father worked with Galway Co. Council and made concrete blocks for housing as a sideline. Meanwhile her mother set up and ran a local shop where Maureen was serving before she was ten years old. A native speaker 'ón gclabhán', unlike most of us, Maureen went to school to learn English, progressing to Scoil Mhuire and on to UCG (now NUIG) to study Gaeilge and History. She then returned to teach in her alma mater where she was greatly impressed by the Sisters of Mercy to the extent that she considered taking the veil herself. But then she met Tom at a dance in Tully Hall in December 1969 and they married in June 1970.

Tom, a garda who had been stationed at various locations from Glenties, Annegray, Ballyforan and Clonark, was posted to Ballinasloe so Maureen got a job in the Mercy Convent in Ballinasloe again teaching Gaeilge and History. One of her 1972 pupils recalls 'a vibrant long-haired lady with bundles of energy'. She says it was only when she came to the Gaeltacht that she fully appreciated the Irish language and tradition she had grown up in and she enjoyed handing it on to her students. However in 1974 she chose to become a full-time mother and for the next ten years she stayed at home to mind her nine children, doing occasional substitute teaching when called on at short notice. With four in nappies at one stage, her memories now are of the good times, the excitement of preparing for Christmas, hiding 'Santa' with the neighbours until after Midnight Mass and getting ready for the sacraments when not just the recipient but all of the children had to be turned out in their best.

A busy family life did not stop Maureen from giving time to the community. She was a member of a very active branch of Conradh na Gaeilge and involved in the Ard Fheis which was held in the town in 1994. She helped organise ranganna Gaeilge, trath na gceist, comortaisí aisti and ceolchoirmeanna. They worked for



bilingual place names on town street signs and organised Gnó tre Gaeilge and Comortas na bhFuinneog during the annual Seachtain na Gaeilge coming up to St. Patrick's Day each year. The Conradh also supported the establishment of what is now Gaeilscoil Ui Cheithearnaigh.

Maureen was involved in fundraising for the restoration of the Town Hall in 1989, selling 200 tickets for the draw, and collecting 50 of those subscriptions door to door monthly for a year.

Maureen was also treasurer of the swimming club and a supporter of Community Games in Ballinasloe. She encouraged her own, and indeed everybody else's, children to get involved in Community Games, whether it was running, swimming, hurling, football, rugby, soccer, camogie or basketball. Their motto was 'Bain Triail As (Have a Go)'. Rugby brought them national success with Eamon winning silver and Tomás winning gold.

While he was chairman of the Community Games for several years, Tom had a particular love for boxing and Maureen helped him organise tournaments. The boxing club closed for a number of years from 2000 but started up again in 2004. Maureen felt honoured to be invited to open it and to see a memorial cup in Tom's name presented every year at their annual Ballinasloe Tournament.

Maureen sat on the management boards of two national schools and on the boards of Scoil Mhuire and Garbally College at various times. But she never

lost the 'grá don múinteoireacht'. In 1984 Sr. Helena of the Sisters of Mercy had the vision to start St Mary's pre-school for the travelling community. This community backed initiative aimed to raise the educational standards among the marginalised community in the town. Initially based in Harbour Road it later transferred to the Parochial Hall on Dunlo Hill. Maureen was Principal there from 1984 -2011. They catered for an average of 14 children in the 3-5 age bracket offering social, personal and educational development for children to prepare them for entry into primary school.

Maureen enjoyed working with the children and also meeting the parents who would visit to see how their children were getting on. They were lovely natural people, she recalls, and there was great trust between them. She reminisces about the summers of her childhood when the travellers would come to An Sailín about a mile down from their shop for the summer in their barrel-top wagons. It was, she remembers, a relationship of respect. The women would come down to the shop in their wonderful coloured shawls and the men would make tin buckets for the neighbours. Her father, a former great athlete, handball player and runner, was invalided by an accident and the only concert he'd have then was their songs as he sat in his wheelchair.

In June 2011 the Department of Education decided to abolish traveller-only pre-schools and integrate the pupils into mainstream education. St. Mary's was one of the last that was left, 'thanks to a great Board of Management, staff, parents and the children who came to us'. Maureen is still on the Board of Management of Scoil Ui Cheithearnaigh and of Canal House, while she continues her involvement with Conradh Na Gaeilge, brings her native 'blas nadúrtha' to the weekly Ciorcal Comhrá and works with a Bereavement Support Group.

Her role as the wife of a garda was one where confidentiality had to be observed. A community guard, Tom was a well known figure around town where he would chat and listen to people's issues and problems. There was great 'meas' on the uniform always and of course on inspection coming up, 'I had to see that shoes were polished and all that'. Tom took early retirement in 1995 after 30 years service in the Garda Síochána. Illness had a big bearing on his decision. He died on St. Stephen's

Day 1998. Maureen speaks with gratitude of Dr. Barton and Portiuncula Hospital and her family, neighbours and friends who supported her during the following years and the travellers who knew him as a community guard and still talk about him when she meets them. She still talks to Tom. She will, she says, 'call on him, bounce ideas. He is very much part of my life to this day.' Christmas will always be tinged with sadness for her now she says, but Easter brings her hope and she has a very strong Christian faith. After Tom's death she was drawn back to the sea and she will often take a bus into Galway and walk the prom, an activity she finds therapeutic, 'good for mind and body'. Maureen loves activity, the buzz of crowds and was a big fan of the Volvo Race stops in Galway. She travels too, to see Conor and his family in Swansea and when we met she had just returned from a trip to Italy.

Despite her love for the sea, Ballinasloe will always be home to Maureen and she will not leave. She is part of the fabric of the town, cutting a warm and affable figure as she makes her way around, extending her greetings 'i nGaeilge nó i mBearla' to all whom she meets.

As a mother, Maureen knows that she is blessed to have all her children- apart from Swansea-based teacher Conor -around her in Ireland. Conor's twin Brid is a Montessori teacher in Dublin while Roisin works as an administrator in the local Millrace Nursing Home. Pdraig and Eamonn work together in business in Dunmore. Tomas and Eoin are members of the Gardai, Ruairi teaches in Portumna while Bairbre has returned to her roots in



*Maureen with her late husband Tom.*

Connamara. She lives in An Ceathru Rua and is principal of Camus NS. Altogether there are 18 grandchildren ranging from 12 years down to four months. Maureen belongs to the generation who lived to see the evolution of women's rights including equal pay for equal work. She believes there is a need for more women

in politics but does not see herself getting involved in party politics. 'I need to see results straight away. Politics is too slow.' She belongs to that great group Mná na hEireann, the many great ambassadors and mothers, who influence through their parenting, through education and through voluntary community work. 🌱

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## Christmas Singers Circle

Ballinasloe Singers Circle will hosts its Christmas Circle in The Dunlo Tavern, Dunlo Street, Ballinasloe on the Thursday 13th December from 9.30pm. All singers and listeners from far and near welcome. The organisers, now hope that the regular followers will come out as usual to support the Circle. A further invitation has also been issued to all singers and storytellers in the surrounding area to come along and support the circle. Admission is free. The organisers at this time would like to say thanks to everyone that came to support the Circle over the past year and wish them a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. For more info contact Thomas 086 377532 or Facebook: Ballinasloe Singer Circle.



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# 35th New Inn Mummings Festival



## Writes Síofra Mannion

Preparations will continue throughout the Christmas period for the staging of the Annual Mummings Festival in New Inn, which takes place on Friday and Saturday night 4th and 5th January 2013. This unique Festival of traditional music, song, dance and storytelling brings patrons and participants from all over the Country, and is eagerly awaited as part of the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

The Festival Chairman, Michael Mullins, confirmed this week that plans for the 35th Annual Festival are coming together, and that this year the Junior Competition will be held on Friday night 4th January at 7.30 p.m with the Senior event being staged on Saturday night 5th January also at 7.30 p.m.

The Festival Secretary, Michael Finnerty, is delighted with the initial expressions of interest in performing at the event, and he is urging all Groups to confirm their entry as soon as possible. He can be contacted at New Inn, Ballinasloe, Telephone 090

9675600. We really appreciate the huge effort that Groups put into rehearsals at this busy time of the year, he added.

Thanks to their generous sponsors, there will be lots of prizes at Festival 2013. There are cash prizes and Perpetual Trophies for winning Groups, and many individual prizes to recognise great singers, musicians, dancers and storytellers.

The New Inn Mummings Festival is organised by the Community Council and as well as fostering and promoting a great tradition, it helps provide badly needed funding for the running costs and improvements to the Leisure Centre, which is extensively used by the youth of the area. In addition, some of the proceeds are donated to charity.

For lovers of traditional entertainment, a visit to the Mummings Festival in New Inn is a must, so the dates for the diary are Friday and Saturday night 4th and 5th January 2013, and you can be assured of a warm welcome and a comfortable venue for the event.

## Hayden's Hotel

### Christmas Party Menu

Mulled Wine Reception  
4 Course Festive Dinner  
Live Music in the Bar  
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#### Starters

##### Christmas Crostini

Topped with Salmon & Sun-Dried Tomato

##### Honey Roasted Parsnip Soup

with Apple & Parsnip Crisps

##### Waldorf Salad

with Grilled Goats Cheese

#### Mains

##### Roast Stuffed Turkey & Ham

with Chestnut Stuffing, Roast Gravy & Cranberry Tartlett

##### Sirloin of Irish Beef

Oven Roasted with Crushed Black Peppercorns served with Yorkshire Pudding, Rich Red Wine & Mushroom Sauce

##### Oven Baked White Fish

On a bed of Stir Fry Vegetables

##### Duck Confit Leg

Served with Potato & Scallion Stuffing with Orange Sauce

#### Dessert

##### Traditional Christmas Pudding with Rum & Raisin Ice Cream

##### Chocolate & Orange Mousse with White Chocolate Shavings

##### Chestnut & Brandy Fruit Pavlova

#### Tea / Coffee

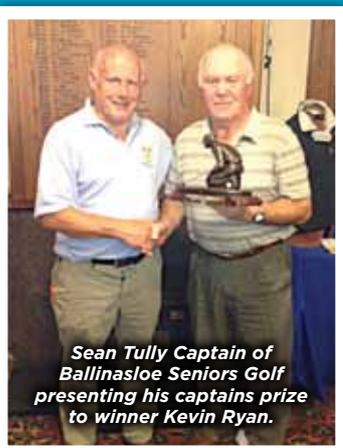
Served with Mini Mince Pies



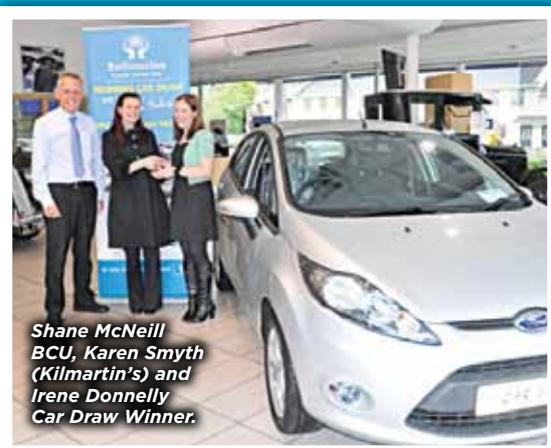
# Out and About in Ballinasloe



Photo (L-R): At the Community Heart 'Fish & Chip' evening in Ballinasloe recently with Garda crime prevention tips were... Supt. Gerry Roche, Seán Óg Hurley Director Dubarry, Verona Mc. Givern SUAS, Mayor Carmel Grealy, Mary O'Connor SUAS, Helen Butler Youth Work Galway, Gda Ciarán Ó Ráighne, missing from photo Sgt. Tom Horkin.



Sean Tully Captain of Ballinasloe Seniors Golf presenting his captains prize to winner Kevin Ryan.



Shane McNeill BCU, Karen Smyth (Kilmartin's) and Irene Donnelly Car Draw Winner.



At the Recent AOIFE conference were Mike Kelly, Donal Scannell, Minister Michael Ring TD and Senator Michael Mullins.



Childrens Cookery Competition: Lily Gavin of Ahascragh receiving a prize for her cup cakes at the Childrens Bakery competition at Ballinasloe October Fair, with Deputy Manager Local SuperValu Store, Eddie Kelly and Queen of the Fair, Alison Duffy.



104-year-old Jean Weir, originally from Taughmaconnell, celebrates her historic birthday in the Hillside Nursing Home, Aughrim, with her sons Gerry and Des.



Gullane's Hotel sponsored Tug-O-War Finalists with Queen of the Fair, Alison Duffy and Referee, Dermot Connolly, Committee Members, Niall Clarke, Kealan Clarke, Tug-O-War Founder John Flynn, Sponsor Tomás Gullane and Fair & Festival Secretary Mary Phelan.

# Irish Country Women's Association

**Writes Síofra Mannion**

The Irish Country Women's Association is a group set up to promote the love of the home, culture, and preservation of Arts and Crafts. It is open to all women from sixteen years of age and provides the women of Ballinasloe with a getaway at least once a month.

In the town, the Moore Guild branch of the club was set up on the 17th of December 1968 in Moore Hall. The membership began with forty five women and has moved to the mid twenties. The current Chairperson is Kathleen O'Shea, Treasurer Mary Egan, PRO Mary Kelly and Secretary Mary Dolan Kenny.

The group meet on the second Tuesday of every month and are always looking for more women to add to the group. At their meetings which is at least once a month, the ladies have a lecture or demonstration on a particular subject, debates, quizzes and competitions. Their social side of life is also very well taken care of as they have annual dinners and tours to different places. The Moore Guild version of the group is also affiliated to the Associated Countrywomen of the World. Members have travelled to Vienna, Holland, Finland and England to attend meetings of A.C.W.W.

Each year the Guild gives two half scholarships to the I.C.A Educational College at An Grianán, Termonfeckin, Co Louth. Members attend there regularly to part take in the various courses and members have obtained "Brannra" which is proficiency of the highest standard in a craft.

Over the years the women of this group have had many achievements within the Guild. They won the All-Ireland AIB Guild of the year in 1983 which at the time was a great



achievement for a Rural Guild. Three of its members have been elected to the Federation President for Co. Roscommon.

A member was elected to the ICA National Executive for two years. A member won community Person of the year in 2006. One person won an All-Ireland Art Competition, another won the All-Ireland Brown Bread Competition and the All-Ireland Bord Iascaigh Mhara Pork and Bacon Recipe Competition. A further two women won Mum of the Year for Connacht and the County Roscommon ICA Canderel Public Speaking Competition 1994.

For years these women have collected a huge amount of money for Cancer Research and have been active in getting a Breast Cancer Mammogram for the West. Members are very active on the Committees within the parish.

They have held some interesting events over the past few months inviting Paula Gannon, a headpiece designer, to speak with the group and help them design their very own headpieces. It was a very enjoyable night for all those involved with the group. They had a trip to Newbridge during the summer which proved very popular among all the members and a visit from Philip Gleeson who spoke to them on 'Living life to the full with arthritis'.

Their plans for the coming months are a Dutch auction on the 2nd of December after 11.30 mass in Moore, their Christmas party on the 11th and an outing to Gleeson's in Roscommon on the 15th where they will go to the Arts Centre and view a show afterwards. All newcomers are welcome and if you would like more information about the Guild contact the Secretary Mary Dolan Kenny on 086 3911645. 

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# Ballinasloe's Own Jubilee Nurse

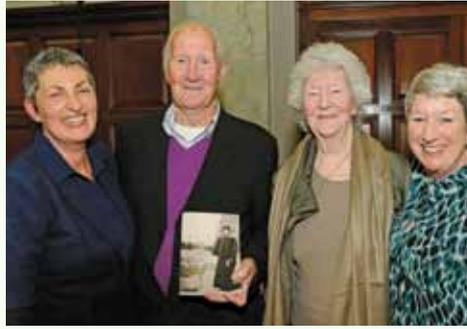
**Writes Elizabeth Prendergast**

A book presenting the stories of hundreds of communities around the country, Jubilee Nurse highlights the work of exceptional Irish women from diverse backgrounds who cared for patients in their own homes.

Nurse Mary Agnes O'Grady provided her services as a Jubilee nurse to the town and the countryside surrounding it. She was the first and only nurse to be appointed and supported by the Ballinasloe District Nursing Association.

The association's committee consisted of up to ten representatives including some very well-respected members of the local community such as Rev E Hughes, the local parish priest, and Mrs Maureen Crohan, the wife of the local Bank of Ireland manager. Ballinasloe district nursing association operated a 'no-fees policy' so patients who required care were tended to by Nurse O'Grady at no expense. The voluntary contributions of the local community were therefore all the more valuable. Nurse O'Grady cared for the people of Ballinasloe between 1936 and 1955,

Mrs Kathleen Kilduff, the secretary of the committee and the wife of the town harness-maker, was responsible for holding the regular meetings of the Ballinasloe District Nursing Association in her kitchen. The focus of many of these meetings was the organisation of fundraising efforts such as donations from door-to-door collections were



*At the launch were, Co-Author, Elizabeth Prendergast, Mattie Ganly, Mary Delaney and Co-Author Helen Sheridan.*

counted and recorded and bi-annual jumble sales. A vital fundraising element and means of redistributing goods and clothing during times of extreme hardship were essential to provide for the salary of Nurse O'Grady so that she could continue her important work.

The agendas of several committee meetings throughout the year would also focus on the highlight of Ballinasloe's annual social calendar the 'Nurses' Dance'. Tickets to the dance would include supper and the entertainment of a good band and the results were positive. In 1945, for instance, the dance raised £63, a considerable part of the association's income.

Nurse Mary Agnes O'Grady, born in 1903, was from Ballaghderreen, Co. Roscommon. She trained in general nursing at Sir Patrick Dunn's Hospital, Dublin between 1926 and 1929 and worked as a staff nurse there and in Birmingham before training to be a

midwife in the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. Nurse O'Grady completed her path to becoming a Jubilee nurse at St Patrick's Training Home in St Stephen's Green in 1936. Miss Colburn, the superintendent for St. Patrick's Home, wrote in Nurse O'Grady's graduation report: 'Miss O'Grady is a thoroughly well-trained nurse. Most kindly and considerate with patients by whom she is much respected and truly liked. The nurse is capable of teaching her patients and their friends as she has grasped the wider responsibilities of our work.'

Mattie Ganly, a neighbour of Nurse O'Grady during her tenure in Ballinasloe, remembers the nurse and the little dog that had run along next to her bicycle as she completed her patient visits. Upon the dog's death, Mattie buried her canine companion in ground surrounding a monument near the nurse's home. Nurse O'Grady's first district, Ballinasloe, was her last. She began to care for the people of Ballinasloe town and its hinterland shortly after she finished training and continued until her death in 1955.

Mattie Ganly and his sister Mary Delaney attended the launch of Jubilee Nurse at the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland in Dublin recently. Elizabeth Prendergast and Helen Sheridan have known each other for many years. Elizabeth is a botanical artist and Helen is a community volunteer. Both authors are based in Dublin. This is their first book and Elizabeth's sister Margret is married to Mattie's eldest son Ciaran!



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# Full Steam Ahead for the Panto



Writes Declan Finn

Pre-production for the traditional Christmas pantomime season is in full swing and Ballinasloe Panto is getting in on the act, with *Treasure Island*, for the fourth consecutive year.

Eoin Croffy takes the reins once again and together with John Roe and Olwyn Cronin are preparing for the final stages of their ambitious production of *Treasure Island* to be staged in the Town Hall, Theatre, Ballinasloe, from Monday to Sunday 10th-16th December, 2012. According to director Eoin Croffy, "The push was on to enable lots of children from the surrounding hinterland to take to the stage and I think we achieved that as over 120 children and twelve principal characters will entertain more than 2,000 people over the course of eight shows on the run up to Christmas."



The show is based on the traditional tale of *Treasure Island* and contains the distinctive Ballinasloe twist that Ballinasloe Panto has become renowned for. The show features a cast built from the huge talent the town has to offer. Sarah Corcoran makes a welcome return as Captain Deck and she will be joined by Enda McGrath who tries to woo her as the hapless Jim Hawkins. Fergal D'Arcy has taken time out from his drive time radio programme to play Long John Silver; again with a unique Ballinasloe flavour.

"I love this time of the year when we get to take to the stage and offer the audience something distinctively Ballinasloe. However it's the children that make the show. Their enthusiasm and commitment is fantastic to watch as we get deeper into rehearsals and ever closer to opening night", states Fergal. The Carlton Shearwater Hotel is once again on board to provide rehearsal facilities for Ballinasloe Panto's fourth production.



This year the cast will be joined by Dave Hardiman, appearing onstage with the group for the first time, playing the part of Blind Pew. Dave has worked tirelessly backstage over the last number of years and so this year he swapped building sets and making magic for learning lines and making tea. Declan Finn plays the nasty Israel Hands and he will be partnered by Aiden Flanagan playing the inept Scurvy Steve.

Panto Chairperson, Pat Vaughan could not get enough of the spray tan and Pretty Polly tights from last year and so makes a welcome return as Nurse Bendover but will also double up and play the part of Billy Bones early in the first act. This year Brian Derrane drew the short straw as the panto ship set sail. Playing Mrs. Hawkins, the panto dame, he is currently training four hours a day in high heel walking and falsetto singing under the stewardship of Pat McGovern. Mike O'Reilly will play the town's squire and love interest for local secondary school teacher Brian.



Newcomers Eimear Costello, Máiread Barrett, Kim Kelly, Shane Hughes as well as young panto veteran Ronan Keane will play 5 leading roles for the first time. This is testament to the community spirit of the panto group where they are endeavouring to enable young people to gain experience in leading roles in some of the full scale productions that are happening right on their doorstep.

*Treasure Island* is one of the best known pantomimes and promises fun, laughter, music and of course some magical special effects created by the notorious technical team. Tickets for the production will go on sale in late November and will be available from Box Office sponsor: J&S Photos, Society Street, Ballinasloe. Further information is available on the website [www.ballinasloepanto.com](http://www.ballinasloepanto.com) and the Facebook page where updates and a rehearsal blog will be posted.

# The Life of A Grocers Assistant

**Writes Eamonn O'Donoghue**

For their next production Acorn Theatre Co. have chosen the ageless and timeless *A Crucial Week in The Life of A Grocers Assistant* which will be presented in Ballinasloe Town Hall from January 17, 18 and 19th.

Director Eamonn O'Donoghue has assembled a large cast of which includes the very best of local talent including: Seamus Feerick as Fr. Daly, Patrick Byrne as John Joe Moran, Louise Bourke as Monah, Mary Fahy Cuddy as Mother, Liam Jordan as Father, John Boland as Alex, Mike O'Reilly as Packie Garvey, Mary O'Connell as Mrs Smith, Mary Walsh as Agnes

Smith, Declan Kelly as Mr. Brown and Margret O'Grady as the Pension Officer. Tuam born Tom Murphy now regarded as one of Ireland's foremost playwrights has achieved much acclaim both in Ireland and abroad with works such as "Famine" "Conversations on a Homecoming", *The Gili Concert* to name but a few.

"A Crucial Week" is thought provoking and often very hilarious look at the way we lived and in many aspects still do. It is guaranteed to raise many a laugh and above all to provide a thoroughly entertaining theatre experience. Curtain up at 8pm. For further information: Contact Eamonn on 090 9643338, 086 8750578 or 086 1697441.



Some of the cast for Acorn's Production of Tom Murphy's 'A Crucial Week in the Life of A Grocer's Assistant': Eamonn O' Donoghue, Declan Kelly, Mary Walshe, Patrick Byrne, Louise Burke, John Boland, Mary Cuddy and Pat Cauty, outside a famous thespian hostelry on Main Street.

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# St. Michael's Church Folk Choir

**Writes Ann Jordan**

Carol Singing has become an annual ritual for St. Michael's Church Folk Choir. Each Christmas Eve, the Choir together with their many friends sing all the traditional carols outside Liam Jordan's Shop in Main Street. Santa and his friends entertain the passersby as the choir sing out with joy. The townspeople and visitors look forward to this event from year to year and the choir and their friends enjoy the event immensely.

St. Michael's Church Folk Choir was formed in the late 1970's by Sr. Michael Connaughton, Choir Mistress at the request of Rev John Naughton, Administrator in Ballinasloe at that time. Young children from the town Girls National School together with many local musicians began singing as a Folk Choir at the 10 am Sunday Mass. Many of the members of the choir have gone and more have come. The Folk Choir continues on in 2012. As well as providing a Christmas cheer in the town, large amounts of money are raised for Charity. To date €40,000 was raised and this has been distributed to local charities over the years. Anyone who wishes to join in the singing on this day is very welcome to take their place on the street with the choir. As well as providing a Christmas cheer in the town, large amounts of money are raised for Charity. All the hymns sung are scripture based. The Choir Mistress, Sr. Michael attended



the Annual Church Music Summer School Week in Maynooth each year down through the 1980's, 1990's and 2000's. Choir members now attend this summer school for one day each year in the more recent years.

There is a guest church composer in attendance at this Summer School and his/her music is taught and made available to all choirs. There are Church Music Workshops organized which the Choir members attend. They get new material for singing at Mass on an ongoing basis from the Church Music

School and the Church Music Workshops. Today, the Folk Choir has 40 members, two guitarists, drummer, organist and keyboard player. The choir sings every Saturday night at 7.00 pm. for the Sunday Vigil Mass, the 12.15 p.m. Mass on Easter Sunday and Christmas Day, First Confessions, First Communions, Confirmations. The Choir, also, sings at Funeral Masses and Weddings when requested.

*Choir practice is held every Wednesday evening 7.45pm - 8.30pm in St. Michael's Church and new members are welcome at any time of the year.*

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## Ladys Children's Hospital Fundraiser

Christmas is a time to think about helping others. With that in mind Laura Blair from *Oops a Daisy Party Entertainers* is pleased to announce their first annual Children's Christmas party. This year the party is in aid of Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin. The warmth, love and hope the hospital gives all its attendees is what Christmas should be about. It

is Ireland's largest paediatric hospital, providing excellent care to thousands of sick children. In 2011 the hospital had 72,601 outpatient attendances, 33,980 emergency attendances, 18,325 day cases, 9,809 in-patient admissions and performed 16,373 surgical procedures. The party will take place on Sunday 16th, December in Hayden's Hotel, from 4 to

7pm. Tickets will be on sale from Salmon's or from Laura on 087 6017169, price is €10 and includes visit to Santa, disco, face paints and entertainment. There will also be raffles and spot prizes. Laura would like to thank all of their sponsors, especially Hayden's for providing the venue, Salmon's for selling tickets and DesignTech Ireland. All other donations will be greatly appreciated. For more info or to donate, contact 087 6017169 or email: [daisy@oopsadaisyparties.com](mailto:daisy@oopsadaisyparties.com)

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# GROW Creating Awareness For Mental Health Week



Local Mental Health Service members at the GROW public info talks, held during Mental Health Week in Ballinasloe. (L-R) Lorraine Kelly (Social Worker), Elsie Donoghue-Curley (Nurse), Gerard Grehan (Nurse Manager), Deirdre Mulryan (Registrar), Paul Clabby (GROW), Kieran McMahon (Nurse Manager), Brendan Barrett (Addiction Counsellor) and Ruairi Powell (GROW).

## Writes Siofra Mannion

Suicide Awareness and Mental Health promotion is again at the forefront of public discussion, especially in the current economic climate. Ballinasloe in particular has been severely hit by suicide in the last year. It was with this in mind that the GROW organisation in Ireland, decided to choose Ballinasloe as the location for its first series of talks in Connaught.

The Organisation recently held a number of events during World Mental Health Week to raise awareness about mental wellbeing and suicide prevention in Connaught. The main event was a series of free public information talks held in the Carlton Shearwater during October.

“Raising awareness, especially about services in the local community, is a very important step in tackling the epidemic of suicide taking place in Ireland today. We all have a part to play in looking out for others”, says Paul Clabby, Area Co-ordinator of GROW in Galway.

The overall aim of the series was to inform the general public about the topic of mental health, its role in suicide prevention & provide information about relevant services in the area. A variety of topics were covered over the 5 week programme. Topics covered included *Understanding Mental Health, Challenges Facing Young People, Suicide Awareness & Prevention*, and *Services in Ballinasloe*. Each evening had a guest speaker from a voluntary organisation based in Ballinasloe, to offer their expertise on a given topic. Some of the organisations represented were GROW, Samaritans, Canal House, Western Region Drugs Task Force and JIGSAW.

GROW also hosted its first Golf Charity Fundraiser in Galway Bay Golf Resort during Mental Health Week. The aim of the golf fundraiser was to raise awareness about GROW projects in Connaught, and also to reduce the stigma related to mental health issues. All proceeds from the GROW golf charity fundraiser are being used to develop GROW services in the Western Region.

The organisation is Ireland’s largest voluntary mental health organisation. It is a community based support network for people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems. It has over 100 free support groups nationwide, including a weekly group in Ballinasloe.

GROW support groups are a unique service in that groups are made up entirely of people who’ve had first-hand experience trying to cope with many mental health issues including depression, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal thoughts and phobias. It offers an opportunity for people to attend weekly meetings to discuss the issues they are facing with a group who are non-judgemental and experiencing similar issues. Network’s groups are free, confidential and open to all.

If you wish to find out more about GROW, please contact Paul Clabby on 087-4187714 or Email: paulclabby@grow.ie or visit [www.grow.ie](http://www.grow.ie)

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# Buccaneers in The Town Hall!

**Writes Catherine McCormack**

Ahoy there. Well the fun and games (and learning of lines) is well underway. The Pirates are due to land in the Town Hall Theatre next February. The production is steering its way to be a fantastic performance, with a host of Ballinasloe's own walking the plank... sorry, stage!

This being a special year for the society (90th) it is only fitting to mark the event with this Gilbert and Sullivan production. Gilbert and Sullivan are responsible for the most popular operettas in the history of English theatre and to anyone who loves music theatre, 'G&S' means melody, irreverence, wit and fun so add the cast of Ballinasloe Musical Society and you can imagine what delight is in store. Pirates of Penzance has been thoroughly updated by Essgee Entertainment, allowing us a fresh look at this timeless classic. We can guarantee plenty of swashbucklin on and off the waters but alas can't promise a smooth sailing for any of the cast or crew, but for the audience, well it will be a treasure of a performance. Thank you to all the children (and big children/adults) who came along to our Halloween Party, we hope you all had fun.

So its full steam ahead, not long to the opening. The production will be on nightly from Tuesday 19th February to Saturday 23rd February. Auditions are all over and our open night was a great success with returning and new members all excited about the production of them, rehearsals are now underway but we are always looking for cast and crew, so come on, its not to late to join in the fun. You can find us on face book or on our website. You can also phone Frances on 0872220282. Hoping to see you all during the show.



*Trevor Moran and son.*



*Ghoulish behaviour at the Halloween Party.*

# Marcus A Winner Down Under

**Writes Ken Kelly**

A young Ahascragh footballer is making a big name for himself "Down Under" after only arriving in Australia eight months ago. For 25-year-old Marcus O'Neill it was an incredible season which saw his team, Southern Districts, win the Western Australia GAA senior football championship.

The eldest son of Murt and Mary O'Neill, Marcus decided to emigrate last February to Perth in search of employment. He had been a most promising footballer with his club Caltra since 2005, joining them the year after the club had won the All-Ireland club title. He had been one of their most consistent forwards for the past seven years but in Perth his scoring talents proved to be a revelation for his Southern Districts club..

Marcus started his football career with Caltra at under 8, then onto under 16, under 18 and under 21 before making it on to the senior team. He won a Connacht minor football medal with Galway in 2005, playing at corner back, beating Mayo in the final. Two of his teammates, on that team, who also emigrated won championship titles with their respective clubs this year. Cathal Kenny from Mountbellew was successful in Canada while Mark Gottsche from Loughrea won his medal playing in London.

But then Marcus was born with footballing blood. His uncles, Liam and Padraig excelled with their home club, St. Grellan's. Liam went on to play senior football with Galway in the seventies and later became manager of both the Galway and Mayo senior football teams. Liam's son, Kevin, was an outstanding forward with the Mayo senior team for many

years and the pair became the first ever father and son to win All-Star Awards. Liam's selection came in 1973 and twenty years later, in 1993, Kevin was also honoured with an All-Star. Liam's contribution to Mayo football, particularly with the Knockmore Club in helping them win the county title forty years ago, is widely acclaimed.

Marcus's 16-year-old sister, Tara, is making a name for herself with the Ahascragh-Caltra camogie team while their 23-year-old brother, Darren, who emigrated to Sydney in 2010 where he is also involved in sport.

For Marcus O'Neill the possibility of joining the ranks of the Australian NFL is a possibility. "I have been approached by one or two clubs, but I think I will stay with the GAA here in Perth for another while" said the talented Ahascragh star.



# Nurturing The Next Generation of Ballinasloe's Rugby Greats

**Writes Kevin Murphy**

Over the years, the Ballinasloe RFC has been conscious of the need for children to enjoy the game, have fun, and make new friends through rugby. It is with this in mind that there are no competitions at mini rugby level, though there are regular blitz days, on what is always a very family friendly occasion.

Underage Rugby would seem to be continuing its growing popularity in Ballinasloe as upwards of one hundred children returned to training this season. For those returning there was some exciting news waiting for them, as it was announced that they will be taking to the field with an added advantage this year the enviable new name of the *Ballinasloe Broncos RFC*.

Ballinasloe Mini Rugby, now Ballinasloe Broncos, was officially established back in 1997 with the main aim of introducing boys and girls, between the ages of seven and twelve, to rugby. The Club has gone from strength to strength in that time, but hope that with their refreshed identity, they will continue to appeal to players, as well as attracting more new children to play Mini Rugby in the town. For the many dedicated coaches involved there is a sense of tremendous satisfaction to be derived from seeing young players develop through the

ranks to senior level. Indeed one of their most eminent graduates made a big breakthrough just last year, as Irish Under 20 star Conor Finn, first togged out with the club's Mini Rugby team.

It will now be hoped that some of the current young crop of players can emulate that achievement, and just this summer, there was great success for Ballinasloe's Under 11 team in the Community Games Rugby. They became County and Connacht Champions, and beat reigning Leinster Champions Athy, before finally succumbing to a Limerick side in the All-Ireland Final, held in Athlone. This is the latest in a line of recent successes at Community Games U-11 Mixed Rugby as Ballinasloe

has won All-Ireland bronze in 2010, and silver in both 2011 and 2012. The success is surely a sign of the growing achievements now being enjoyed at all levels, as the development in underage rugby in Ballinasloe, continues to pay dividends. Ballinasloe Broncos RFC will continue to hold training on Saturday mornings at 10.30am at the Rugby pitch, until the end of the season, Saturday 20th April. All Mini rugby coaches are voluntary, affiliated to the IRFU, subject to their code of ethics, and attend ongoing coaching programmes.

*For further information on Ballinasloe Broncos contact Mike Devine on 087 6792567, Declan Murphy on 086 8548046 or Seamus McCarthy on 087 1779392.*



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# The Road to Victory: Connacht Junior Football Champions



Keith Kelly (Man of the Match and Ballinasloe captain) accepts the Frank Reynolds Connacht Cup from Frank Burke (Chairman Connacht Council) with fellow players: Marcus Kelly, Darragh McCormack, Shane Kelly, Niall Hynes and Luke Tierney at St. Brigid's GAA Grounds, Kiltoom, Co. Roscommon.

## Writes Colm Croffy

**Ballinasloe's Gaelic Footballers are back playing Intermediate football in 2013 after 11 years in the Junior grade. Not alone that but the squad, after winning some thirteen matches in a long campaign, are now Connacht Junior Football Champions and are in the All-Ireland Final Series at their grade.**

"We'd hate for people to read about it in a rush because this just didn't happen overnight" explained a rueful Pat Cunningham. "This overnight success has been grafting with this cohort of young dedicated players, as far back as under 16 Grade in 2007."

Most of the local armchair analysts are adamant that the route to this recovery and success can be traced to five key mentors who toiled first at underage level and then got traction with Under 16 success in 2007, winning a juvenile county title in the 2007/08 season and at the Under 21B Grade in 2008. The key names roll off the lips expertly of those in the hallowed know of deepheat infused dressing rooms and loud boisterous bus journeys, empty stands and scarce resources: Pat Cunningham, Sean Riddell, Benny Jennings, Joe Kelly and Godfrey Gibbons.

Few in town would doubt that their collective fingerprints are upon all the new Silverware, now groaning on a trophy cabinet in the Club's state of the art new Clubhouse and facility in Brackernagh. For Pat and his sideline team there are similarities to this squad and the glory years of the modern era, the teams of the 1972-79 period, when again the Club meticulously took Juvenile, Minor, Under 21 and then Senior Championship allocades. The Club last won a Connacht title in any grade, some long 33 winters ago in 1979!

In this narrative one finds the thread of victory from one generation to the next being spun quietly. The Kellys and Gibbons' were players off that squad and current Manager Seán Riddell and Selector Pat Cunningham both have sons involved critically in the current panel, Colm and Paraic. No one from the management or players is shy in their acknowledgement of the masterful role of Sean Riddell in this odyssey.

Examining the human drama behind the stuff of dreams and the bonfires being lit on approach roads and streets in the town for a sporting win, sees a deep squad of over 35 young men (well ranging from Senior Cycle students to the Grandad of the team Shane Kenny at 33) with an average age of 24.

Over half are full-time third level students, 6 of the squad

are teachers, a few are unemployed and about a dozen are engaged locally in a variety of occupations – the Construction, Hospitality, Service and Public Sectors. Whilst emigration has thankfully not got a hold on this squad (unlike so many others of its type in the West). Gary Canavan, a young Defence Force Soldier with the Western Command left soon after the Kiltoom final to take up a six month tour of duty in the Lebanon.

They trained typically twice a week – over 90 sessions since last February – and played over 25 games. That's some amount of commitment and travelling for those lads but especially so for whose place of work or study was not East Galway. "We have been working on this panel now for over seven years, we have expended a huge amount of effort in bonding a bunch of players who function and think as a team, we've gone to dog nights, special events, we've had specialist away training camps in Killarney this year and indeed in Bundoran in 2011 – working alongside football greats like Brian McEniff and Darragh Ó Sé" explains Pat.

In Killarney this year the players were coached by Mike Brennan and Donie Buckley (who has been recently been appointed Assistant Mayo Senior Football Manager), all pointing to a more professional and thorough athletic approach to the modern game. Seeds of their thorough preparations and commitment were keenly observed by Aiden Dooley the Underage Chairman at the Club from early on "I can recall when they were preparing for their Under 16 campaign, passing them in St. Brigid's Hospital Grounds on the pitches at 8am in the morning."

What this win is doing for the Club and the community one can ascertain from the commentary of the Players, Mentors and Club Officials but critically it confers significant success on a sporting leadership who sagely pooled resources in a deft amalgamation move, prudently tackled the club facilities and infrastructure deficit in the years of plenty and then wisely concentrated firepower and energy on the nursery in all codes.

"We are emerging with a cohort of some 8 to 10 players who all have seen some underage county football experience, which again bodes well for our future." says Dooley "Thanks to the current work in underage and minor."

No sporting success on the field can accrue without the massed ranks of supporters, sponsors and officials and most of the current club officers are effusive in their praise for Keith Kelly and his gutsy troops. All eyes are firmly fixed with a weekend date of destiny – the last weekend in January – when the side face the Ulster champions in All-Ireland Semi-Final, bringing the colours and supporters closer to Jones Road.

Today the club has its management, its facilities, its mentors, its players and supporters and indeed it can't be one of the oldest clubs in the country (playing Gaelic games here shortly after the GAA was founded) without a few ghosts and traditions, but wonderfully it has provided some shining example of leadership and co-operation both on and off the field.



# BALLINASLOE: Connacht Junior A Football Champions 2012



Above: Back (L-R): W. Stankard (Football Chairman), P. Cunningham (Selector), J. Casey (Physio), C. Casey, D. Nevin, C. Riddell, M. Kelly, L. Tierney, P. Hickey, N. King, D. McCormack, P. Whelehan, S. Coghain, M. Colohan, N. Stack, D. Burke, J. Twohig, R. O'Healy, P. Ryan, S. Riddell (Manager), M. Brennan (Selector), C. Coleman (Selector). Front (L-R): G. Canavan, C. Dooly, L. Kelly, R. Breun, S. Kelly, C. Kelly, L. Lynch, J. Shaugnessy, E. Fenton, K. Kelly, S. Kenny, N. Hynes, N. Stankard, B. Milton, C. Smyth, D. Glynn, P. Cunningham, C. Croffy (PRO/Selector), R. Lynch-Riddell (Mascot) and C. Coleman (Mascot).



### **SEAN KEELY (Uachtaran/President of the Club)**

“For me personally this squad of players have brought a new lease of life to our followers, in my 76 years of supporting the GAA locally, we’ve had lots of ups and downs and heartaches but I’ve never seen so much pride and enthusiasm in the Club currently. They are undoubtedly the fittest team I’ve seen in my lifetime, they won 8 matches to come out of Galway and 3 to win Connacht and that’s great consistency. For me the underage managers and mentors are the unsung heroes of this success. It’s truly remarkable to see our great supporters getting behind the Club again. All credit to the Managers, Mentors and Players and to their outstanding captain Keith Kelly, hopefully we can build on the success to date.”

### **PAT SULLIVAN (Cathoirleach/Chairman)**

As Cathoirleach of Ballinasloe GAA Club, I look back with pride and satisfaction over the year 2012. It has been an extremely busy year for the club in many areas but especially on the playing fields. With the amount of work being done at under age level in ladies football, hurling and football and the progress of our teams through their various competitions, it has taken a huge commitment from many people. To all those we express a sincere thanks. Off the field of play we have brought bingo back to town, had our sports person dream draw and our lotto is continuing. To all our hard working members and supporters in these and other ventures we as a club express our deep gratitude.

As I mentioned, on the field of play we have had our success during the year, with the revitalised ladies footballers progressing to many finals and winning major trophies and the progress of our hurlers in their competitions, especially at minor and junior level the future looks bright and hopefully 2013 will bring ultimate glory. But without doubt 2012 has to be the year of our Junior Footballers. Winning a County Title and going on to become Connacht Champions has brought honour and pride not only to our club but to the town. In times of hardship you have given us reasons to smile.

To captain fantastic, Keith and this group of dedicated and skillful young men, backed by a great management and backroom team we say thanks and well done. Success such as you have achieved is the result of hard work and no little football talent and you showed this on the fields of Galway and Connacht during 2012. We now look forward with great hope to face the future. As a club we could not progress without the work of many people who give of their time freely and willingly. This club has more than its share of such people but we could also do with extra help. If you feel you can help in any way please come on board you will be most welcome.

A very special word of thanks to the many sponsors, who in times of financial constraints, have come to our aid and given us support. This help, as we all know is absolutely vital for the survival and success of the club. Once again sincere thanks for your help, it is really appreciated. On behalf of our GAA Club may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and wining New Year

### **WILLE STANKARD (Football Chairperson)**

“This outstanding provincial win gives a platform for our players to develop and display their undoubted talents and really is just reward to all those who have worked so hard to develop and bring our club forward.”

### **SEÁN TULLY (Past Chairman), Football Board Delegate**

“I was extremely pleased with the performance of our Juniors in first of all winning the County Championship with a tremendous display against a great Clifden side. The team are playing a beautiful style of football and this was amplified by their sterling performance in the Connacht run. Their promotion to intermediate at this stage has gladdened the heart of all sports supporters in the locality.”

### **STEPHEN RUANE (Club Treasurer)**

“Once again congratulation to our footballers. It’s great to see success coming to our club and County and provincial level, having developed our own superb club facilities in the town. I believe that this has helped put the foundation success into our club. The club now has a very active underage system in place with qualified coaches in football, hurling and ladies football and it’s my belief that this hard work by many people will ensure further successes will happen in all codes in the very near future. We look forward to following our footballers in the all Ireland series 2013 and wish them the very best of luck.”

### **SEAN RIDDELL (MANAGER)**

“This has been good for our club but great for the town. The last 8 years or so have seen lots of heartbreaks, dropping grades and status. This season has changed all that, getting out of junior to intermediate have the run in the provincials and now if we can stay committed and focused – we could be in Croke Park which will be a huge boost for the Club. I am very happy for the panel of committed players and management team as well as our Club Officers are all fully behind us and share in our success. My thanks to all for helping us fulfill our objectives so far.”

### **KEITH KELLY (TEAM CAPTAIN)**

“It was great to have success and big days out in front of our families, friends and supporters, but no one really sees the work that goes on behind the scenes. Our Mentors, Selectors: Cathal Coleman, John Mitchell, Cathal Croffy, Wille Stankard, Aidan Dooley, Physio Geoff Casey and of course our Managers Pat Cunningham and Sean Riddell, they are our backbone.

Without the fundraising and sponsorship of the Carlton Shearwater Hotel and Joe’s Bar, who backed us from day one, we might not have got the success that we did. He outlined that the squad were having a short break after their long campaign so far, since the cold winter nights of February, but that they would be back in training before Christmas as they had only a few short weeks to stay on top of their game, until they meet the Ulster Provincial Champions on the weekend of 26th/27th January. “Just like to really thank everyone for getting behind us and for the pride everyone has encouraged us to play for the town.”

### **CLAIRE GALLAGHER (Ladies Football Treasurer)**

“Heartiest Congrats to our Junior Footballers, we look forward to them going all the way. We are delighted to be part of the GAA in town and have had a very successful year, winning County titles in Under 12 and Under 18 Minor and being finalists in under 14, 16 and Junior Grades. We also had players under our new manager Danny Moynihan in the County Development Strategy. We would also like to thank all our volunteers and we’d love if more people got involved with us for next season.”

### **MATTIE GANLY (Former President, Chairman & Secretary)**

“We are on a crest of a wave, bringing us back to the glory days when the town was known to all as the home of Gaelic Football in Galway. A Barrowful of praise is fully deserved to the current mentors and team, in particular for Sean Riddell, Pat Cunningham, Cathal Coleman etc. When I see the huge voluntary effort they have put in combined with a spirited group of gifted players, playing a lovely entertaining style of football, is iontach an radharc é. Go néiri an tÁdh libh.”

### **TOM FAHY (Former President)**

“I am delighted to see the lads promoted to Intermediate and out of Junior Football, for the first time in 11 years. They deserve it for all the hard work they have put in. I wish them the very best of luck in the All-Ireland Series and I hope to see them play in Croke Park in the final.”

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# World Champion Ken Doherty Takes on Some Local Talents

Writes Barry Ó Crofaigh

The snooker club held a different kind of fundraiser in their Emerald Ballroom home attracting some world class snooker. The great Ken Doherty came to town to play the clubs brightest and best in an evening that attracted huge interest.

The former world champion (1997) played six of the best from the club and club chairperson Barry O'Connor was confident that one of the local lads might snatch a frame. Ken was the second world champion to come to the club and this is a tradition the Club would like to try work on and attract more world class players and champions to Ballinasloe, "to show our youth the beauty of snooker and try to get more young people in the town taking up the sport." Club Secretary Joby Kelly commented.

The flamboyant and always entreating Alex Higgins played in the club in 1972. One of Ken's opponents Dominic Divilly, who's late Dad played Higgins in the club (with the very same cue Dominic would use against the darling of Dublin) enjoyed a few pots. In a fitting gesture Dominic's son Shane finished the frame against Doherty, with three generations of the Divilly family playing world champions with the old cue on a nostalgic night!

On the night, Ken was very impressed with the talent of the club, playing a frame against the next up and coming stars both young and old the club have to offer. Dominic Divilly, Ciaran Keighery, Ger McGrath, Gary Ward (only 18), Cormac Lyons and Paul Keighery were the lucky six to be selected to play the Dublin based Snooker player. All frames were sponsored by local businesses but Ken showed his class and dispatched all six comfortably. The crowd were then treated to an exhibition match where the Ranelagh native took on Ireland number one Rodney Goggins, where Ken didn't have it all his own way, with Goggins winning 3-2.

On speaking to Ken, he commented "I'm happy to be back in Ballinasloe, I've been here a good few times before but I've never been into the club, really impressed with the place, couple of real nice tables and the talent the club is producing is very high, but none of this can happen without the people behind the club and you can see from the organisation of tonight that this club has a solid backbone and its clearly going places."

For those of you with an interest in the game, at any level, get in touch with the Snooker Club 086 8427576.



Main Pic: Ken Doherty with Tomás and Barry O'Connor. Photo 2: Ken in action at Ballinasloe Snooker Club. Photo 3: Paul Keighery from St. Micheals with Ken Doherty Photo 4: Dominic Divilly and Shane Divilly with the famous cue. Photo 5 (L-R): Gary Ward, Ger McGrath, Dominic Divilly, Cormac Lyons, Ciaran Keighery, Ken Doherty and Paul Keighery.



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# Ladies U12 Footballer's Success

**Writes Seamus Duffy**

Enthusiasm for Girl's football is most definitely on the up. Last March when Miriam Murphy, Vincent Parsons and Seamus Duffy called together all girls born in the year 2000 or after to form a squad for ladies football, they were pleasantly surprised by the response. Training was initially once a week and the girls had some excellent performances in the league campaign, with wins over Mountbellew, Caltra, Kilkerrin, a draw against Ballygar and one loss to neighbours St. Gabriel's. In the knockout stage of the competition they lost to Dunmore by a last minute goal. In July as the squad increased to 28,

training sessions went to twice a week with several challenge matches played against Pearses, St. Gabriel's, Athlone and Banagher. Revenge by a margin of 15 points over Dunmore in the first round of the championship got the momentum going and after close wins over Menlough/Skehana and Ballygar they met an upcoming Oranmore in the County B final. Leading 2-7 to 0-2 at half time they were comprehensive winners on a scoreline of 6-7 to 2-3. After 43 sessions (including 16 games) the girls had plenty to celebrate. The management team of Messers Duffy, Parsons, Campbell and Miriam Murphy wish to express their thanks to Gullane's Hotel for their sponsorship of the food after the final win.



*Front (L-R): Nadine Fogarty, Elisha Manning, Becky Cawley, Clodagh Duffy, Beibhinn Parsons, Maeve Deely, Ella Grealley, Hannah Gullane, Maeve Bergin, Caitlin Ward, Lauren Dowd, Heather Bruen and Lisa Madden. Back: Leanne Manning, Janine Fahy, Aisling Murphy, Sarah Fletcher, Emily Gavin, Orla Reynolds, Anna Killeen, Katelyn Cunningham, Angel Cunningham, Aoife Dudgeon, Emma Loughnane, Maria Lynch, Ellen McLoughlin. Missing from Photo: Maeve Fahy and Maria Colohan. Team Managers: Seamus Duffy, Miriam Murphy and Vincent Parsons.*

## Derrymullen Handball Finals

**Writes Barry Cormican**

In an exciting weekend of finals at the Derrymullen Handball club, crowds packed the stand to watch two exciting finals. The first being the grade C Warrior shoes final between Willie Martin and Peter Mulryan who returned from the world championships last month. Willie Martin took victory in the first game 21/9 before Peter Mulryan put him to the test in the second narrowly losing 21/19 to give victory to Mr Martin to receive the yearly cup presented by Warrior shoes owner Benny Donnellan.

Fresh from competing in the World championships last month, Dara Cronin and Jonny Keighery took to the alley to decide on the Grade B Barry Brennan Memorial Cup. They put on a magnificent display showing the game at the very highest level of skill and accuracy. This thrilling final took 3 games to decide, being these players are as talented as each other. Following from last year's win, Jonny Keighery again took a narrow victory 10/21, 21/13, 21/14 In what turned out to be a great display for the crowds. Barry Brennan's parents Paddy and Margaret kindly presented the trophies to mark a memorable event. The club thanked all volunteers who assisted and the sponsors of the cups for supporting their local club and helping the club to expand year on year.



*Winner Johnny Keighery is presented with the Barry Brennan Memorial Shield from Paddy and Margaret Brennan with beaten finalist Darragh Cronin also pictured*



*Warrior Shoes Final Winner Willie Martin and his daughter, Sponsor Benny Donnellan and beaten finalist Peter Mulryan.*

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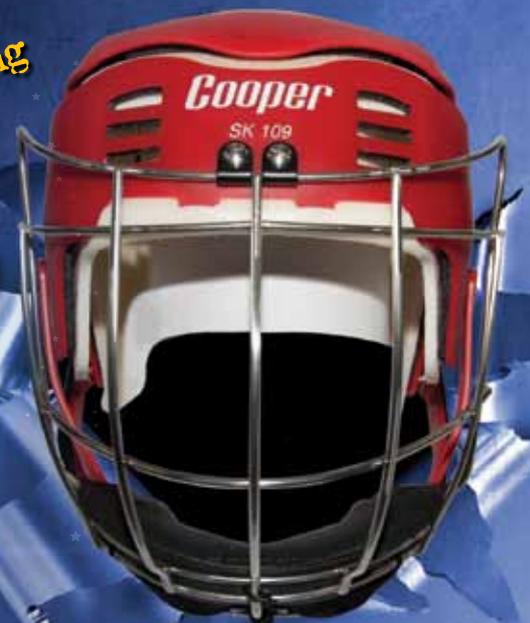
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# Ballinasloe Hurling 2012 Review



Young hurlers with the Bob O'Keeffe Leinster Senior Hurling Trophy.

## Writes Ronan Lally

**Ballinasloe Hurling has seen a transformation in its underage hurling over the past few years with all teams competing very strongly in all there grades. The work in the club is ongoing and the aim is to have all underage grades competing at the highest level over the next few years.**

This year our adult team unfortunately saw an exodus of players from last year's panel which left the club with no option but to play at a lower grade to give those players interested game time this year. The panel were entered in the Junior C competition with 7 other teams in their group. The team have managed to win all there group games, quarter final and will play Moycullen in the semi-final of the competition. The club are hopeful with hard work this will be a stepping stone to playing at a higher grade over the not too distant future.

**Under 6:** This is our introductory level to hurling in the club. We had 18 new kids join the club this year where they learned the basic skills i.e. Grip, Swing etc. This was incorporated with fun games where all kids took part. The kids also took part in mini games throughout the year with other clubs in Galway.

**Under 8:** We had a panel of 27 kids for 2012. Again a lot of the coaching was based on basics with a faster level of

practise required from the kids. A lot of fun games were used also to add variety to coaching sessions. The panel of players took part in 15 matches in total for the year which took in Go Games, Hurling Blitz's and Challenge games. All players received equal amount of playing time.

**Under 10:** Our under 10's had a panel of 20 players. The players were coached from the end of February to the end of October. They played 24 matches in total over the year where they took part in Go Games, Hurling Blitz's and the East Galway League where they reached the final for a second year in a row. They lost out to a strong Cappataggle team in the final but had done very well to reach the final again this year.

**Under 12:** 22 Players togged out this year. Coaching began in February and finished end of September. They played 15 games in total over the year where they took part in the Suck Valley League (Runners up Shield final) and the Under 12 league where the competed very strongly in all games.

**Under 13:** A panel of 20 players took part in Under 13 hurling this year. As this competition ran at the same time as under 12 it was difficult for challenge games to be arranged during the season. Their championship group consisted of 8 teams where they won 4 and lost 3 games. That qualified the team to play Cois Fhairraige in the semi-final but lost out to very strong opposition on the day.

**Under 14:** A panel of 20 played this year. With 20 games in total being played during the year which included Suck Valley League, Challenges and Championship. The team had 4 games in their 'B' championship where they won one, drew one and lost 2. This team can consider themselves very unlucky not to have qualified out of the group. A narrow defeat to Tommie Larkins by one point cost them qualification. The Club have been very encouraged with how this panel of players acquitted themselves at this level and hope to build on how this year went.

**Under 16:** The panel consisted of 24 players. Playing a total of 14 games throughout the year which included Suck Valley league, challenges and championship. This team also played in the B Championship where they won one and lost three games but been very competitive in all games. Their final game would have qualified them for a preliminary quarter final but lost out to Michael Cusacks on the day. Some good talented players again playing for this age group and the club hope to develop these players further over the coming years.

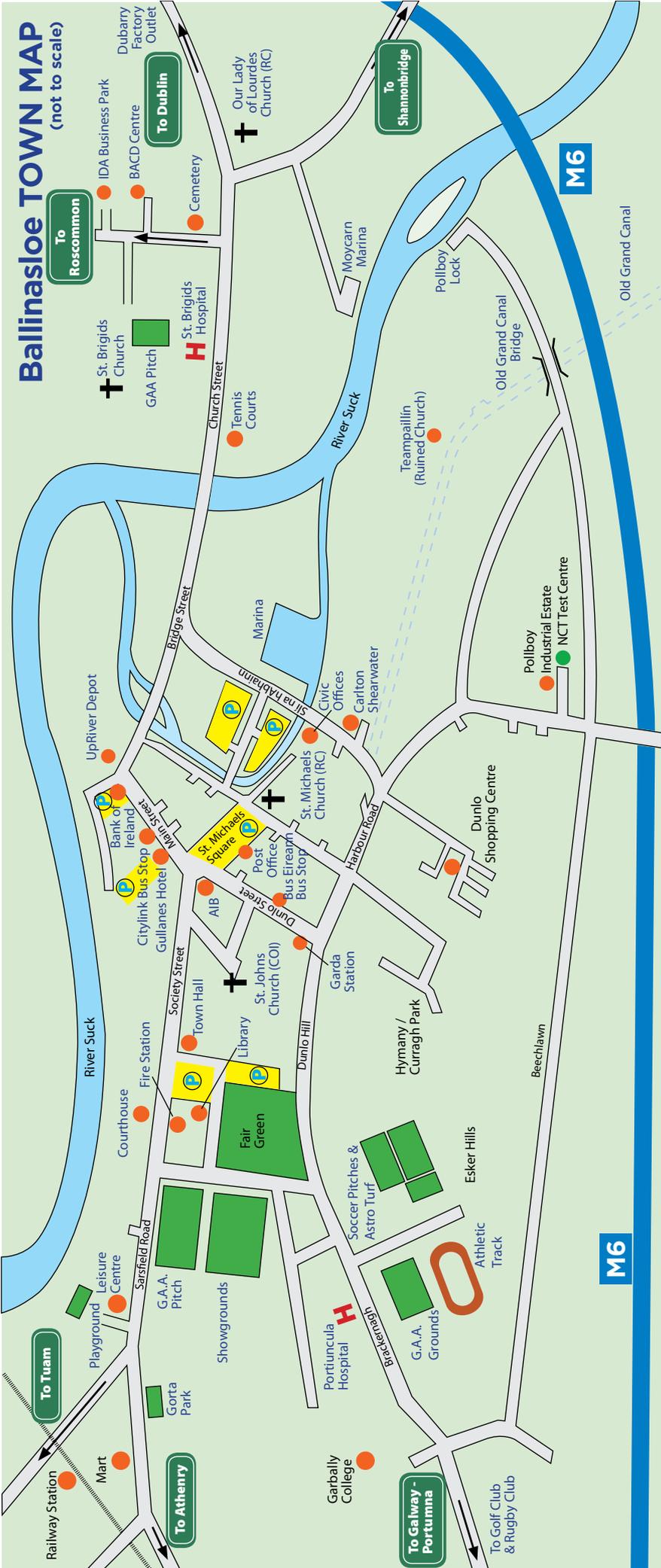
**Minor:** A panel of 22 players togged out this year. This team had a good run of hurling where they won two and lost two games in the championship group. That qualified them for a Quarter-final where they defeated Pdraig Pearses (Gurteen-Ballymacward). In the semi-final the team came up against a strong Sarsfields side and went down by five points in the end. Again a developing group of players who are well capable of playing at a higher level in the future.

The Club would like to thank everyone: managers, selectors, parents and anyone associated with the teams throughout the year for their dedication and time spent trying to improve the standard of the club's hurling teams. Thanks very much to all who have sponsored any or our hurling teams during the year. Your donations are much appreciated.

On behalf of all involved with Hurling teams in the club we would like to congratulate the Ballinasloe Junior footballers on their success, in winning the North Board, County and Connacht Finals this year. May you have continued success next year in the All-Ireland competitions. A special mention of congratulations and well done to Eoin Stack who represented Galway at Under 16 level and to Aodán Connaughton and Micheal O'Neill who played in the maroon and white for Galway at Under 14 level. Your dedication and efforts have had reaped just rewards.

# Ballinasloe TOWN MAP

(not to scale)



## Ballinasloe History Walk

- 1 – Start at the statue known as *The Man with the Horse*, where Main Street joins St. Michael's Square. From the crossing near the statue, continue by turning right onto Main Street. The prosperity of Ballinasloe in Georgian times can be seen in the scale and classical style of the buildings here. A fine group of four frontages stand across from the statue of The Man with the Horse. With shops and pubs on the ground floor for the most part, these Main Street premises have several floors above.
  - 2 – Walking along Main Street, lift your eyes above the shop frontages for one of the town's characteristic sights. There are the Diocletian windows that grace several facades. They are from the years after 1805 when the 2nd Earl was in charge. A window of this sort is formed under a semi-circular arch with two upright divisions so that the whole opening is divided into three parts.
  - 3 – As you stand at the meeting point of Bridge Street and Main Street, you will see the Victorian frontage of a commercial premises, originally the Masonic Hall. Next to it stands a classical looking, beautifully-crafted, early 19th century stone house, currently a guest house. Beside these is a tall, fine stone-fronted classical mansion, which is now the Bank of Ireland. It was originally the town mansion of the Lord of all of Ballinasloe, the Earl of Clancarty. A friend of king George IV, the Earl was one of the architects of the resistance to the emperor Napoleon. It could be said that he was the person to whom most credit is due for the layout, growth and architectural character of Ballinasloe as we see it today.
  - 4 – At the end of Main Street, head along Bridge Street, then turn to the right to the pathway which runs to the riverscape where you can see channels flowing through the several arches of the long stone bridge over the river Suck, one of the town's most precious monuments. The Bridge has been in continuous use since the 16th century and its extension in 1754 prepared it structurally to carry even the heaviest juggernauts of today.
  - 5 – Walk through to the far end of the park; you will approach St Michael's Church (1852-58) that stands in a commanding position over the Square. Its architect was J.J. McCarthy, a follower of Augustus Pugin (famed for other Neo-Gothic churches in Ireland) – and the design is said to have been revised by Pugin himself. Inside are many fine stained glass windows. Of particular quality are those of St. Patrick and St. Rose of Lima, of 1925, by the renowned Dublin Stained glass artist, Harry Clarke and *The Raising of the daughter of Jairus* by Patrick Pollen, inserted in 1958.
  - 6 – From St. Michael's Church now walk up St. Michael's Square back towards the Man with the Horse Statue. Take a left into Dunlo Street, an important street in the history of the town, which contains, together with other buildings of about the same date, the late-Georgian Garda Barracks. The Barracks are towards the far end of the street, on the right hand side. Also on this street, over Dolan's Electrical Shop, you can see another fine example of Diocletian windows.
  - 7 – Halfway up Dunlo Street, turn right up Duggan Street, which will take you to St. John's Church (Church of Ireland, 1843). It dominates the vast Fair Green which becomes a hive of activity during one week every year when up to 100,000 people throng to the October fair. Look out over the Fair Green and admire one of the grandest freestanding classical monuments in the region. Dedicated to Charles Le Poer Trench, it was designed in the Neo-Greek style by the English architect George Papworth (1781-1855). A mile past this monument on the Main Galway road, South West of the town, the Earl of Clancarty's former country house is situated, where imposing gates mark the entrance to Garbally Court. It has been a school since 1923.
- Walk down Church Hill onto Society Street and turn left, arriving at the Courthouse on the right. Society Street, like Main Street, was the 19th century location for the professional classes. As well as The Courthouse, it contains the former Bridewell (or gaol) from the 1840s. Further along this street, Ballinasloe Railway Station is a must. Constructed in 1851, it is a Neo-Gothic limestone tour-de-force and a fine example of the quality of rural Irish railway architecture in the mid-19th century.

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