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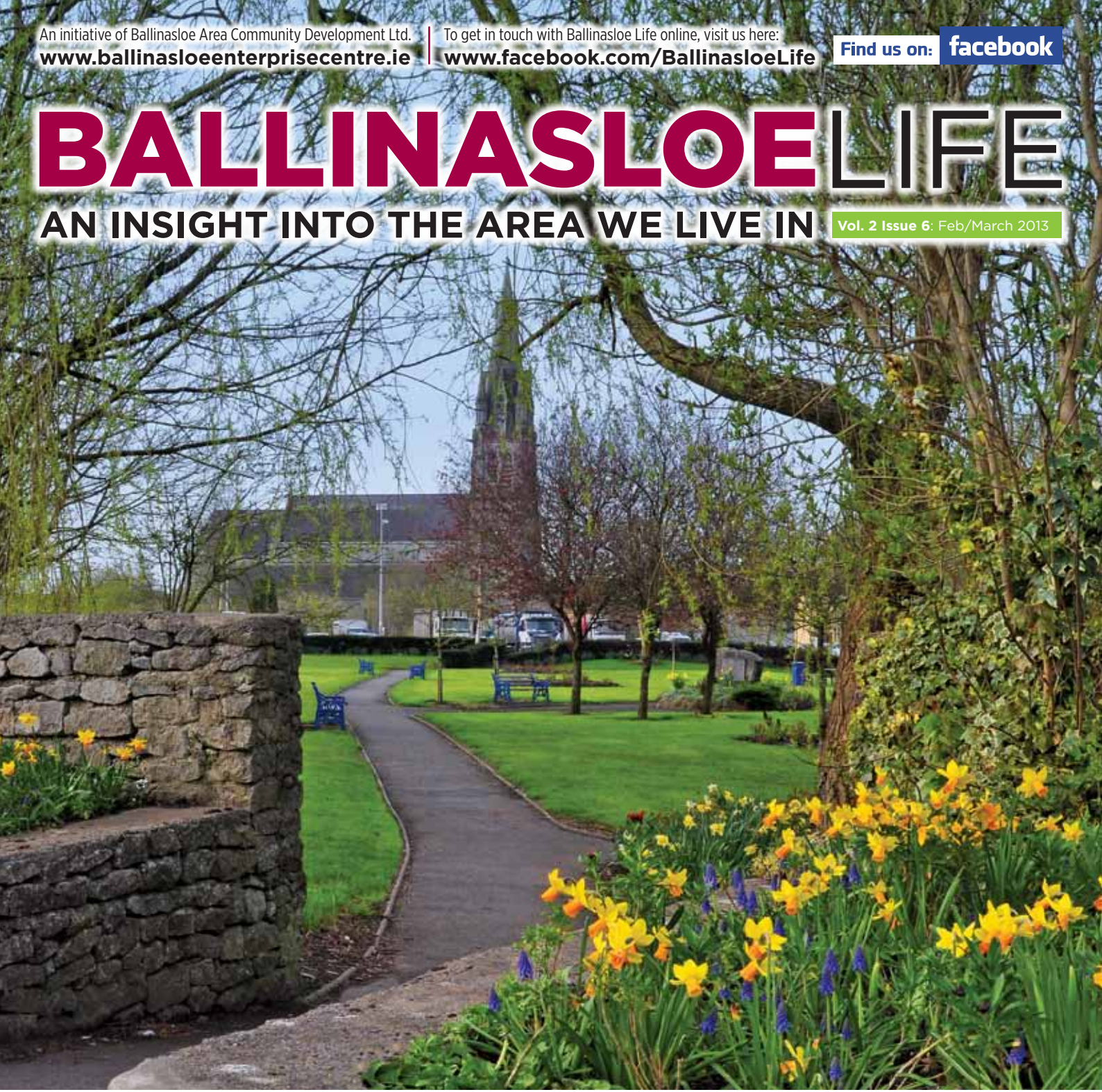
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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 2 Issue 6: Feb/March 2013



**LILY BRODERICK  
COMMUNITY HERIONE**



**PIRATES OF PENZANCE  
TOWN HALL THEATRE**



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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 2 Issue 6: Feb/March 2013

## REAMHRÁ



*Hard to see Spring, as we prepare this edition with the negative temperatures and freezing fog, but nestled in among the butts of the beech hedging are the snowdrops and crocuses creeping up. The first signs of the cycle of renewal after the horrible short winter evenings get enticingly longer. The Budget has come and gone. We all think we know how poorer we might be in the four quarters ahead but the longer this malaise goes on, the more I feel we can all move the recession into a proper cyclical perspective.*

*In this edition, it is hard to imagine the late Gerry Daly and his footballing comrades togging out in sand and sawdust conditions of the 50s. It's practically impossible to imagine this town without a nursing home, never mind a hospital which is what the first 'English' nuns found when they got here, as the war was starting. Hard to fathom this country and town so searingly Spartan as the one evoked by our county's second oldest person May Coughlan. Our profile on another woman who has contributed massively to our community, Lily Broderick, who reminisces on her life and times. She speaks about street leagues and organising sports activities for young people, without the lavish facilities of playgrounds, parks, gyms, pools and running tracks that are common place for the this generation.*

*Yet in all their tales the constant ebb and flow of people leaving for work, returning from places afar pepper their lives. What was haunting about the Festive season around town was not the joy of seeing all the faces back but seeing the town with the missing generation, the 20 to 40 somethings back with their families, as it was in 80s, 50s and 30s and all the other 'Cycles'. What ever all of us can do in the next four quarters, as a community, we must, to maintain the jobs we have and try and create opportunities to keep our schools filled, our playgrounds noisy, our teams stocked with players, our businesses surviving and thriving and a town with a strong heartbeat!*

*Le gach Dea Ghuí,  
Colm Croffy, Editor*



*We have broadened our involvement in the Community over the past 12 months and intend to build on that in 2013. We have just completed Volume 12 of Ballinasloe Life, which has continued to highlight all the positive aspects of our local catchment area and look for your support going forward. We need the continued support of our subscribers/advertisers and ongoing articles which are of interest to our readers.*

*We co-ordinated the Festive Gathering in the Town Square on 1st December where all age groups turned out in huge numbers to see and hear local talent on offer, welcome Santa and turn on the excellent Christmas Lights which the Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Town Council funded. We are already planning for next years event.*

*We also worked with the local business Community to promote a "Think Local, Shop Local" campaign and feedback in regard to same has been very positive from the Business Community with sales for the comparable period last year well up. This is not just a Christmas Campaign but an all year round campaign, so the message is give your local retailer first call. We will continue to work with organisations to promote the Town in a positive light and you are very welcome to come to our AGM on Thursday 21st February 2013 in the Enterprise Centre Creagh at 7.30pm.*

*Seamus Duffy, Chairman,  
Ballinasloe Area Community Development*

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An Initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community

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## New Medical Academy

Alliance partners, NUI Galway and the University of Limerick are delighted to announce the opening of a Joint Medical Academy at Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe. The NUIG-UL Medical Academy will bring the expertise of two of Ireland's medical schools together through shared teaching and facilities. This allows for greater efficiencies in maintenance of infrastructure and recruitment of academic and administrative staff but also allows students of undergraduate medical training and graduate entry programmes to learn from one another.



(L-R) Prof Gerry Loftus, Dean of Medicine, NUIG; Prof Deirdre McGrath, Director of Education, Medical School, UL; Mr Noel Daly, Chairman of Galway and Roscommon University Hospital Group; Prof Fidelma Dunne, Head of Medical School, NUIG; Prof Paul McCutcheon, Vice President Academic & Registrar, UL; Prof Nollaig Mac Congáil, Registrar and Deputy President, NUIG; Dr Maeve Durkan, Dean of the Medical Academy.

# Ballinasloe Town Council

## Comhairle Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe



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# March 21st: BEST Awards Night

Writes Owen Dunne

The fifth annual BEST Competition, Ballinasloe Entrepreneurial Skills Tournament, organised by the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre and Ballinasloe Credit Union is holding its awards night in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel on March 21st where the winners will be announced.

The aim of BEST is to promote an entrepreneurial spirit in the youth of Ballinasloe, the next generation of entrepreneurs. The Competition was opened to students in Árd Scoil Mhuire, Ballinasloe; St Joseph's College, Garbally Park, Ballinasloe; St Cuan's, Castleblakeney; Holy Rosary, Mountbellew and Coláiste an Chreagáin, Mountbellew.

BEST received over 100 applications this year. All entrants attended a workshop on the 18th January 2012 in Árd Scoil Mhuire to announce the 1st round winners. The Judges for the Competition are Gerry Kelly, Chris Armstrong and John Power (Chair). The following 13 qualified for the final:

- 1 Sally Anne Parsons (Árd Scoil Mhuire)
- 2 Laura Creaven (Árd Scoil Mhuire)
- 3 Martin Cunningham and Mark Naughton (Garbally College)
- 4 Sean Kelly, Shane Hughes and Stephen Naughton (Coláiste an Chreagáin, Mountbellew)
- 5 Brian Burnell (Garbally College)
- 6 David Hanrahan (Garbally College)
- 7 Viktorija Maksimchika (Árd Scoil Mhuire)
- 8 Ross Maloney and Jake Curley (Garbally College)
- 9 Claire Keane (Árd Scoil Mhuire)
- 10 Eoghan Donohue (Coláiste an Chreagáin)
- 11 Ellen Gavin (Árd Scoil Mhuire)
- 12 Nicola Kelly (Árd Scoil Mhuire)
- 13 Rachel Greene and Shannon Dolan (Árd Scoil Mhuire)

The judges were very impressed this year with the calibre of ideas from the students which included projects from the technology industry, sports, agriculture, music and practical solutions to everyday problems. The Finalists will now present their projects at the *Dragons Den* stage where they will pitch



their projects to the judges on the 5th March and fight it out for prizes totalling over €2,000. All participants will then attend an awards ceremony on March 21st 2013 in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, where the winners will be announced and a prominent entrepreneur will give a speech to the students and their parents. All members of the public are welcome and are encouraged to attend the awards night to see for themselves the amazing entrepreneurial skills that the youth of Ballinasloe have to offer.

The BEST competition is sponsored by Ballinasloe Credit Union and Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre.

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 more information on the BEST Competition: Call Lyn on 090 9646516 or visit [www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie](http://www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie)

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# Shearwater's Wedding Award!

**Writes Owen Dunne**

Congratulations to Ballinasloe's Carlton Shearwater Hotel and C Spa who have won an outstanding award for Best Wedding Venue in Galway with [weddingdates.ie](http://weddingdates.ie). The Team at the hotel have built up a reputation as a venue of excellence for Weddings; an ideal venue for your very own unique and personalised wedding ceremony, the

choice is yours as to whether you wish for a more traditional Church ceremony in one of the many churches in the area or whether you wish to have a Civil Ceremony at our hotel as they are licensed to host Civil Ceremony's. You can also choose to have your marriage blessed at the Hotel offering an intimate setting in the hotel, a secret rooftop garden or the Marina. In recent years the Carlton Shearwater Hotel has been

working on building their wedding brand experience with the launch of their all-inclusive *Sparkle Wedding Package*, "You won't just shine on your big day, You'll sparkle!"

**The package includes:**

- Arrival drinks reception with sparkly cupcakes and arrival music
  - Fully colour co-ordinated and themed banquet suite with our new Munroe backdrop and VIP white carpet
  - Contemporary evening food
  - Moposa award winning wedding planning package
  - Finally *Love is in the Air* - Wedding Gift for the Bride and Groom
- All you have to do is choose your menu!

The Sparkle package is tailored to suit all brides and grooms on their special day.

They envisage catering for all your needs and making this very important day in your life the most spectacular and joyous occasion. Winning this award the Shearwater Hotel and C Spa will continue to offer everything the couple need in one great location and provide the ultimate wedding experience.

Call today at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel 090 9630 400 for a Wedding Showaround with their Wedding co-ordinator Annette or visit their website [www.carlton.ie/shearwater](http://www.carlton.ie/shearwater).

**Date for the Diary! Wedding Showcase 9th and 16th February but they're here always for brides and grooms to be!**



*Aisling Courtney and Shane Feeney who got Married in the Carlton Shearwater on 28th December 2012 accompanied by Annette Ryan Wedding Coordinator and Jakub Gargas duty manager*

## Pottery Classes in Kilconnell Village

Learn a new and enjoyable craft in 2013. Classes start on Monday, the 4th February and will continue every Monday. Class duration will be 1 hour 30 mins to 2 hours. You will be instructed throughout by fully qualified instructors.

- The classes are suitable for beginners, from teenagers to the not-so-teenagers!
- You will learn how to work with clay using hand building techniques
- You will learn how to throw on a potter's wheel.
- Over the block of classes you will develop skills to create a piece of work and take it through the stages of firing to a finished glazed piece.

A six week block of classes will cost €90 with all materials and equipment supplied. Classes will take place in Kilconnell village across from the creamery.

Limited places, for booking and more information, please contact Walter on: 086 3228434 or 090 9686772 or email: [walterceramics@gmail.com](mailto:walterceramics@gmail.com)



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# Age Friendly County Initiative Putting the Best Foot Forward

**Writes Owen Dunne**

Following on from a successful Age Friendly Consultation process where over 2000 older people took part across Galway County, City and the Islands, organisations are working in partnership with the community to draw up an Action Plan which will address the issues raised.

This action plan will form part of the Galway Age Friendly Strategy which is currently being written up by the Age Friendly Alliance Board with a view to launching it in the first quarter of 2013.

Feedback from the consultation was presented to over 250 older people, who attended a social event in the Menlo Park Hotel in October, 2012 and a general agreement was made about the priorities for the strategy. In a view to making Galway more Age Friendly, some of the key actions happening include:

- The Development of an older People Forum and an Executive Committee to allow people to have a say in better policy planning and in shaping their communities.
- A review of current Transport Provision to try and suit the community needs better.
- The development of a Directory of older people's services for Galway is being compiled.

The Older Peoples Forum is an essential part of the Age Friendly County Programme and is a way for older people to raise their issues and concerns at decision making level as well as influencing future planning and development in Galway.

The older Persons Executive Committee provides an active channel of communication between the older Peoples Forum and the Age Friendly County Initiative. This Committee had its first meeting in December just gone. The overall aim of the Executive committee is to ensure that older people in Galway participate in the decisions which affect their lives.

This committee will strive to do this through working on behalf of, and in partnership with, the Older Peoples Forum to advocate for positive change in issues like housing, planning, health and safety, inclusion and social partnership issues relating to older people.

For further details please contact: Denise Feeny, Galway County Community Forum, Tel: 091-476511 Email: dfeeny@galwaycoco.ie or Catherine Collum, Age Friendly County Officer, Tel: 091 476514 Email: ccollum@galwaycoco.ie

**Ballinasloe electoral area funding workshop on Galway County Council's Community Support Scheme Grants 2013. Ballinasloe Local Area Forum AGM and Funding Workshop: Wednesday, February 6th at 7.30pm in Shiven Rovers FC, Newbridge, Co. Galway.**



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# Back For The Future: Former Auctioneer Returns to the Fray

**Writes Owen Dunne**

Prominent local man, Michael McCullagh, has come out of retirement to re-enter the property market at his new offices at 30 Society Street, as an independent estate agent. His services will include sales and rental of residential properties, sale and letting of farm land. Valuations for probate, acting for potential buyers in securing properties, commercial sales and lettings.

Born in Ballinasloe in 1939 he received an auction permit on his 21st birthday in 1960 from his uncle, Andrew Jennings who was an established auctioneer. Michael was 44 years in Auctioneering, selling residential property sites, residential and non-residential farms, both by private treaty and public auction. He held his 1st Public auction of a farm when he was 25-years-old and throughout his time at Five Society St. carried out auctions of fine art, books, etc.

When he formally retired in 2005 he held the record for the biggest price achieved for a residential property in Ballinasloe.



Prices for property were on the way up upon retiring in 2005 and he feels prices are now on the way up again but at a more cautious rate!

Michael opens his new offices at 30 Society Street, beside the first house he bought with his wife back in 1966, for £2550. Following his retirement in 2005 Michael became involved with two specialised Consultants in the negotiations under CPO on the M6 motorway between Ballinasloe and Athlone gaining valuable skills.

“I’m looking forward to renewing acquaintances and serving new clients in a professional manner whether selling or acting as a buyer. I have a lot of genuine experience in the field and am eager for the challenges in this testing property market” said Michael.

Michael’s office will be open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm (except Thursday). He is fully registered with the new Property Services Regulatory Authority PSRA and is a member of the Chartered Surveyors Ireland. 

# Hayden’s Hotel is Featured on RTE’s *At Your Service* TV Show

**Writes Owen Dunne**

Hayden’s Hotel recently featured on a full length programme of RTÉ One’s Sunday Evening popular show *At Your Service* and created huge waves of positive reaction for both the town and landmark hotel. The RTÉ One programme which features Kerry Brothers, Hoteliers Francis and John Brennan showed the savvy businessmen embarking on a rejuvenation programme at the one time icon of Dunlo Street.

Lots of shots of the exterior, the street scape and some landscape scenes of the town featured. Gabriel Creaven of Hayden’s said that everyone enjoyed the experience of working with Francis and John. “It was great having them on board. They are so knowledgeable and have some great insights into the hotel business. They were with us for nearly 6 days in total and the crew were here for much longer, capturing shots.”


Management at Hayden’s approached the production company behind the TV business makeover show and were picked for the current series. The business brothers visited the hotel from March to October last year to help refresh rooms, look at solving food costing problems and aggressively win back the wedding market. In the heyday of the hotel upwards of 150 weddings a year were booked!

The Opening Show of the new series had a record viewership of 616,000 that Sunday night and the 3 Creaven Brothers (who originally bought the Hotel from the Lynch Group to



redevelop into apartments, before the property collapse) have been overwhelmed by the positive reaction of their customers and clients to the show.

Some Senior Staff members: including longstanding Chef Jim Russell and the Duty Manager, Kathy Hopkins were interviewed on the programme as well. Gabriel gets the final word “We never anticipated what the impact of our involvement would be, but overall we’ve been really enthused and encouraged from all the feedback and business is certainly up!”

Two weeks later the Hotel featured prominently in another RTÉ One Hit series *Hector Goes Country & Western*, when the bilingual broadcaster visited a Mike Denver dance in the ballroom and shook some steps with the dancers! 

# Xmas Appeals Give Generously

Writes Owen Dunne

Christmas is a time of giving and this was no more evident locally as various charities worked hard to raise much needed funds. Different organisations such as the St. Michael's Folk Choir, St. Vincent De Paul and the Lions Club were on the streets collecting for various causes. The St. Michaels Choir continued their annual tradition of singing in the town centre and were hard to miss in their Santa Clause gear! They sang carols at the top of their lungs from 1-4.30pm on Christmas Eve outside Gullane's, entertaining the busy shoppers. The choir managed to raise a staggering €7,300 for their efforts. The money went to two great causes: The Samaritans and the local Sunflowers Chernobyl Appeal.

"This has become a yearly event for us and it is the 10th successive Christmas that we have grouped together on Christmas Eve." said choir member Sean Óg Hurley. Over the 10 years St. Michaels Folk Choir have raised an incredible €47,300 for various charities. St. Michael's were not left to soldier on alone however as they were often joined by other choir members from around the area to bolster their singing timbre. "We were helped out by other choir members and at one stage we had around 40 people singing Carols together."

The local St. Vincent De Paul Conference was also out in force over Christmas collecting money to help continue their ongoing work. On December 9th they




*Presentation of Cheques to the Samaritans and Sunflower Appeal by St Michael's Folk Choir*

organised a church collection in St. Michael's which received many generous donations from the local parishioners. Gate collections were also held in various other churches around the locality. The 60-year-old charity organisation were also helped out by the local secondary schools who, like St. Michael's went carol singing. The hard work and hoarse voices were duly rewarded with much needed funds raised.

Vice-President of the local organisation Margaret Moran noted that "Because of the current times SVDP are needed more than ever. During Christmas we were inundated with applications. This year we saw almost 800 people applying for help, and this is increasing every year." Local volunteer Kevin Whyte also said that "The voluntary work by the local people is fantastic. We have 15 main volunteers and 30 others who help out in the shop and without them we would not be able to function like we do." He also remarked on the great success of the Toy Appeal, co-ordinated

by Supervalu in Brackernagh. The needs and services of SVDP are daily and their giving campaign is year round with total confidentiality being one of the hall marks for both donor and recipient.

The Lions Club also made efforts to help the needy during Christmas. An annual tradition, they organised Christmas hampers to send to less fortunate families in the area. The hampers consisted of basic Christmas food requirements with well over 100 delivered by the club. They also contributed to the National Lions Club initiative in dispensing sleeping bags and clothes to the young homeless around Ireland. President, Brian Derrane stated the importance of the initiatives and local volunteering "They're two great causes and only for the help of members and locals we would not have been able to give our support." They also held a gate collection in December which helps fund the club "The local donations and support have been great. Ballinasloe people are never to be found wanting to help the more needy." 

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# Shop Local Campaign Success

**Writes Owen Dunne**

The *Shop Local* Campaign initiated by BACD and the Local Retail Group was hugely successful. The Campaign was initiated by the BACD and Local Retailers in late October as an attempt to persuade people to shop local for Christmas. The aim was to build the awareness of local shoppers and retailers, with Door Stickers used to encourage shoppers, to try and make purchases to support the 1,500 jobs in the Town Centre. The stickers project was supported by the Chamber and Town Council. A working party chaired by Seamus Duffy and Manager Lyn Donnelly met regularly since October, to co-ordinate efforts between local retailers and the Town Council, who provided free parking for the majority of December. Chamber of Commerce President Donal Scannell acknowledged the "Contribution made by the Town Council in altering the pay parking to provide

shoppers with practically free parking created great goodwill." The retailers group consisting of Val Collieran, Sean Fletcher, Dermot Salmon, Michael Ward, Bill Keller and Niall Clarke said that "The shop local campaign and extended hours were very beneficial and resulted in a positive Christmas, sales were well up on 2011. We want to acknowledge and thank the local customers for their support. It has made a huge difference and remind everyone that retail is a 12 year business!" Distribution of 3,000 extra copies of the Life Magazine to out of town shoppers in November and the circulation of the Shop Local Message to all 26,000 account addresses of the Ballinasloe CU prior to their AGM was hugely helpful. Chair Seamus Duffy said "We're thankful to the Chamber, Council and Credit Union and will build from the back of this experience to keep the momentum going year round to safeguard local jobs and businesses."

## New Children's Clinic Opened

**Writes Owen Dunne**

A new children's clinic has been opened at the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, Creagh, off the Roscommon Road. The clinic which opens from 10am - 4pm on Saturdays only, will be run by Dr. Susan Orwa. Dr. Orwa graduated from Charles University, Prague (Czech Republic) with a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree. She then furthered her clinical training in Kenya and The United Kingdom. She completed her postgraduate degree and passed her membership of the Royal College of Physicians and Child Health in the United Kingdom. Before coming to Ireland in 1992, Dr. Orwa worked in

the UK where she held various posts before becoming a temporary Paediatric Consultant. She then later became the locum Consultant, at Mullingar Regional Hospital. She opened her own Paediatric Practice in Mullingar in 2008. Dr. Orwa lives in Ahascragh. She speaks several languages (Czech, German, Swahili, Luo and of course English). Dr. Orwa hopes this service will benefit The Community especially being open on a Saturday when most GP Services are closed. This service also allows parents to have a direct access to a paediatrician without formal referral. All patients will be referred back to GP's. Investigation will be done where necessary.



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## BACD: New Acting Manager Appointed

BACD Ltd have appointed Castleblakeney native Eamon O'Donoghue to act as the Company Manager when the current manager Lyn Donnelly is on maternity leave. He worked for many years as IT Manager at Midwest Farmers' Co-op (now Arrabawn) in Kilconnell. Eamon has held various roles in IT, Sales and Marketing and Management in Ireland and abroad. He has qualifications in Computing, Training and Development and Business Admin and has a range of skills and experience. Welcoming him, BACD's Seamus Duffy stated "We're fortunate to have someone of Eamon's expertise providing cover. We wish him the best of luck in keeping the the company's projects moving forward." Eamon will be take up the full-time role Mid-March until Mid-September.



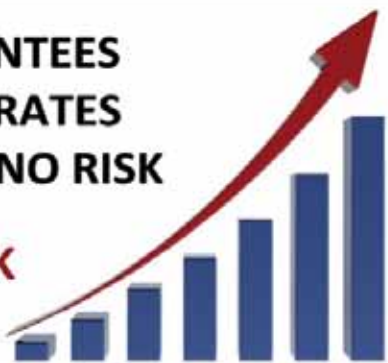
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# St Patrick's Day Preparations

## Writes Owen Dunne

Preparations are well under way for this year's St. Patrick's Day festivities here in Ballinasloe with a parade that is set to be bigger and better than last year's edition.

This year's parade will take place on Sunday the 17th March with all entrants expected to assemble at the Fair Green at 1.30pm. The parade will then get underway at 2pm starting from the Fair Green moving on towards Society Street, down through Main Street, past Slí na hAbhainn, on to Dunlo Street before finishing at the Soundstage Reviewing Platform in St. Michael's Square. There will be no shortage of entertainment for spectators with live music and dance on hand at St. Michael's Square from 1pm.

In keeping with the year of The Gathering, this year's theme is: "Hostings and Welcomes". All parade entrants are required to style their floats and entries on this theme.

Ideally any groups wishing to showcase their school reunion, worker reunion, hospital or nursing school reunion or football or sport reunions are all invited to put their thinking caps on. It is always an ideal occasion for groups looking for new members to feature in the event!

People may enter their float into one of the five different categories. The categories for the parade are as follows: Education (Bursaries for all schools who

take part), Cultural, Voluntary, Sporting and Commercial. There will be €4,000 worth of prizes to be won with €500 going to the overall winner. There will also be a separate competition for the *Best Dressed Window Competition* run by *Conradh na Gaeilge*.

Building on the success of last year's parade, the organisers have made sure that they will go one better than last years with an entertaining, colourful and fun filled parade to look forward to. The parade is an important time and an opportunity for locals to promote all that is good about the town and the surrounding area. The Town Mayor, Cllr Carmel Greally noted the importance of the parade saying: "The St. Patrick's Day Parade is always a great occasion. It's a huge opportunity to showcase the many positives that the town has to offer."

She also urged the local people to come out and help make it a parade to remember; "We have a fantastic parade organised for the town, now it's up to the local people themselves to come out and support our town on this very special day." With only weeks to go to the big day, people are hard at work trying to construct their floats that they hope will dazzle the judges. Entries need to be in by the 8th of March.

Anyone who would like an entry form or if you have any enquiries contact Carmel 090-9643279 or Nancy at 090-643497 or 087-997300.

Football Great, Cyril Dunne, leads last year's parade.



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# The Abolition of Town Councils

## Writes Cllr Johnny Walsh

Proposed reform of Local Government which proposes the abolition of all Town Councils, will have major negative implications for the town and its citizens. The minister for Local Government Phil Hogan TD claims that his proposals will bring Local Government closer to the people while at the same time abolishing the Local Government which is closest to the people and the most efficient unit i.e. Town Councils. The abolition of the Town Council will present the Business Community with increased business rates. The Town Council currently strike the third lowest rate in the country, significantly lower than Galway County Council and neighbouring towns. Under the proposed new arrangements Galway County Council will decide the rates for the Business community in our locality.

Under the new proposed arrangements our Town Council will be replaced with a "Municipal District Committee". Although the geographical boundaries of the "Municipal District" have not yet been determined, it is expected that it will include the general geographical area of the current County Council electoral area, which in turn will be answerable to the full Galway County Council. This Committee won't be an autonomous Town Council as we now enjoy. The Local Government reform framework document on future functions and powers of councillors is littered with vague possibilities and very short on

specifics. However, unlike current Town Councils who have such specific powers, the new Municipal District will not be able to pass their own budget or strike the business rate, neither will they be a Housing or Planning authority. All these powers will be in the hands of the County Council where there will naturally be allegiances to other towns and areas.


The following have been delivered in the recent past or are currently underway by our Town Council.

- Five public playgrounds: Rathbawn, Cleaghmore Leisure Centre, Poolboy, St. Grellans Terrace, Hymany Park.
- Town centre enhancement scheme.
- Roadway at rear of Gullane's, opening up the back of Main and Society Street.
- New Leisure Centre.
- Purchase of Convent and land to be developed for new library, exhibition area and community.
- Excellent all weather running track.
- Transfer land to Soccer and GAA clubs.
- Allocation of €37,000 to Enterprise Centre towards new roof.

These projects were largely financed by our local authority and one must wonder where will local organisations seek funding for such projects now? The direct focus which our Town Council place on our town will be completely lost under a Municipal District situation. We will be just another part of a much larger area with no priority for resources. We do need reform of Local Government and not in name only. We need progressive



and efficient Town Councils like ours to be retained with extra powers and responsibilities to be allocated to elected councillors. Removing 27 Town Councillors from the 3 Town Councils in Co Galway will save €162,000 per annum in councillor's payments. While creating an extra 9 county councillors under the new proposals will cost some €270,000 approx. An overall extra cost of some €107,000. This doesn't make sense!

Members of our Town Council met with local Oireachtas members recently and directed them to bring to Minister Phil Hogan' attention our concerns. We also passed a motion rejecting the reform package which will be forwarded to all national Oireachtas Members, Minister and all local authorities in the state for their consideration. I feel it is vitally important that the full implications of not having our own Town Council are fully understood and considered by citizens of our town! 



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# Life Contributors Get Together



## Writes Owen Dunne

Gibbons' was the venue for this year's annual get together for the contributors of the *Ballinasloe Life Magazine*. Many topics were discussed, including the development of the magazine for Volume 3, creating a larger reading audience, reaching out to our emigrants and other ways of improving the magazine, now in its 3rd year.

Company and Project Chairman Seamus Duffy took the opportunity to thank the contributing members for their hard voluntary work. "While Trainee Journalists are engaged and the design and printing are professionally contracted to KPW all other activities: collation, compilation, editing and photography through to delivery are all undertaken voluntarily by the crew that BACD have built around the project."

Over 3,500 copies are distributed freely within the town, another 500 are distributed to our outlying villages and some 500 are available for purchase locally. The final 1,500 copies are used

by the hotels in the locality as marketing collateral in the bedrooms and the events guide is used regularly at receptions. A great number of the Magazines are now being posted overseas to friends and family, though it is available free online at [www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie](http://www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie)

He also spoke about the challenges that face the publication: replacing subscribers, finding content, staying relevant, getting more profiles for the hinterland. He then thanked the Trainee Reporters for last year Siofra Mannion and Barra Ó Crófaigh and welcomed the new kid on the block, Kilcormac Native and UL Undergraduate Owen Dunne to his posting. Editor, Colm Croffy re-iterated the Chair's gratitude but also singled out the photographers and Designer, David Cunniffe and Larry Rohan, Production Manager with KPW Print as the unsung heroes of the publication. He also pointed out that whilst typically the reviews were good, the team welcomes all suggestions and criticisms and would love to see more copy from PROs. "As our inflight Magazine for the town, more

organisations should be clamouring for space and profile pieces, but quite a few are, it appears, publicity shy."

President of the Chamber of Commerce Donal Scannell commented that "One very positive feature in our community is all the good news stories that are in the *Life Magazine*. It gets everyone looking at our town more positively and it is now eagerly awaited. The Xmas Campaign for Shop Local, the extra 3,000 copies distributed free at retail parks and the *Switching On Evening* were all good for business, well done, keep it up."



**New Reporter, Owen Dunne (centre), has been appointed to the Ballinasloe Life Magazine. The Kilcormac native is a second year New Media and English Undergraduate in UL. He takes over from the hard working Killtullagh UL Undergraduate Siofra Mannion, who is now enjoying her Erasmus Year in Barcelona. Owen's stint as Press and Communications Assistant with AOIFE will involve 3 *Life* editions and a host of multimedia work with the Irish and European Festival networks. We wish him well! Contact him: 085 1481911**



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# An Post Distribution Moving to Poolboy

**Writes Owen Dunne**

Work is well and truly underway on the construction of Ballinasloe Post Office's new Distribution Centre which will be located in the Poolboy Industrial Estate, in the old AT Cross storage facility. The new development will vastly improve the postal services for the surrounding area as well as reducing traffic congestion from larger SDS and An Post Trucks in St. Michael's Square. Scenes of large postal vans and Lorries attempting to make their way in and out of St. Michael's Square will become a thing of the past as the new distribution facility will ease congestion woes in the town centre.

The new collection and delivery area will employ 25 full-time and part time sorting staff, retaining the same group of people who worked in the old distribution area in the square. The new collection and distribution point, which is 5 times larger than the current site, will also make life easier for An Post leaving their couriers with much more room to manoeuvre resulting in a quicker and more efficient postal service.

Galway based contractors Stewarts are the Builders behind the six figure sum renovation of the plant and site and expect to hand it over to the clients for use in October of this year. The new Delivery Service Unit will not only serve

the local Post Office but also 6 other sub-offices in the wider area including: Ahascragh, Ballyforan, Ballinamore Bridge, Kilconnell, Woodlawn and Gurteen. This new unit will be of huge benefit to these offices creating much needed space and better service for their customers. It will also have the capacity to cater for a larger number of deliverables which An Post intends on expanding in the future.

Fears that the new development will affect counter services in the Post Office can be quickly dispelled as the office in St. Michael's Square will continue business as usual without disruption.

The new distribution centre is expected to open its doors in autumn of this year, leaving the old collection and distribution point in the Square vacant.

However, plans are in train to use the newly vacated space to re-configure the office, retail and counter sales for further development of the Post Office, resulting in better and more efficient counter services for their customers.

Noel Frehill, Acting Delivery Service Manager, stated "All in all, it's a positive development that will safeguard the 25 full-time and part time employees involved in sorting and distribution and will safeguard the 8 employees engaged at counter and retail services, as well as decongesting the town centre." This new development is a huge boost for the town as it will result in less congestion on the main streets as well as making the area a central collection and delivery point for numerous postal offices.



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# The New Bethany Amenity Park

**Writes Owen Dunne**

The new town park, currently under construction, is nearing completion and marks the culmination of over €1.7m of investment by the Town Council in Leisure and Amenity Parks in the locality over the past 3 years. The park is located across the road from St. Brendan's housing estate in Poolboy and is expected to be open by Summer. It will serve as a public amenity to all in the Town and surrounding areas.

The 4,000 sq. m section of land was generously donated by local woman Mrs. Betty Ring to the Town Council, becoming the first land donation from a private individual to the council in over 3 decades. Betty comes from a distinguished family who were paper merchants in the town and developed a large farm surrounding their residence. Some of the land was sold during the Celtic Tiger era for new building and development and the parcel of under an acre with excellent road frontage, estimated at €150,000 was gifted.

Currently the park still resembles a building site with poor weather delaying planting, however, once the €40,000 phase 2 is completed and mother nature does her work it will soon become a more pleasing environment. At present the site has been levelled and a concrete pathway installed. Local builder Ivan Mullins, who is in charge of the development described some of the features that will be found there: "There will be a rugby ball shaped walkway with a seated area at each end. It will be totally level and 100% wheelchair accessible. At the moment we are beginning phase 2 which is the seeding of the ground and the construction of a pelican cross from St. Brendan's estate to the main gate. We expect phase 2 to be completed by late April. The gardening team will then move in to plant various shrubbery and trees to enhance the recreational nature of the location."

The park, which will be called Bethany Park (as part of the bequest) will not be for skateboarders or bikers but intended for more tranquil and peaceful usage. Unique features will include seating and a small kick-about area for younger ones.



The opening times and access policies will be similar to all the other Amenity Parks in the municipality. In time in consultation with residents other facilities such as playgrounds maybe included. The Cleaghmore Playground behind the Kingfisher Leisure Complex, has just had a €48,000 refurbishment project completed with a host of new features for slightly older age youngsters. It is currently open to 6.30pm but will change with the change to summer-time.

In Hymany, over €35,000 was expended in replacing facilities, upgrading the surface of the playground area to all weather and installing new fencing. Work was finished just before Christmas. In the Kilgarave Recreational Park, located between the Portnick Road and the rear of Hawthorn Estate, a further €28,000 has been earmarked for perimeter concrete walkways and landscaping to allow for multi-use play areas alongside the playground.

There is currently a draft plan at Council for a large investment for a new play area in St. Grellan's Estate, but some more costings and consultations are believed to be in order before a final decision is made. The Town Council has also been awarded a grant of €50,000 from the Department of Sport to develop toilets and shower facilities in the new Dunlo Recreational Park, officially opened last year and is available to all sports groups in town.

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# Credit Union App *cuAnywhere*

Writes Niall Clarke

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*cuAnywhere* employs industry standard data security and use of the app is subject to user acceptance of the terms and conditions displayed on the device prior to first use.



Ballinasloe Credit Union will once again be organising the CU Factor talent competition in April 2013. Following on from the success of last year's competition the Credit Union is delighted to sponsor this initiative designed to allow the youth of Ballinasloe and its hinterland to showcase their talent. Auditions for the talent competition are open to all under the age of 21, so if you have a talent in song, music, dance, comedy etc please come along to the auditions and we will give you an opportunity to stage this talent. For more details visit the Credit Union website [www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie](http://www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie) or follow on facebook. The final is scheduled to take place at the end of April in the Town Hall Theatre. 

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# The September Start for Our October Fair

**Writes Niall Clarke**

Picture this scene if you will, because as sure as night follows day this will happen. A bus-load of tourists arrives in Ballinasloe on the 6th October expecting to see the Horse Fair. Everyone on the Bus is looking forward to spending a few hours in Ballinasloe mingling among the horse buyers and sellers.

They arrive in Ballinasloe, and have no difficulty in driving up through the town. The bus makes its way to the top of the Square, the tour guide steps off the bus and enquires from a local citizen (it could be you) "Where is the Horse fair taking place?" "You're a week too late" comes the reply. It begins to dawn on the tour guide that nobody in the company checked the dates before they organised their trip. How this error is explained to the tourists on the Bus as it departs Ballinasloe is another story.

As he walks away our local citizen starts to see the reason why the bus would arrive a week late, after all isn't the Fair branded as the October Fair and last Sunday was the 29th September. So now he asks himself "How can a Fair branded as the Ballinasloe October Fair start in the last weekend of September? When asked the same question a lot of people are left scratching their heads when you ask why this is the case.

This year the fair will start in September (Sunday 29th) and we will have to wait until 2018 before we have a September starting date again. In the intervening years the Fair will have a starting date in October, confusing you say, let me explain: The first Tuesday in the month of October always determines the starting date of the October Fair. So in the case of 2013, the first Tuesday happens to be the 1st of October so the opening Sunday and Monday have September dates. In 2014 the first Tuesday in October falls on the 7th October so the Fair will start on the Sunday the 5th October.

In it's prime, four Fairs took place in Ballinasloe during October. The starting date of the Fair as we now know it has more to do with ewes and rams than horses and donkeys. It was the hosting of one of the largest sheep fairs in Ireland on the first Tuesday and Wednesday in October that decided the dates for the horse sales that would take place on the Sunday and Monday prior to the sheep fair on the first Tuesday in October. Thursday was preparation day for the cattle sales that were held on Friday, with Country Fair Day taking place on Saturday. Unfortunately the great sheep and cattle fairs are no longer part of the October Fair, but their legacy of determining the opening Sunday of Fair Week remains. So it if doesn't happen



to you this year then perhaps in 2018 if you are stopped by a busload of tourists on the first Sunday in October you can explain why they are week late.

**The 2013 October Fair will run from the Sunday, 29th September to Sunday 5th October. Monthly meetings commence shortly and the committee are always looking for new members. If you would like to get involved please contact our Festival Secretary on 087 2071869**

## New Shearwater Management

**Writes Owen Dunne**

Fergal Ryan, General Manager, Barry Kilroy, Deputy General Manager and Michelle Ryan Sales and Marketing Manager have recently joined the team at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel and C Spa. Fergal Ryan has taken up the role as new General Manager of the hotel having built the empire of the McWilliam Park hotel for the past 7 years and previously worked in the Harbour Hotel and Galway Bay. The focus and drive that Fergal has is to build on his Wedding Venue reputation through Service Excellence and enhance the awards won at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel in 2012 as best Wedding Venue in Galway.

Accompanying Fergal as a new start is Barry Kilroy as Deputy General Manager, having worked as General Manager at the Carlton Hotel Tralee, Loughrea Hotel and St. Cleran's Manor House. Barry has gained extensive knowledge of the region which will help him drive and build the Food and Beverage Standards and Service, having achieved previous awards for Excellence in past business's for the local market and tourists coming to Ballinasloe.

Michelle Ryan has been appointed as the Sales and Marketing Manager, having worked with such companies as Dromoland



Castle, Radisson Blu Sligo and the Carlton Hotel Group. Michelle branched into sales and marketing having worked and built her career in the Leisure and Spa industry both in Ireland, USA, Asia and Europe. To become a bit more settled Michelle returned to Ireland and commenced working with the Carlton Hotel group nearly 2 years ago. Fergal, Barry and Michelle look forward to building on the brand of The Carlton Shearwater Hotel and C Spa along with Ballinasloe as a destination for tourists to visit from near and far.

# Origins of Portiuncula Hospital

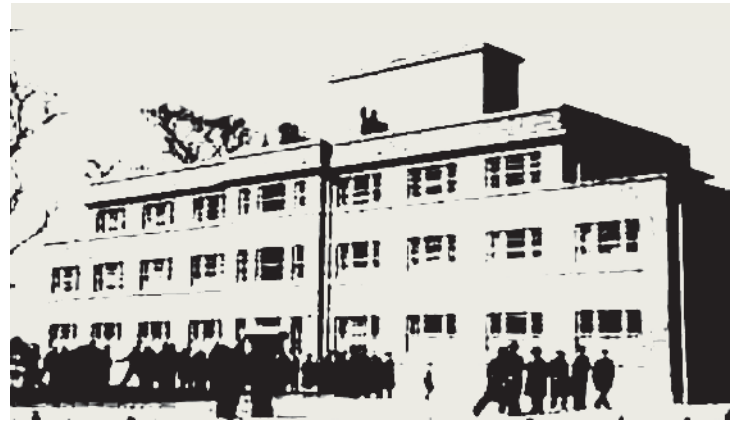
Writes Colm Croffy

While the Hospital is rarely out of the news - which hospital today is not? It's surprising how few really know the origins of the facility which has grown from a humble little portion of two houses in Mount Pleasant to an acute general and maternity hospital, with a total of 196 in-patient beds and 12 Day Care beds and a staff compliment of over 700.

Two Sisters from the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, Mother Margaret Keenan and Sister Bernard Rudden, had been searching for a site to recruit and train Irish nurses for an Irish Foundation. They had originally set upon Athlone as their preferred location but ran into some opposition and were persuaded by Bishop Dignan of Clonfert, a dedicated social reformer who on the urgings of a colleague Dr. Ada English (then the RMS in St. Bridgid's Psychiatric Hospital) got the nuns to open a small nursing home in Mount Pleasant, in February 1943.

For the first few years the nuns slept in the attics, while the patients slept downstairs. The Missionary Nuns were an order founded in the inner cities of late 19th Century Northern English cities. Their first foundation house was in Aldershot, Hampshire. The Hospital was named from the start, 'Portiuncula' after the first foundation Church founded by St. Francis in the village of Assisi in Italy in the 15th Century. It translates into "Small Church".

From the archives of the Order and the Diocese it is apparent that both Mother Margaret and Bishop Dignan were kindred spirits and saw the project as being progressive for the town, community and the patients. They were always focused on the faith dimension to the whole affair. It is also clear that the Bishop wanted 'his' hospital but in the end was happy to agree for Mother Margaret to Develop 'hers' with him as Patron. It is unimaginable in today's world to picture the locality in the war-time 40s with home births (Midwives like the late



Mrs Bridgid Whyte, cycling to houses in all weather ! ) no Merlin Park and the Regional Hospital about 80 minutes by bad road away for a patient in distress! At that time Medical procedures, interventions in so far as they could be afforded by the populace were handled from the Dispensary (located in the Town Hall) by Dr. Coyne and he and the Nuns never really saw eye to eye, to put it mildly.

The Nuns had their priorities set from the moment they left the Motherhouse Hospital in Guilford in Surrey, which was to capture some of the hundreds of young Irish girls and women who were heading for Nursing Training to Britain and teach them professionally high standards of nursing practice within a Catholic teaching tradition. They also wished to in time create a teaching facility at the Hospital to train young members of their congregation to work in the third world, in developing basic medical services in post colonial Africa.

Most past staff, nurses, doctors, board members, suppliers and even patients, still hold in huge regard, reverence and esteem this band of medical pioneers who took to an East Galway town and brick-by-brick surmounted various obstacles to create the Hospital. The nuns and of course, the pivotal manager, the feared Matron of these Order run hospitals, ran their facilities with boundless energy and charity coupled



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with ruthless efficiency and a passion for routine, order, hygiene and very high standards of patient care. Their work rate was phenomenal. When Dr Stanley Hewitt arrived as the first Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist in 1962, it had almost 200 beds, 4 Consultants, half a dozen Junior doctors and all the Hospital Administration was being handled by Sr. Marie Patrice and one Assistant!

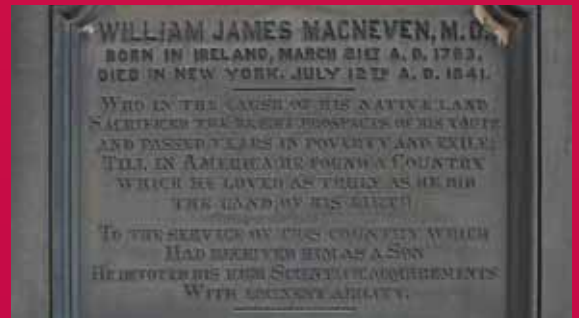
The Bishop donated a site on the Clancarty estate in Brackernagh (which came with the purchase of Garbally) to the Sisters and in October of the same year the foundation stone was laid for hospital, McKeowns were the builders. When the 36 bed Hospital opened just before the end of the war in February 1945, the first patients were transferred from Mount Pleasant by means of a baker's van, and the equipment followed on the greengrocer's horse and cart. A large number of local ladies who were having families in the forties and fifties (mothers of people in their 60s and 70s perhaps now) had their first children at home and the later ones born in Portiuncula!

In 1946 the 'Ladie's Committee' of the Benevolent Fund ran a sale of work that raised over £540, a huge sum at the time. This was the first in a very long line of local community and area fundraising that went on for all the Capital extensions and the patient support funds that culminated with the CAT Scanner in the late 90s. This money in 1946 was used by the Sisters to head to Belfast and buy two Nissen Huts, from the departing US Airborne Division, which became the first ward for public patients, 14 women and 6 men. The second was used for accommodation for the Nuns. These huts were a great temporary investment, with one of them in various uses until the mid 80s.

In 1947 the nuns, after negotiations with the Department of Health, bought the land and developed a 100 bed hospital for East Galway public patients, on the east and west wings off the original block. The Irish Nursing Board finally gave approval in April 1953 for a Nurse Training School which was opened in May 24th as the Madonna College of Nursing. In 1957 the first X-Ray Department opened and Eagle Lodge was bought for a Nurses home. In 1959 the nurses home was built, opening in 1962. In 1973 the Hospital began its formal relationship with the Western Health Board, the fore runner of the HSE and had expanded to over 200 beds. In 73 the Hospital Consultative Committee was formed, chaired by the son (Seán) of the Patriot Major John McBride and Maud Gonne. Seán, a former Government Minister, was a key until his death in the care of the Portiuncula Nuns in 1988.

**The story of some of the medical research and facility enhancement of the 60s, 70s, the capital development of the 80s, 90s and noughties and transfer to the HSE will be relayed in further *Life* editions.**

# MacNevin's New York Connection



## Writes Sean Tully

Ever wondered why the connecting road from Harris Street through the Fair Green and back onto Society Street is named MacNevin Avenue? It's because of the work of one William MacNevin, born in Ballinhowan, Aughrim, reared and educated here in the locality. He was a leading figure in Chemistry and is held in high regard in the States because of his pioneering work. He was heavily involved in the United Irishmen and after serving in the French Army as surgeon in the Irish Brigade he sailed to New York where he lectured in various colleges for physicians. He authored leading books and journals on medicine and Chemistry and is views as the father of that subject in the early 1800s US.

In November of last year myself and Rita on the invitation of my cousin Bill visited the burial place of MacNevin. There we met his son Bill Junior and went to the World Trade Centre site with its monuments to those who were lost in 9/11. It's a very patriotic place for all Americans. Bill then took me to St Paul's Church closeby to show me the monument to William MacNevin. I have been in New York many times over the years and visited the Twin Towers in the old days but I never realised where his burial place was.

The monument clearly states in English and Irish how highly he was thought of as he is described as the "Father of American Chemistry" As well as lecturing in various prestigious colleges MacNevin wrote a number of books including *An Exposition of the Atomic Theory, Argument in Opposition to a Union, Rambles in Switzerland* and *Pieces of Irish History*. MacNevin was an accomplished scholar and spoke German, French, Italian and Irish. He was also a proud Irish man and was involved in many Irish movements in the States. After a long career MacNevin died in New York on 12th July 1841, aged 78.



Sean, his Wife Ita and Cousin Bill pictured at the MacNevin Monument.

# Flood Alleviation Group Making Steady Progress



**Writes Owen Dunne**

**Flood Alleviation Ballinasloe Project or 'FAB' for short, is a committee, which was born out of the devastating floods of November 2009 by a group of residents affected.**

Subsequent to the flooding in the region the committee became aware of a distinct lack of clarity about the State's response to flooding. Their concern was heightened due to what appeared to be a great lack of urgency in putting measures in place to prevent a re-occurrence of the flooding.

FAB commissioned a study in order to put Ballinasloe to the forefront for attention and to fast-track remedial works by the relevant authorities so as to protect the community, its residences and its water and sanitary systems from a repeat of November 2009.

The 'Study' was carried out by Hydro Environmental Ltd in conjunction with Bronra Surveyors Ltd and the Department of Engineering and Hydrology of NUIG which is to be commended for all the tangible help provided by the engineering students under the guidance of Professor Conleth Cunnane.

The 'Study' has been undertaken to an internationally recognised standard and has been endorsed by the hydrological community as a work that is substantial in its scope and reliable in its content, making it a reference for all works relevant to safeguarding this community of ours from the ravages of future flooding. So many theories and half truths about flooding in Ballinasloe can now finally be put to rest by those who will take the time to read through the report and its findings. This report can be accessed on [Ballinasloe.ie](http://Ballinasloe.ie)

A detailed Cost Benefit Analysis of the proposed measures is also contained showing a favourable ratio of 1 to 1.72 which indicates the economic benefit of undertaking the infrastructural and remedial works proposed. The recommendations in this report are crucial to a holistic and effective State response to flooding in the Ballinasloe area and represent a challenge to the OPW, Ballinasloe Town Council, Galway County Council and Government Agencies to deliver the proposals contained herein. FAB are working closely with

all the stakeholders to ensure that the recommendations of this report are implemented.

**8 works areas between Derrymullen (upstream) to downstream of the Ballinasloe Marina have been identified where flood relief works are required.**

- **Area 1:** Ballinasloe Bridge (East)
- **Area 2:** Upper Derrymullen Area
- **Area 3:** Derrymullen Area
- **Area 4:** Station Road Bridge to the Hill of Back (Right Bank)
- **Area 5:** Church Street to Creagh Road (Left Bank)
- **Area 6:** Town Centre (St. Michael's Square and Island Area)
- **Area 7:** Bridge Street to Canal Road (Right Bank)
- **Area 8:** General Main Drainage Works.

**Works Area 1:** Ballinasloe Bridge (East) The purpose of these works is to remove the constriction imposed by Ballinasloe East Bridge and its approach and exit channel. For completeness the option involves an extended section of channel regrading, bridge underpinning, removal of sluice gates and the construction of new flood eyes on the east bank.

**Work completed to Date:** The sluice gates have been removed and three extra eyes have been opened.

**Works Area 3:** The purpose of these works is to protect the the low lying properties and roads in the Derrymullen area from flooding both from the River Suck and the Deerpark River. These protection works include the construction of flood walls, flood embankments and flood relief drainage works. This proposal has been significantly developed by the OPW and their consultants Atkins on behalf of Ballinasloe Town Council and Galway County Council.

**Work completed to Date:** Construction of flood walls, flood embankments and flood relief drainage works.

**Works Area 4:** Station Road to Hill of Back The purpose of these works is to protect a 1.75km length of low lying properties, school buildings and business and roads in the Cleaghmore, Townspark (West) and Hill of Back area along the right bank of the River Suck from flooding. These protection works include the construction of a short length of flood, an extensive length of flood embankments and flood relief drainage works.

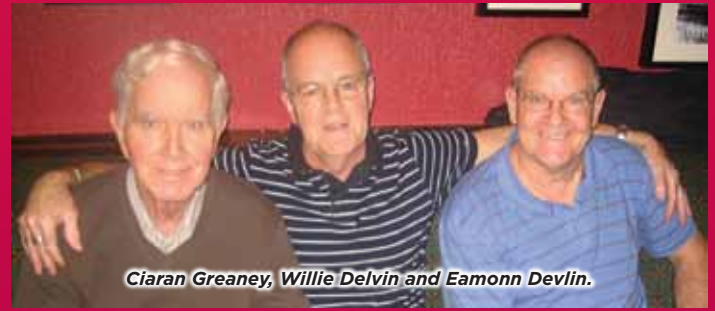


**Work completed to Date:** FAB have commissioned a report for submission to Ballinasloe Town Council for flood defence works for the Station Road/Cleaghmore area.

The committee wish to acknowledge the support of the Ballinasloe community and in particular the members of the Ballinasloe Flood Relief Committee, Community Foundation of Ireland, Lions Club, Gullane's Hotel, Canal House, Ballinasloe Golf Club for all their help in our fundraising efforts. They are also indebted to Ballinasloe Town Council and Galway County Council officials for their co-operation and guidance.

Committee: Michael Tully, Chairman, Frank Kavanagh, John Jordan, Anne Jordan, Mary Cunningham, Pat Harte, Colm McCann, Brian Conneely, John Slattery, Willie Devlin, Ann Marie McCormack and Josephine Goode.

# Singer's Circle



Ciaran Greaney, Willie Delvin and Eamonn Devlin.

8 years on and Ballinasloe Singers Circle is still thriving. The Circle hosts its 8th Anniversary in the Dunlo Tavern on Thursday, 14th March. Organiser and *Fear an Tí* Thomas Corcoran started the Singers Circle in March 2005. From September to June the sound of unaccompanied singing and storytelling fills the the Dunlo Tavern. On the second Thursday of each month the group collects at the Dunlo with others who've made the trip from their own singing circles to join local singers in Ballinasloe. The Circle is open to everyone to join and on the night caters to all ages from 18 up. The casual environment is a good confidence builder for those performing solo for the first time. The Dunlo Tavern is a great venue for the Circle and its supportive public. Dunlo's proprietor, Damien Clarke enjoys the singing and this is a plus. He often joins in with a song. Organisers are delighted with the progress and increasing popularity of the Singers Circle. They would like to thank everyone who has helped over the last 8 years, whether they be singers or listeners. An invitation has also been issued to all singers and storytellers in the area to come along and support the circle. Admission is free. For more information contact Thomas: 086 3777532 or find us on Facebook.

# Ballinasloe To Feature in BBC's *Great Train Journeys of Ireland*

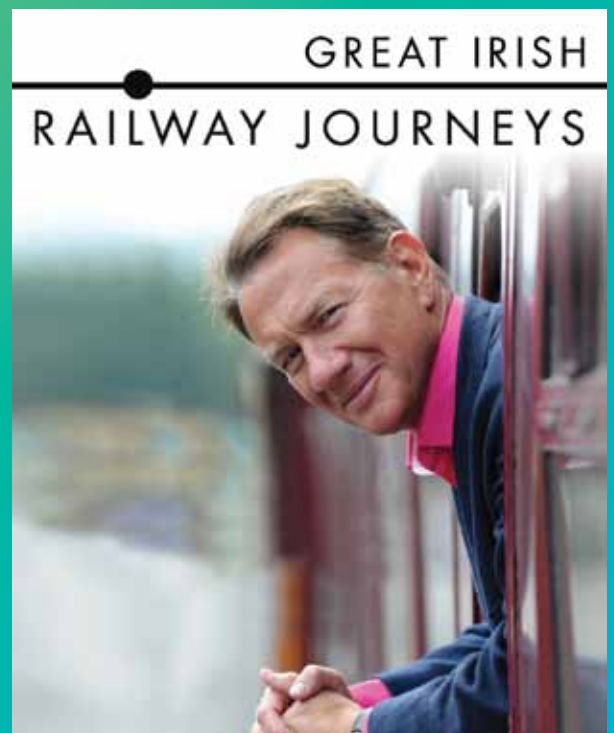
**Writes Pat Johnston**

Ballinasloe will feature on BBC2's *Great Train Journeys of Ireland* during the week starting February 4th. Former Tory minister Michael Portillo, in Ireland to film the series, shared a pint and a few songs and tunes with the locals in the Dunlo Tavern last July. His main interest in the area was the effect of the railways on social life of the people and he was interested to hear more about local hero Matt Harris.

Following Bradshaw's *Monthly Railway and Steam Navigation Guide*, Portillo and his BBC team visited the site of the old Corbett's Hotel on River Street and St. Michael's Square where the Saturday market was in progress.

They then went to the grave of Matt Harris (1826-1890) in Creagh Cemetery. Historian Brian Casey, who has just completed his doctorate, was able to tell him about the Ballinasloe man who was an Irish Fenian, founder of the Ballinasloe Tenants Association in 1876, Land Leaguer and Irish Parliamentary Party MP who represented Galway East from 1885 until his death in 1890. The theme of land and politics was continued in the pub session when Portillo heard about the stories, music and songs of East Galway during the period of land agitation in the 1880's.

With a relatively fine day the town was looking its best and should turn out well when the series is broadcast in the spring. Filming is also taking place in the town on a *docudrama* for TG4 which will be broadcast as a seven-part series next year.



# FEBRUARY / MARCH Events Guide

1st FEBRUARY		
An Táin	Trad: The Beahan's & friends	6-9pm
Carlton Shearwater	Ken & Steve	10.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	Trad with Still Slopin	10.30pm
Town Hall	Country Market	9-2pm
Maud Millar's	The Gaegan Pagans	10pm
2nd FEBRUARY		
Carlton Shearwater	The Legends	10.30pm
An Táin	Chillout	9.30pm
Kileen's Sh'bridge	Men of Aran	9pm
Cluain Mhuire	New Premises Family Fun Day	2pm
Mart	Rally Service Park	7am-6pm
Gibbons' Pillar House	Silk Cut Blues	10pm
Maud Millar's	Wash Out	10pm
Hayden's	Last Man Standing	8pm
3rd FEBRUARY		
St. Michael's Square	Galway Rally Ceremonial Finish	5pm
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Gibbons' Pillar House	Trad: John Whyte & Frank Kelly	6pm
Maud Millar's	The Hooch Hikers	10pm
Hayden's	One to One	8pm
4th FEBRUARY		
Hayden's	Set Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's	Line Dancing	8pm
5th FEBRUARY		
Gullane's	Uni Slim	5.30pm
GAA Club House	Kids Sean Nós Dancing	6.15-7pm
Gullane's	Active Retirement AGM	3.00pm
Gullane's	Tea Dance	9pm
6th FEBRUARY		
An Táin	Trad Session: Frank, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
7th FEBRUARY		
Cluain Mhuire	Something to Sing About Choir Practice	7.30pm
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's	Bruno Groening	7pm
GAA Clubhouse	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
Hayden's Hotel	Kevin Rohan & Friends	8pm
8th FEBRUARY		
Town Hall	Country Market	9-2pm
Carlton Shearwater	Paul Burns	10.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	Pete Jones	10.30pm
Maud Millar's	The Rivulettes	10pm
An Táin	Trad music: The Beahan's & Friends	6-9pm
9th FEBRUARY		
Carlton Shearwater	Chris Nash	10.30pm
Hayden's Hotel	Christy & Mike	8pm
Dunlo Tavern	The Boru	10.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Wedding Showcase	All Day
Killen's Sh'bridge	Kieran Rosney	
Gibbon's Pillar House	Lyrical	10pm
Maud Millar's	Keith & Johnny	10pm
An Táin	Bug and Ben	9.30pm
10th FEBRUARY		
Gibbon's Pillar House	Trad: John Whyte & Frank Kelly	6pm
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Maud Millar's	The Hoppy Bar Stars	10pm
11th FEBRUARY		
Hayden's Hotel	Set Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's	Mothers Union Meeting	8pm
Gullane's	Line Dancing	8pm
12th FEBRUARY		
Gullane's	Tea Dance	9pm
GAA Club House	Kids Sean Nós Dancing	6.15-7pm
Cluain Mhuire	Family Support Group	7.30pm
13th FEBRUARY		
Gullane's	Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	8pm
An Táin	Trad session: Frank, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
14th FEBRUARY (VALENTINE'S DAY)		
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's	Bruno Groening	7pm
GAA Clubhouse	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
Dunlo Tavern	Valentines Night Singers Circle	9.30pm
Hayden's Hotel	Kevin Rohan & Friends	8pm
E Galw Cancer Support	Choir Practice	7.30pm

15th FEBRUARY		
Town Hall	Country Market	9-2pm
Maud Millar's	The Silk Cut Blues	10pm
Dunlo Tavern	Buzz the Agent	10.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Michael Regan	10.30pm
An Táin	Trad & Folk: The Beahan's & friends	6-9pm
16th FEBRUARY		
Gibbons' Pillar House	Johnny O'Halloran & Eamon O'Dwyer	10pm
Hayden's Hotel	Chamber of Commerce Dinner Dance	7.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Chequeres	10.30pm
Maud Millar's	Live Music	10pm
An Táin	Mike Carty	9.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	Kensey 3	10.30pm
Hayden's Hotel	Country Comfort	8pm
Carlton Shearwater	E. Galway Foxhounds Valentines Ball	7.30pm
Kileen's Sh'bridge	One to One	9pm
Carlton Shearwater	Wedding Showcase	All Day
17th FEBRUARY		
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Árd Scoil Mhuire Hall	Camógie Club Registration	5-6.30pm
Maud Millar's	The 2Q's	10pm
18th FEBRUARY		
Gullane's	Line Dancing	8pm
Hayden's Hotel	Set Dancing	8.30pm
19th FEBRUARY		
Cluain Mhuire	Breast Cancer Support Group	7.30pm
Gullane's	Tea Dance	9pm
GAA Club House	Kids Sean Nós Dancing	6.15-7pm
Town Hall Theatre	Pirates of Penzance	8pm
20th FEBRUARY		
Town Hall Theatre	Pirates of Penzance	8pm
An Táin	Trad Session: Franky, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
21st FEBRUARY		
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
GAA Club House	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Cluain Mhuire	Something to Sing About Choir	7.30pm
Enterprise Centre	BACD AGM	8pm
Hayden's Hotel	Kevin Rohan & Friends	8pm
Town Hall Theatre	Pirates of Penzance	8pm
22nd FEBRUARY		
Town Hall Theatre	Pirates of Penzance	8pm
Maud Millar's	Live Music	10pm
Town Hall	Country Market	9am-2pm
An Táin	Trad & Folk: The Beahan's & Friends	6-9pm
The Hill Bar, Kiltormer	Kiltormer Camógie Club Table Quiz	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	Steve Brennan	10.30pm
23rd FEBRUARY		
Town Hall Theatre	Pirates of Penzance	8pm
Hayden's Hotel	One to One	8pm
Maud Millar's	The Rivulettes	10pm
Dunlo Tavern	Anne Marie McLoughlin	10.30pm
Gibbons' Pillar House	Shawn & Paul Allen	10pm
An Táin	Jigsaw	9.30pm
Kileen's Sh'bridge	Boogie Shoes	
Carlton Shearwater	The Lee Brothers	10.30pm
24th FEBRUARY		
Maud Millar's	The Happy Bar Stars	10pm
Gibbon's Pillar House	Trad: John Whyte & Frank Kelly	6pm
B'sloe Golf Club	Captains & Presidents Drive	All Day
25th FEBRUARY		
Gullane's	Line Dancing	8pm
Hayden's Hotel	Set Dancing	8.30pm
26th FEBRUARY		
Gullane's	Tea Dance	9pm
GAA Clubhouse	Kids Sean Nós Dancing	6.15-7pm
E. Galw Cancer Support	Prostate Cancer Support Group	8.00pm
27th FEBRUARY		
An Táin	Trad Session: Frank, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
28th FEBRUARY		
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
GAA Club House	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Hayden's Hotel	Kevin Rohan & Friends	8pm
Cluain Mhuire	Something Sing About Choir Practice	7.30pm



# FEBRUARY / MARCH Events Guide

1st MARCH		
Town Hall	Country Market	9am-2pm
Carlton Shearwater	Bojangle	10.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	Trad with Still Slopin	10.30pm
An Táin	Trad Session: The Beahan's & Friends	6pm
Maud Millar's	The Gaegan Pagans	10pm
2nd MARCH		
Carlton Shearwater	B'sloe GAA Dinner Dance	8pm
An Táin	Al O'Connor	9.30pm
Carlton Shearwater	TBC	10.30pm
Gibbons' Pillar House	The Geagan Pagans	10pm
Maud Millar's	Live Music	10pm
Kileen's Pub	Trash the Barley	9pm
3rd MARCH		
Gibbons' Pillar House	Trad Session with John & Frank	6pm
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Maud Millar's	The Hooch Hikers	10pm
4th MARCH		
Hayden's Hotel	Set Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
Gullane's Hotel	Mothers Union Meeting	8pm
5th MARCH		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
GAA Club House	Kids Sean Nós Daning	6.15-7pm
Garbally Colloge	BEST Competition: <i>Dragon's Den</i>	All Day
6th MARCH		
An Táin	Trad Session: Frank, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
7th MARCH		
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's Hotel	Bruno Groening	7pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
GAA Club House	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Cluain Mhuire	Something To Sing About Choir	7.30pm
8th MARCH		
Town Hall	Country Market	9am-2pm
Carlton Shearwater	Pascal Brennan	10.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	One 2 One	10.30pm
An Táin	Trad Session: The Beahan's & Friends	6-9pm
Maud Millar's	Live Music	10pm
9th MARCH		
Gibbons' Pillar House	Silk Cut Blues	9pm
An Táin	Jigsaw	9.30pm
Maud Millar's	Monster Session	10pm
Kileen's Pub	Kieran Rosney	9pm
10th MARCH		
Gibbons' Pillar House	Trad Session with John & Frank	6pm
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Maud Millar's	The Hoppy Bar Stars	10pm
11th MARCH		
Hayden's Hotel	Set Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
12th MARCH		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
GAA Club House	Kids Sean Nós Daning	6.15-7pm
Cluain Mhuire	Cancer Family Support Group	7.30pm
13th MARCH		
Gullane's Hotel	Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	8pm
An Táin	Trad Session: Frank, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
14th MARCH		
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
GAA Club House	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Dunlo Tavern	Singers Circle	10.30pm
Cluain Mhuire	Something To Sing About Choir	7.30pm
15th MARCH		
Town Hall	Country Market	9am-2pm
Carlton Shearwater	Chequeres	10.30pm
An Táin	Trad Session: The Beahan's & Friends	6-9pm
Maud Millar's	Live Music	10pm
16th MARCH		
Carlton Shearwater	The Legends	10.30pm
An Táin	Live Music	9.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	Tepid Rewind	10.30pm
Maud Millar's	Live Music	10pm
Kileen's Pub	KK Kenny	9pm
B'sloe Golf Club	Mens 18 Hole Stroke, Corn na Féile	All Day
17th MARCH		
Main Street	St. Patrick Day Parade	1-2pm
Dunlo Tavern	Kensey 3	10.30pm

Gibbons' Pillar House	Trad: John & Frank / Hickory Wind	6pm / 10pm
B'sloe Golf Club	Mens 18 Hole Stroke, Corn na Féile	All Day
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Carlton Shearwater	Ken & Steve	10.30pm
An Táin	Live Music	9.30pm
Maud Millar's	The Rivulettes	10pm
18th MARCH		
Hayden's Hotel	Set Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
19th MARCH		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
GAA Club House	Kids Sean Nós Daning	6.15-7pm
Cluain Mhuire	Breast Cancer Support Group	7.30pm
20th MARCH		
An Táin	Trad Session: Frank, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
21st MARCH		
Carlton Shearwater	BEST Awards Night	7.30pm
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
GAA Club House	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
Cluain Mhuire	Something To Sing About Choir	7.30pm
22nd MARCH		
Town Hall	Country Market	9am-2pm
Carlton Shearwater	Last Man Standing	10.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	Pete Jones	10.30pm
An Táin	Trad Session: The Beahan's & Friends	6-9pm
Gullane's	Active Retirement Dinner Dance	8.30pm
Maud Millar's	Darken The Distance	10pm
23th MARCH		
Gibbons' Pillar House	Ultan Conlon	10pm
Carlton Shearwater	Chrish Nash	10.30pm
Kileen's Shannonbridge	Claymore	9pm
An Táin	Mike Carthy	9.30pm
Gullane's Hotel	Ceili	10pm
Maud Millar's	The Gaegan Pagans	10pm
24th MARCH		
Gibbons' Pillar House	Trad Session with John & Frank	6pm
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Maud Millar's	The Hoppy Bar Stars	10pm
25th MARCH		
Hayden's Hotel	Set Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's Hotel	Line Dancing	8pm
26th MARCH		
Gullane's Hotel	Tea Dance	9pm
GAA Club House	Kids Sean Nós Daning	6.15-7pm
Cluain Mhuire	Prostate Cancer Support Group	8pm
27th MARCH		
An Táin	Trad Session: Frank, Bobby & Jojo	10pm
28th MARCH		
St Michael's Church	Children's Mass / Holy Thursday Mass	6pm / 8pm
Creagh Church	Holy Thursday Mass	8pm
Hayden's Hotel	Social Dancing	8.30pm
Gullane's Hotel	Bruno Groening	7pm
Maud Millar's	Live Acoustic Session	10pm
GAA Club House	Adults Sean Nós Dancing	7pm
Cluain Mhuire	Something To Sing About Choir	7.30pm
29th MARCH (Good Friday)		
St Michael's Church	Good Friday Ceremony	3pm
Creagh Church	Good Friday Ceremony	3pm
Town Hall	Country Market	9am-2pm
St Michaels Church	Good Friday Evening Ceremony	6pm
An Táin	Trad Session: The Beahan's & Friends	6-9pm
30th MARCH		
Gibbons' Pillar House	The Chillbillies	10pm
Kileen's Shannonbridge	One to One	9pm
Carlton Shearwater	Michael Regan	10.30pm
Dunlo Tavern	Anne Marie McLoughlin	10.30pm
An Táin	Live Music	9.30pm
Maud Millar's	Keith & Johnny	10pm
Kileen's Pub	One to One	
31st MARCH (Easter Sunday)		
Dunlo Tavern	Buzz The Agent	10.30pm
Gibbons' Pillar House	Trad Session with John & Frank	6pm
Gibbons' Pillar House	The Geagan Pagans	10pm
Carlton Shearwater	The Lee Brothers	10.30pm
Marina	Cycling Club	10am
Maud Millar's	Washout	10pm
St Michael's Church	Easter Sunday Masses	9/11/12.15
Creagh Church	Easter Sunday Mass	10.30am

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# 106-year-old is Going Strong

Writes Ken Kelly

County Galway's second oldest person celebrated her 106th Birthday on Thursday, 20th December last. The honour went to Ballinasloe woman, May Coughlan, who enjoyed the unique occasion in the company of her family and friends at her home in Kilclooney.

Born on 20th December 1906 at Culliagh, Ballinasloe, May (whose maiden name was Murray), was the eldest of eight children and saw her mother pass away when she was 11-years-old. She walked the two miles to Clonfad National School, in her bare feet, where one of the pupils was George Brendan Nolan, later to become known as the film star, George Brent.

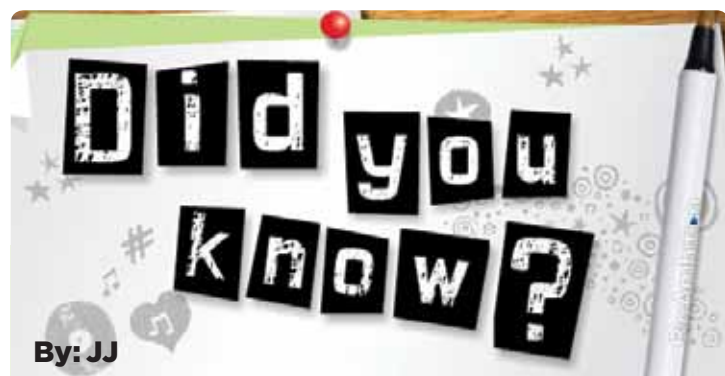
Now acknowledged as Ireland's ninth oldest living person by Áras an Uachtaráin, May was delighted to receive her 6th Presidential Medal on the occasion of her historic birthday. "I'm getting used to them now" she chuckled as she sat by the fire, recalling her earlier years with such amazing clarity and accuracy.

She lived through two World Wars, as well as the 1918 Flu Epidemic and remembers the sleepless nights when the Black and Tans terrorised the countryside. "They were tough times but everyone worked for one another and we survived. During the Wars things were rationed and they were hard times. Of course there were no televisions and very few had radios. We had to depend on neighbours for all the news. Now people have big houses, running water, electricity and motor cars" she explained.

Moving to Kilclooney in 1939, following her marriage to psychiatric nurse, Bill Coughlan, May reared fowl and poultry and sold the eggs each week in Ballinasloe. "Things have changed a lot in the town since them days. There were no cars and just a few bikes, we used the pony and trap or the



May Coughlan with her 6 Presidential medals.



ass and cart mostly. Most people even walked, it was good exercise anyway" said May. She also spoke of the big October Fairs, when the streets were full of horses and the sheep, for sale, were penned to the residents' front doors.

Living with her son, John, in her home of over seventy years, this amazing woman revealed great stamina as she entertained visitors and well-wishers on her birthday in lively conversation, sitting by the fire, clutching her Rosary Beads. Without the aid of spectacles or hearing aids, she enquired about the welfare of other parishioners and townspeople, showing great interest in their current situations. She thanks the Good Lord for her longevity and praised the many people who cared for her in recent years, particularly the carers, home help team, her family and kind neighbours.

May has two sons and one daughter-John (at home), Brendan (Galway) and Bernadette (Dublin), as well as six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren, together with numerous nephews, nieces and other relatives.

John said "We just had a quiet family gathering to celebrate Mum's great milestone. It was such an historic occasion and I would like to thank all the well-wishers who called or contacted us on the day. And of course the family are eternally grateful to the carers and others who looked after our Mother down through the years. She is truly a remarkable woman and we all love her so much" he added.

- *The Sisters of Mercy came to Ballinasloe in 1853 and took up residence in Main Street, across from the present Bank of Ireland. Four years later they moved to two houses in Sarsfield Road.*
- *One of the founders of the National Maternity Hospital ("Hollis Street") in Dublin, in 1894, was Andrew Horne, who was born in Society Street, Ballinasloe where his family ran a hardware business.*
- *Harris Road in Ballinasloe is named after Matt Harris who was elected M.P. for Galway in 1870. He died in 1890 when an estimated 30,000 people attended his burial in Creagh Cemetery.*
- *Work started on the building of St. Michael's Church in Ballinasloe in 1851 and it was officially opened by Cardinal Wiseman on 25th August 1858.*

# The ACCORD Family Service

Writes Owen Dunne

ACCORD is located in The Family Centre Brackernagh, Ballinasloe. The ACCORD service is committed to responding to the challenges facing Christian Marriage in today's world. The service provides for the pastoral needs of couples at different stages of their relationship.

Couples preparing for marriage can avail of their pre-marriage course at the centre. Available dates can be seen on their website [www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie) or by calling the local office at 090 9643573. The next pre-marriage course is on February the 22nd/23rd 2013. The preparation for marriage courses focus on the essential components that foster a healthy relationship and facilitates couples to reflect on the relationship commitment, communication, conflict resolution, sexuality and responsible parenthood.

Counselling is provided to married couples and individuals who are experiencing relationship difficulties. The counselling is client centred and confidential. It involves enabling the client to identify the areas of concern in the relationship and discover the inner resources to resolve the problem and make personal changes to improve the quality of their relationship.

ACCORD's staff are appropriately qualified and are required to engage in continuous professional development and clinical supervision to ensure a quality service is maintained.



In today's world where families are experiencing severe financial pressures, relationships are easily stressed and conflict erodes the couple's capacity to resolve issues. They can support and foster relationships and empower people to regain their ability to relate to each other in a loving way. Affordable counselling is available in ACCORD and is part funded by the family Support Agency and only request an affordable contributions per session.

They recognise the value of healthy relationships and cares for marriage

in a unique way. They encourage all those in need of their services to be confident that they will be treated in a professional and caring manner and facilitated to discover the richness of a true relationship. ACCORD's service desires to continue to make relevant and valued contribution to Marriage, the Family and the whole Community.

Counselling is available by appointment from Monday-Friday. For more details please contact the Family Centre office at 090-9643573 between 9.30am-1.30pm Monday-Friday.

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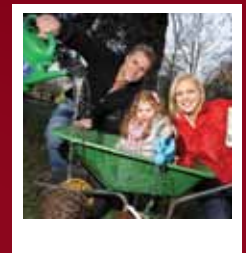
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# Lily Broderick - A Community Heroine

**Writes Pat Johnston**

**Of all the people who live and worked in our town few can trace their links back through three generations and few can claim to have contributed as much to social improvement in the town as Lily Broderick. Not that she would actually make such a claim because she has worked all her life in and for Ballinasloe in her quiet, modest and diligent way.**

Lily's grandfather, Patsy Mullen from Taughmaconnell, married Agnes Kelly from Moore in the late nineteenth century and they settled in Market Square or St. Michael's Square as we call it now. They lived in the row of houses where the Post Office is now and they worked for Ms. Kate Ward, who owned a public house in the building now occupied by Cahalan's Jewellers.

Her grandmother had five children, Nan who married a Donnellan man from St. Michael's, Rosie who married Paddy Harrison a postman from Cleaghmore, Mickey who joined the Irish army and married Della from Mayo and Julia who married Tommy McKenna. In an unusual reversal of emigration trends Tommy had come from Glasgow to work with

a farmer in Sligo but he later joined the Irish Army and was stationed out at St. Brigid's Hospital.

Tommy met and married Julia in the early 1920's. This is where Lily comes in. She was the eldest of the children born to Julia and Tommy. They went on to have five more children. Della and Nancy still live in Ballinasloe, while Paddy, Eddie and Ethna are now deceased. From Market Square the family moved to Jubilee before settling permanently in Brackernagh. Lily remembers her youth as a time of great poverty and emigration. She can describe the Square where Geraghty's kept an 'Eating House' beside the church and there were two buildings, a slaughterhouse and a power station, as well as the weights and measures depot.

Lily loved her school days in the Convent and remembers the nuns, among them Sr. Assisi, Sr. Anthony and Sr. Hilary, with great affection. After her first Holy Communion the nuns treated them to decorated boiled eggs and tea and barm brack in the Convent. She learned Irish dancing from Ms. West in Church Hill. Lily was confirmed by then Bishop John Dignan, who was a dedicated social reformer and his proposal for a scheme of national health insurance may yet be realised in the policy of the current Health Minister Dr. James Reilly.



Leisure activities in the teen years centred around the cinema in the Town Hall where they watched Clarke Gable in *Gone With The Wind* as well as the iconic dance partners Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Their own dancing was limited to outings to the Maypole 'Out the Country' often arrived at on the bar of a man's bike, the only means of transport available. Her uncle in Glasgow sometimes brought the lads over to see Celtic play but that trip was never offered to the girls.

Because her father's sister was a successful seamstress in Glasgow, he thought that Lily should learn the trade. However, after a short stint with Mary Coen in Church Hill, Lily decided it was not for her and she went to work for Paddy Lynch and Frankie Cunningham of Paddy's Lamb where she was to work for 33 years altogether. Paddy Lynch

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and John Clayton were members of Fine Gael as was her father and, although she did not go to meetings in the turbulent thirties, she heard all about the goings on. Yet, despite her political background, in 1950 this independent minded lady married a staunch Fianna Fail man whose father-in-law always claimed that he built the platform for one of Dev's visits to Ballinasloe!

Lily met Ambrose Broderick through her brother Paddy. Ambrose's mother was from Tynagh and his father, a Killimor man, came to town to work in Flanagan's sawmills making coffins. Ambrose himself worked in Top Quarries, then a thriving enterprise, cutting stone for local building and for export. Much of it went to Galway Cathedral and Ambrose himself worked on the dome of that building. The political mixed marriage began with a salubrious wedding breakfast in the back garden of her family home in Brackernagh before they went on honeymoon to Athlone!

Now, while we have all been taught about the traditional role of women and the marriage bar that prevented women working outside the home, what is truly remarkable about Lily Broderick is that she continued to hold down a full-time job, a career in local politics and raise a family of seven children. Even more remarkable is that she took it all in her stride and never saw the need to question this or wonder as we modern women do about 'having it all'. She acknowledges the support she got from the two grannies in rearing her family of one girl, Nuala and six boys, Tony, Gerry, Michael, Eugene, Stephen and John.

Yet she always took time for fun with her children and never missed a chance to bring them to the circus in Ballinasloe or Athlone even if she had to go back afterwards to finish her day's work. There were trips to Achill Island when, on one occasion, their tent blew over and they had to take refuge in the Community Hall; trips to the airport to see the planes and a trip to the Zoo following which Lily lost her way and ended up with a Garda escort out as far as Maynooth to put her safely on the road home!

In 1967 Lily stood for election to the Urban Council. She was encouraged to do so by her employers who saw her as someone with an interest in people and concern for the state of public housing in the town. Her aim was to improve the living conditions of the people who were already coming to her for help and Paddy Lynch said the best way to bring about change was through local politics.

While Ambrose never sought to deter her from this course, he did not actually canvas for her. Nevertheless Lily won that election and served on the Council for 32 years, during which time she never



*St Michael's Square,  
Lily's first home.*

lost an election but rather headed the poll on many occasions. She was Chair of the Council in 1986 and again in 1995. The body was a fairly patriarchal group with the exception of herself and Maura Croffy in the early days, but Lily says they worked well together for the good of the community.

Patsy Geraghty, Cormac Glynn, Pat Galvin, Grellan Deeley and Sean Tully are names that come to mind and Lily says they were great people to work with. She remembers too the gracious Town Clerk, Harry Lyne 'a real gentleman' as well as Brendan McGrath, Gerry Hogg and, of course, Mary Molloy and she has special praise for Galway County Manager the late Donal O'Donohue. Lily in fact speaks well of everybody and has none of the partisan attitudes we usually associate with local politics. Her father was 54 when he died and as the eldest in the family, Lily was used to responsibility. She was driven by a sense of social justice to work for the community and didn't get involved in ideological debates. "I just did what I had to do" she says.

Rooted in her home town, Lily is not much given to travel. She has been to England and Wales to visit her friend in Abergavenny, she visited France for the town twinning with Chalonnes-sur-Loire. There was her annual trip to the Auld Lammas Fair in Ballycastle which continued right through 'The Troubles', despite road blocks, searches of their bus and their hotel being bombed on one occasion just prior to their visit. She might visit Glasgow to meet her father's people and to see the Celtic team for herself.

Lily retired from the council in 1999 but she still has people calling to her with their issues, many of which she passes on to her son, Gerry, who is now a member of the Council. Others she can help herself as many people still come to her with furniture, clothes and other goods which she can pass on to those

in need. "Like a one woman Vincent de Paul" I suggest and she immediately deflects from her own work to praise the work of that organisation, Joe Salmon and all who work with him.

Lily still has an open house today and while I'm there she has many callers including a young Garda who calls with documents for her to sign, as Lily is still a Peace Commissioner. The talk turns to Manchester United and the previous Saturday's match which they agree they were lucky to win with a little help from the referee. Her interest in soccer is limited to the fortunes of that club and she regularly watches the matches with her son Tony who has just dropped in for a chat. He tells me then that his mother trained Gaelic football teams in the 1960s and that she ran a street league in St. Joseph's and the finals ended with chips and sausages in Scannell's Hotel, now The Black Pig.

Some of Lily's leisure time is now given to murder mysteries on TV. She is a fan of wordsearch too to keep the brain cells active. But she doesn't neglect her prayer life and she has special devotion to St. Michael the Archangel and St. Maria Goretti. She is not averse to a prudent flutter on the horses, depending on the tips she gets; her best pundit used to be 'The bacon delivery man who lived next door to Charlie Swann'.

Lily has no regrets and indeed, how could she have any? A woman of compassion, she has devoted her life to her family, her work and her community and she is now content in the company of family and friends. Lily has lost two of her sons, Eugene and John. Except Michael, who lives in Canada, all her other children live in Ireland. She has eleven grandchildren and her three great-grandchildren: Ava, Senan and Noah are regular visitors. She has her cats and a canary and many friends who drop in most days for a chat and to exchange stories. Indeed Lily still has great stories to tell.

# Local Student's Scholarships



Distinguished students of Garbally and Árd Scoil Mhuire were recently awarded prestigious Scholarships for their efforts in both the University of Limerick and University College Dublin. In the University of Limerick former Garbally lads Brian Flanagan and Patrick Coffey were awarded the JP McManus funded All-Ireland Scholarship which were presented by Former President of USA Bill Clinton. In University College Dublin former Árd Scoil Mhuire student Lauren Dooley was awarded a UCD Entrance Scholarship for her dedicated study over the past year.

*Top Left: Patrick Coffey is pictured receiving his JP McManus All-Ireland Scholarship from former US President Bill Clinton. Also pictured is Mr. Stephen O'Reilly, Garbally Principal and scholarship sponsor JP McManus. Top Right: Brian Flanagan is presented with his All-Ireland Scholarship from former US President Bill Clinton. Also in the picture is scholarship sponsor JP McManus and Mr. Stephen O'Reilly, Garbally Principal. Left: Lauren Dooley of Garbally Demesne, Ballinasloe who was awarded a UCD Entrance Scholarship. Lauren is pictured on the left with Dr. Hugh Brady, President of UCD at the UCD Entrance Scholars Ceremony.*

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# Running Against Cancer Raises Over €7,300 for Lily-Mae

Writes Pearse Keller

**4-year-old Lily-Mae Morrison suffers from Stage Four Neuroblastoma, which is a rare and very aggressive form of cancer and affects one in every 100,000 children in Ireland.**

Lily-Mae was diagnosed last June, she and her parents who are both self employed dancers and choreographers have spent many weeks in Dublin while Lily-Mae under goes aggressive treatment for her condition. The Sunni Mae trust was set up to help fund her treatment.

In mid December last a few Ballinasloe people who enjoy running with the *Running Against Cancer* (RAC) group and who all completed the Dublin City Marathon in October decided that they would run, from their home to Lily-Mae's in Claregalway. The concept was simple, a group of approx 15 would run the 40 miles in a relay format from Ballinasloe to Claregalway. Saturday the 5th January was decided upon and sure it would knock the post Christmas cobwebs off. The event gained momentum through RAC's Facebook page with Ken Campbell being very prominent in posting comments and information daily. Enquiries poured in from around the country and caught the imagination of the running fraternity.

With all preparations in place runners gathered at the Ballinasloe Running Track at 7.30am. It was a dry mild morning and all were in a great spirits. The route was split into 12 sections. The event had two buses which traveled the route and picked up and dropped runners at the various points. These buses were supplied and sponsored by JK Cabs and Kenny Cabs for which the organizers are extremely grateful.

27 hearty souls of all running ability started while it was still dark at 8am from Ballinasloe on this momentous journey and three of the participants had it in them that they would run the entire route. Along the way more runners joined in, at Kilreekil, Loughrea, Craughwell and finally in Oranmore where they were joined by Leighton Morrison (Lily-Mae's dad) for the final 6 miles. For the last section which was from Carnmore Cross to Claregalway GAA, all the group ran and for this part they donned specially commissioned t-shirts in pink which is Lily-Mae's favorite colour. The group arrived 20 minutes ahead of schedule



and it was a proud day for all, as just under 70 people took part in the event and Yes the three guys Niall Kelly, Mitch Concannon and Gavin O'Donovan who traveled up from Cork completed the entire course.

**Over €7,300 Raised for a Great Cause**  
*Running Against Cancer* meet every Tuesday and Thursday night at 8pm at the running track in Brackernagh and are open to runners of all abilities. They take part in various 5km, 10km runs around the county and some of the group are in training for the Craughwell 10 mile in March, the *Connemara* in April, *Gael Force West* in August and of course the *Dublin City Marathon* in October. Further details are available from Ken Campbell and on our Facebook page.



# Out and About in Ballinasloe



*Michael McCullagh and his Michaelian Choir.*



*Pupils from Laurencetown NS with Bríd Grahán (Ballinasloe Library) and County Librarian Pat McMahon following their awards.*



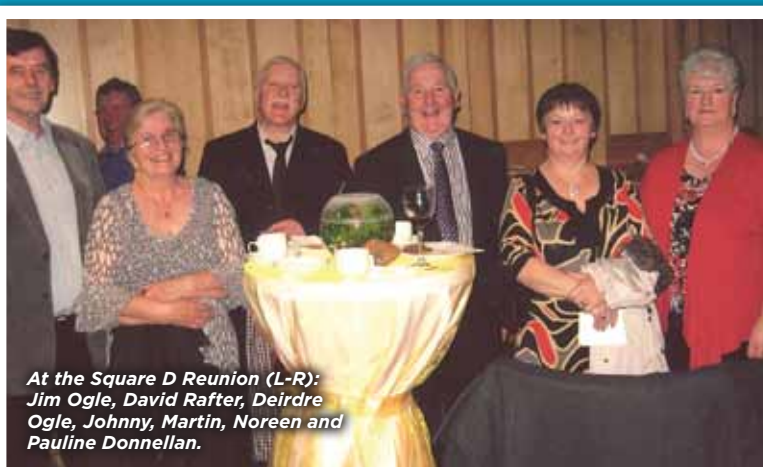
*Pupils from Scoil on Chof Naofa, Ballinasloe with their teachers and County Librarian Pat McMahon, following their awards for their art at the Ballinasloe Library.*



*Presentation of jackets to Ballinasloe Footballers by Joe's Bar. (L-R) Cáit Cleary, Joby Kelly, Captain Keith Kelly and Manager Séan Riddell.*



*Students of Creagh NS, Ballinasloe who won prizes for their artwork*



*At the Square D Reunion (L-R): Jim Ogle, David Rafter, Deirdre Ogle, Johnny, Martin, Noreen and Pauline Donnellan.*



*Ballinasloe Sean Nós Dancers at the East Galway Cancer Variety Concert in the Town Hall.*



# Pour, Oh Pour the Pirate Sherry

Writes Catherine McCormack

Yes folks, **The Pirates** are on shore leave! it's nearly time for **Ballinasloe Musical Society** to take to the stage again with, *The Pirates of Penzance* an up tempo version of the well-known Gilbert and Sullivan musical favourite.

This is the story of Frederic (Paul Conroy), a young pirate apprentice. As he comes to the end of his indentured period it turns out he was indentured by mistake. We follow Frederic as he heads ashore where he stumbles upon a bevy of beautiful maidens. He immediately falls in love with the most beautiful of the bunch, Mabel (Ailbhe Lohan), graciously offers to reclaim the "Poor Wandering One", while her horrified sisters, Isabelle (Catherine Madden), Edith (Sarah Corcoran), Kate (Hannah McCreanor) and Frederic's nursemaid Ruth (Louise Colohan) look on in despair. However Frederic's pirate comrades lead by The Pirate King (Patrick Byrne) and aided by Samuel (Karl Doherty) soon arrive by his side and recognise the situation as a "First rate opportunity of getting married with impunity." But the girls' father, Major-General Stanley (Seamus Feerick), arrives just in the nick of time followed closely by The Police Sergeant (Eoin Croffy) and lets just say things get a bit complicated. 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.

Founded in 1923 as Ballinasloe Choral and Orchestral Society by Miss Lavinia Sheridan, Fr. John Heenan, Mssrs. Nicholas and M.D. O'Carroll among others. This production marks the Society's 90th Anniversary. This year along with an enthusiastic local cast and the production team, Paul Norton (Director), Shane Farrell (Musical Director) and Sarah Griffin (Choreographer) we have all the ingredients for a successful show. The production runs for five nights, starting Tuesday 19th February at 8pm, with the Patrons and Sponsors Gala Opening Night and then nightly at 8pm until the following



Saturday 23rd February. Followed by the Festival Club after show party on the 23rd which will be held in Gullane's Hotel, why not join us.

The committee, headed by Maureen Donoghue (President) and Frances Leahy (Chairperson) have been busy during the past few months building the foundations in preparation for this fantastic show. As always you our Audience, our Patrons and Sponsors are vital to the continued success and even existence of the Society. Without your support we would be unable to preserve the art of live theatre in Ballinasloe and we hope that this year you will be able to remain or become an integral part of our production. Should you wish to become a Patron or Sponsor, please contact any committee member or Frances Leahy on 087 2220282. Tickets will be on sale from Monday 11th in the Credit Union Office and Town Hall Theatre Tel 083 1084455. You can find us on Facebook or on our website. Hoping to see you all during the show.

A limited number of Souvenir 90th Anniversary special addition calendars, showing a variety of photos down through the years are still available in Gullane's Hotel; Salmons Department Store; Stronges; Concannon's, Society Street; The Duck Inn, Downey's Bar; J & S Photos; Keller's; The Dunlo Tavern; Kelly's, Brackernagh; Texoil; Mackney Corrib Oil, Brackernagh; Ballinasloe Golf Club or from any committee member.

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# Acorn Theatre's *The Grocers Assistant* Packs in the Crowds

Writes Owen Dunne

Wonderful houses and tremendous acclaim greeted the 3 night production by Acorn Theatre Company of the Tom Murphy Classic *A Crucial Week in the Life of a Grocer's Assistant* which ran successfully in late January. The Eamonn O'Donoghue directed, two act, twelve scene piece was a riot of skilful character interpretations, side-splitting humour and slick production, which whilst being faithful to the playwrights text and themes, encouraged great latitude for the individual performances to shine.

The problems with any drama involving casts of more than 10 is that all too often, the competing interests in script and stage serve to distract from the tale rather than enhance. With such a really strong cast and the deft touch from Eamonn, that criticism could not be levelled at this show.

Undoubtedly whilst all of the principals delivered powerful roles, the playwright demanded that the Grocer's Assistant John Joe Moran (Patrick Byrne) and his tortured Mother (Mary Cuddy) would carry the Lion's Share of the dialogue and they sparked, moved and engaged with their roles and script convincingly throughout. Their relationship, kitchen and house is the crucial to understanding the play and it's dilemmas posed. The Grocer's Father (Mike Kelly) proved just what can be done in delivering a large on stage presence with minimal dialogue but maximum humour. The Grocer's mercurial boss Jackie Garvey was expertly captured by Declan Kelly. No stranger to the boards is Mary O'Connell and she portrayed the most pious and hardboiled Mrs Smyth with ruthless acidity.

The Grocer's love interest was charmingly delivered by Louise Burke as Mona and her scenes with Pat were always achingly conveyed. The smaller cameo roles like Mullins (John Lawlor), Miko Feely (Pat Canty), Pension Officer (Margaret O'Grady),



Agnes Smyth (Mary Walsh) were adroitly acted and some of the humour from both Canty and Mullins was excellent, again on morsels of lines! Pakey Garvey (Mike O'Reilly) gave a brutally realistic analysis to the Ireland of the small town in the 50s and did so with customary precision. For many John Boland's interpretation as the redoubtable and soon to receive his pension, Uncle Alec Brady was a masterclass. It came close to Seamus Feerick's chilling and cheery portrayal as Fr. Daly in timing and nuance. The beretta seemed very comfortable on that brow for most of Act 2.

The play winds its way through to conclusion with the Dream sequence of Act 2 and the Assistant's bicycling and barracking at the neighbours while undoubtedly under the influence were highlights. Accurate and realistic setting of scenes were provided by Pat McGovern, David Hardiman and Patrick Byrne with many of the above and Declan Finn assisting with the Lights. Overall it was a great nights Theatre, look out for this troupes next show!

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# Treasure Island: Seven Seas Pre-Xmas Tour for Panto Lovers

Writes Pat Johnston

Oh yes they did! Ballinasloe Panto ended its run on Treasure Island at Sunday's matinée following six nights and seven performances. The energetic cast gave a dazzling performance as the good guys led by Jim Hawkins (Enda McGrath) took on the dastardly pirates captained by Long John Silver (Fergal D'Arcy). Following the early demise of Billy Bones (Pat Vaughan), Jim Hawkins and his mother set out to recover the lost treasure and the scheme is funded by Squire Trelawney (Mike O'Reilly) who, it seems, will do anything for Mrs. Hawkins (Brian Derrane) except marry her!

Needing a vessel to take them to Treasure Island they meet up with the Amazonian Captain Lesley Deck (Sarah Corcoran) and her all-female crew. Naturally she falls for the innocent Jim who naively takes with him Long John Silver, Blind Pew (Dave Hardiman), Scurvy Steve (Aidan Flanagan) and the cunningly evil Israel Hand (Declan Finn). Nurse Bendover (Pat Vaughan, again!) administers the vaccinations to all, including some audience members and with crew members Willing and Able (Mairead Barrett and Kim Kelly) and Jim's dim cousins Rum and Raisin (Ronan Keane and Shane Hughes) the crew is complete. So they merrily sing, dance, stagger, and swim their way through a



few of the Seven Seas in search of Billy Bones' treasure. Act Two sees Queen Latifeh (Majella Flanagan) with her right hand woman, Coco (Beth Larsen), welcome the motley crew to Christmas Island where Princess Noelle (Mary Brody) gets cured from her illness, the treasure is found and good eventually triumphs over evil!

Director Eoin Croffy gave us a wonderful production with a host of dancers under choreographers Olwyn Cronin and Aoife O'Grady presenting brilliant set pieces including the Kiddie's Blue Group and Latifeh's ladies' trendy Gangnam Style moves. Musical numbers such as Mrs Hawkins 'Put a Ring on It' and Sarah

Corcoran's rendition of Tina Turner's 'Proud Mary (Rolling on the River)' and Spice Girls' 'Spice up your Life' had everybody dancing in their seats and the cast had the audience eating out of their hands.

Brian Derrane was delightful in his first outing as the Dame and Fergal D'Arcy's Long John Silver was so charismatic that one could almost forgive him his evil propensities! One of the standout moments had to be the arrival of the witchdoctor, Odious, played by Eimear Costello with the surefootedness that belied her youth. The veteran performers, strong production team and hard working backstage crew gave it their all and it was obvious that they were passing on their skills and dedication to younger colleagues. Altogether a great show. Everybody say 'Aargh!' 🦋



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# Eugene Watters: A Life in Letters

Writes Barry Lally

**As Ireland journeys through a decade that will be rendered noteworthy by the number of its centenary commemorations, it may be appropriate to recall that we in Ballinasloe can justly claim the right to celebrate the life of one of the town's most distinguished sons whose centenary will occur in 2019.**

His name was Eugene Watters, born on 3rd April 1919 in a house on Dunlo Hill next door to Dooley's pub. Tom, his father, a veteran of the 1914-18 War, owned and drove a motor hackney cab, one of only two in Ballinasloe at the time.

From the infant school in the Convent of Mercy, Eugene moved across the road to the boys' school in 1925, then housed in a number of rooms at the back of the Town Hall. While there he was greatly influenced by a young teacher from Kilconnell, Paddy Joyce, who instilled in him a lifelong love of the Irish language.

In 1930 the family moved to a local authority house in Brackernagh, and two years later Eugene won a scholarship to Garbally College, which he attended first as a day boy and subsequently as a boarder. In Garbally he excelled in

English, Irish and the Classical languages, and was awarded a scholarship to U.C.G. in 1937. Due to family circumstances, however, he was unable to take this degree, and went instead to St. Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra.

On qualifying as a national teacher, he obtained a post in a boys' school in Rathfarnham in September 1939, and the following year he enrolled in the extra-mural BA course at UCD. Although Eugene did well at his studies, eventually graduating with a first-class MA Degree in English Literature, his experiences in college left him with an abiding dislike of academics.

In November 1944 Eugene moved to a national school in Finglas, and on 10th March 1945 he married Una McDonnell from Cappagh, a librarian and a talented visual artist. The honeymoon was spent touring the south of Ireland in a horse-drawn caravan Eugene had built with his own hands.

While he had been writing since his time in Garbally, it was in the years from 1946 to 1960 that Eugene developed as a prolific author. Articles, pantomime scripts, poems and short stories flowed from his pen, the latter mostly inspired by characters and incidents recalled from his earlier years in Ballinasloe, where he and Una would holiday each year, boating and fishing on the Suck.



His long poem, *The Weekend of Dermot and Grace*, generally regarded as his most important work, was completed during this period, and his only novel in English, *Murder in Three Moves*, was published in 1960.

By now Eugene realized that he could not successfully combine his career as a writer with his job as a teacher, so he decided to resign from the school to devote himself fulltime to his literary work. His decision had Una's wholehearted support. Whereas hitherto most of his output had been in English, from 1961 onwards the emphasis shifted to Irish, and in that year his first play in the language, *De Réir na Rúibricí* (According to the Rubrics) was produced at both the Taibhdhearc in Galway and the Damer in Dublin. It was a comedy based on the characters of Michael Connolly, a sacristan in St. Michael's Church in the 1920s, and Fr.

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John Heenan, a local curate, and received popular and as well as critical acclaim. Two years later Eugene was appointed editor of *Feasta*, a literary magazine published by the Gaelic League.

Profoundly affected by the sudden death of his wife on 20th November 1965, Eugene experienced great difficulty in coming to terms with his loss, which was to adversely influence his writing for years afterwards. He spent some months teaching in the school attached to St. Mary's Children's Hospital, Cappagh, in 1967 and the following year he left his Dublin home and went to live in a riverside house he had bought in Maganey, located between the town of Carlow and Athy. His health, however, deteriorated, and he returned to Ballinasloe to reside with his family, now domiciled in "Pines View" at the Grand Canal Basin, formerly the harbourmaster's house.

While in Ballinasloe he directed a play he had co-authored with Sandra Warde, a young local writer, *The Song*

*of the Nightingale*, for the Relays Drama Group, and accompanied the production on its tour of the festival circuit. On 28th December 1972 he married Rita Kelly, a budding creative writer and a daughter of Peter Kelly, Brackernagh, in St. Michael's Church, and the couple went directly to take up residence in the house at Maganey.

Their time in the "Lough House", as their home was known, proved to be a fruitful period for both Eugene's and Rita's writing. However, because of their precarious financial situation, Eugene was obliged to undertake a lot of non-creative work such as lecturing, adjudicating and reviewing, which ultimately took a heavy toll on his physical well-being. In August 1981 they moved to another house, this time on the main road to Carlow.

Their last move was to "The leap" near Enniscorthy the following June, where Eugene succumbed to a heart attack on 24th August. Two days later he was laid

to rest beside his beloved Una in Creagh cemetery. Apart from the works already mentioned, other notable publications of his include *L'Attaque*, *Lux Aeterna*, *Dé Luain*, *Lá Fhéile Míchíl*, *Infinite Variety*, *The Road to Brightcity*, *An Lomnochtán* and *Fornocht do Chonac*.

Eugene Waters was indisputably the most versatile creative writer in Irish to come from a non-Gaeltacht background, and showed exceptional courage in attempting to live by his pen alone. If he is less well remembered today than he deserves to be, this may be at least partly due to the fact that he had a deep-seated aversion to organisations and wasn't part of the Irish language revival movement. Also, he failed to conform to the stereotype of the Irish man of letters, inasmuch as he never frequented public houses or cultivated the society of the Dublin literary set.

His memory awaits a fitting and deserved monument in the town where he drew his first breath of life. 🌿

## Town To Host Galway International Rally

Ballinasloe is set to play a leading role in the hosting of this year's Galway International Rally. The rally which will feature up to 130 cars will get underway from Galway City on Saturday, 2nd February before finishing in Ballinasloe with a ceremonial finish in the town centre on Sunday the 3rd at 5pm. The town will also play host to the "Rally Service Park" which will be held from 7am-6pm Saturday, 2nd February in the Mart, where car enthusiasts will be able to get a close up look at the cars involved. The local Chamber of Commerce have been working with the organisers to effect all the necessary arrangements locally. Chamber President, Donal Scannell stated that "This a

brilliant pilot project for the town to get involved in Rallying. If all goes well we hope to be able to host their Autumn Weekend in September and will be looking for a larger support team to do that, perhaps as part of the Gathering."

Entries to the rally include household names such as Declan and Brian Boyle, Gary Jennings and Donnagh Kelly. The two days of rallying will feature on TG4 and Galway Bay FM as well as Satellite channel programme Motors TV.

For more information you can visit the Galway International Rally website at: [www.galwayinternationalrally.com](http://www.galwayinternationalrally.com)

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# The Square D Reunion Night



*Square D Reunion Organising Committee: Back (L-R): Brendan Tully, Caroline Kelly, Linda Hynes, Jim Roche, Mary Coughlan, Barry O'Connor, Brenda Lyons, Martin Healy, Michael Treacy and William Duthie. Front (L-R): Michael Mullins, Mary Nee, Sean Kelly, Rose Hannon and Peggy Byrne.*

## Writes Michael Mullins

Close to 300 people, who were colleagues at the former Square D Plant in Ballinasloe, gathered for an emotional reunion before Christmas, in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel. They came from all corners of Ireland and the UK and many had not met since the Plant closed in 2003, with the loss of 385 jobs. Some of those present had worked from the opening in 1971, so there was much catching up to do, and lots to reminisce about.

After the usual meet and greet activities, the evening began with a very moving Mass of Remembrance celebrated by Fr. Bernie Costelloe, for 41 colleagues who passed away between 1971 and 2012. A candle representing each, was placed on the Altar, and former colleagues participated in the liturgy and prayers of the faithful. The beautiful music and singing provided for the occasion by Johnny Donnellan, Nora Flaherty and guest singer Sean Óg Hurley, was really uplifting.

Following the Mass, there was time to meet and chat, and to view the significant amount of photographs and memorabilia spanning four decades that was on display in the foyer. This display and the continuous photo-streaming throughout the night generated much fun and comment as colleagues recalled

many happy events, activities and significant milestones during their years together in Square D.

The Staff at the Carlton Shearwater pulled out all the stops, and the renewing of old friendships continued over a delicious meal, and was only interrupted by some entertainment in the form of a sketch, performed by members of the Moore Drama Group. Later, everyone danced the night away to wonderful music provided by Paul Hardiman, whose late Grandmother Ena Hardiman had worked at Square D for many years.

Speaking at the end of the night, on behalf of the organising Committee, Michael Mullins thanked everyone who had come to the reunion, and helped to make the event such an outstanding success. He thanked Fr. Bernie Costelloe and every member of the organising committee who had undertaken various tasks that made the night special. He extended particular thanks to Mary Coughlan for initially getting a small group together to plan a reunion, and for ensuring a most successful outcome.

A measure of the success of the Square D Reunion, was the fact that nobody was in any rush to go home. Long after the music stopped, the chat, banter and reminiscing continued into the small hours of the morning and events such as Dinner Dances, Children's Parties, Tours and Sporting occasions, plus the highs and lows of business, were recalled as former colleagues remembered the "good old times" spent together in that busy Plant in Poolboy. Many were asking as they left "When are we having the next Reunion?"



*(L-R): Phil Duane, Michael Mullins, Mary Clarke, Ann Curley and Marie Nee.*

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# National and International Success of Ballinasloe Karate

## Writes Leo Mulvany

The Students from Ballinasloe based IKKI karate association have been busy in competition recently.

They competed in the British Open International Karate Championships in Kelvin Hall, Glasgow. The competition ran over two days with over 1100 competitors from 22 countries taking part. IKKI students representing Ireland (32 Counties) under the NGB ONAKAI won 6 bronze medals with locals Layla Ward and Evan Dowd winning 2 bronze each, with Evan Donnellan and Jake Mulvany taking bronze also.

These students train on the Itosu-kai squad and have been selected for the national squad due to their past performances.

November saw the IKKI juniors compete closer to home at the All Ireland Junior National Kata Championships in Dublin. Students competed in individual and team kata. It was a fantastic team performance and they took home no less than 18 medals in total, 7 gold, 3 silver and 8 bronze.

In December the IKKI had its black belt ranking. Students who pass to shodan or 1st Dan Degree Black Belt have spent many years practising in their clubs. It is a big day in their karate career. This year there were 10 candidates for ranking.

The IKKI travel to Osaka, Japan in 2013 to compete in the Itosu-Ryu Karatedo International Federation (IKIF) World Championships. There are 30 in the group including coaches, competitors and parents. The association is fund raising at the moment for the 2013 event. As well as adult competitors, the association has quite a few talented juniors competing in the 2013 World Championships and the coaches hope to reproduce their current form in Japan.

Chief IKKI Instructor is Leo Mulvany and for more info on their activities, IKKI clubs, International affiliations, NGB involvement, go to the IKKI official website: [itosukaiireland.org](http://itosukaiireland.org)



Back L-R: Jake Mulvany, Nathan Donelan, Karen Dolphin, Una Flynn, Faye Mulvany and David Feury. Front: Evan Donelan, Eimear Porter, Evan Dowd, Layla Ward and Kian Porter.



L-R: John Dolphin (IKKI assist. Kata Coach), Marie Dolphin (IKKI National Kata Coach), Nathan Donnellan, Kian Porter, Evan Donelan, Shane O'Quigley, Eimear Porter, Layla Ward, Faye Mulvany, Leo Mulvany (Chief Instructor, IKKI). Kneeling: Sarah Quigley, April Curran and Cerys Porter.



Standing L-R and ranking to 1st Dan, Dale Glennon, Christopher Flynn, Eoin Dolphin (2nd Dan), Laura Creaven, Gillian Creaven, Irene Sherry, Allie Glennon, Colm Glynn, Shane Dolphin (4th Dan) and Jake Mulvany (3rd Dan). Ranking Sensei's, seated, Tony Dolphin, Claire Harte, Leo Mulvany, Marie Dolphin and John Dolphin.



Back: Fionnán Darcy & James Mooney. Front: Fionn Doherty and Adam McGreal.



Presentation by Ballinasloe Credit Union to Ballinasloe Swimming Club: Back (L-R): Declan McKeon, Shane McNeill, Gerry Downey, Kevin Larkin, Catherine Devine, Ann McMahon. Middle: Odhran Dooley Eleanor McMahon, Amy Reynolds. Front: Tara McKeon, Ava McKeon, Mathew Devine, Mark Gallagher, Anna Ward, Dáithi Ward.

# Laoch Sa Pheil: Gerry Daly 1956



## Writes Mattie Ganly

Ballinasloe born Gerry Daly died recently. He was full-back on the Galway team which won the Senior All-Ireland in 1956. Daly and his friend, fellow Ballinasloe man, Gerry Kirwan were travelling from Dublin to Tuam to attend a Civic Reception honouring Jack Mangan the Galway goalkeeper and captain of the 1956 winning team. The two men halted at the Ballinasloe Shearwater Hotel where unfortunately Daly collapsed and died.

Born in St Michael's Square, one of Daly's neighbours and best mates was Sean "Gordi" Ward (also played Senior football with Galway). Incidentally Ward's nephew was the great Armagh footballer from Crossmaglen, Joe Kiernan. Kiernan recently spent a short unhappy spell as Galway manager. Daly


and Ward both attended St Grellan's National School situated in the famous Fair Green. Here the school principal was Tom "Skinny" O'Meara. He'd won All-Ireland hurling medals with Tipperary and was a great promoter of GAA.

Leaving Scoil Ghrealláin both Ward and Daly worked in the famous Dubarry Shoe Factory. Short time meant more time for football. Duggan Park was their "Field of Dreams". Inter Street Football Leagues were big in those years. Brackernagh, Derrymullen, Jubilee, The Hill, Mental Hospital and Culliagh all had teams. The Fair Green, Duggan Park and Mental Hospital grounds were frequent battlefields of pride and passion. Daly togged out with Jubilee, his local street league team. Gerry eventually left Dubarry and moved to Dublin. He continued his football playing centre field for a losing St Ita's side in a Dublin County Final. He joined the Garda Síochána, eventually settling in as Sergeant in Blackrock where he remained until his retirement.

In 1954 he returned to play football with Grellan's. "I remember well his first outing. A league match in Dunmore in February 1954. Ballinasloe togged out in the old Demesne overlooking the pitch. We had our usual pre-match kick about in the mud and muck out comes Gerry immaculately togged". He stood looking at us for a minute then shouted at me (as well as playing I was also Secretary). 'We're not playing Matt

are we?' 'Of course we are' I shouted back 'We play here every year.' 'Not anymore' he replied 'You wouldn't let the neighbours ducks out in this.' It was a cold and bitter day. 'Let's go home!' someone said. Bertie Coleman appeared and tried his best to get us to stay and play, in vain! We drank a few pints and headed back to town!"

The same year Ballinasloe got to the County Senior Football Final, playing in the new Athenry Stadium. In November with more mud and sawdust, Tuam Stars were on a roll with Purcell and Stockwell at their peak, they had won 6 or 7 titles consecutively. Daly had an outstanding game, but we lost. Gerry's footballing ability had been recognised and he was chosen for the County team. Galway football edged back from the doldrums and we were Connacht champions in 1954, 1956-1958 with Daly at full-back. 1956 was Galway's glory year beating Cork in the All-Ireland Football Final.

The full-back line were all Ballinasloe men, Daly at full-back, Sean Kelly in one corner and in the other the iron man himself, Tom Dillon. Gerry Kirwan another native played in the forward line. Many called it "Stockwell's Final", the Tuam Stars man wriggled his way around the big Cork full-back scoring 2-5. Galway also won the National League with Gerry at full-back. The team travelled to New York to win St Brendan's Cup. A great footballer, a true gentleman. Ar Dhéis Dé go raibh a hÁnam. 

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# Ballinasloe Junior Hurling Win

**Writes Owen Dunne**

Ballinasloe hurlers captured their first county title in over 20 years in Athenry just before Christmas. Scenes of great jubilation were witnessed when the final whistle was blown adding a rare hurling trophy to the cabinet. However, as is the story in all codes of sport a Final is not won after just one day's work.

The start of their campaign was not the most ideal, as they struggled with numbers and commitment. But once the results started to go their way things began to pick up speed. Manager Tom Fenton stated "It was a great achievement when you look at it because at the start of the year we were struggling with numbers. But fair play to the lads because they showed great perseverance and dedication, and as the year went on we really began to get going and it all really snowballed."

The group stage went smoothly, as they progressed through to the knockout phase unbeaten, but it was at the semi-final stage where they were really tested. Moycullen were the opposition and only the minimum separated the teams with Ballinasloe marching into the Final on a score-line of 0-10 to 1-6.

Only 8 days later the Ballinasloe men took to the field for the Final oozing of confidence with their 'invincible' title at stake. This confidence and self-belief paid dividends as they

swept aside the challenge of Kilbeacanty to claim the Junior C Championship on a score line of 0-9 to 0-5. County titles don't come around easy and it is because of the club's great work ethic and focus that the title now rests Suckside. Tony Headd said: "The lads were great all year, they were very easy to work with and never complained. They were a very mannerly group of lads and were a pleasure to work with."

This result may mean more to the future of Ballinasloe hurling than the present as the saying goes "Success breeds success". Club Mentor Gerry Seale noted the importance of the win; "It was a great effort and a badly needed boost for the club. Hopefully we can build on this success for the coming year. It just shows you what you can achieve when you work hard and put your mind down to it!"

It may also mark a turning point in what has been a poor two decades for adult hurling teams in Ballinasloe, with many young players involved in this success. But similar to many dual clubs across Ireland it is not easy to juggle both codes, as team mentor Fergus Cotton pointed out: "Because football is the more dominant code in the club we find it difficult to keep hurling going. About 2/3 of our team were footballers too! But it's a young team with about 9 or 10 Under-21s, so the future looks bright." Ballinasloe hurlers now look forward to competing in the Junior B grade in 2013.



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# Ballinasloe Town 2012 Review

The Ballinasloe Town First Team Celebrate completing the treble.



## Writes Johnny Walsh

With 2012 just gone Ballinasloe Town AFC had a very successful year on and off the field of play. The senior sides that are looked after by Enda Concannon, Peter Tyley and Chairman Noel Lyons had an extremely successful year. Our 2nd team won the Roscommon and District League Divisional Cup and promotion.

The 1st Team went on to finish the season with an Amazing Treble by winning the Roscommon and District Premier League, The Divisional Cup and The Roscommon Cup along with having Super runs in the Connacht Cup and the FAI Junior Cup.

There were also some great personal achievements in our club with Town Striker, Liam Lynch getting his first call up to the Irish Junior Squad. This was a proud moment for Liam and all at the Club. Gary Egan and David Cullen also received call ups for the Connacht-Ulster squad for the regions cup. Their impressive performances in this competition resulted in them getting call ups for Connacht as well.

Ballinasloe AFC is also well represented in the Roscommon and District league *Oscar Traynor* side with 6 players on the squad. Gary Egan is Captain and is joined by his club mates: David Cullen, Aiden Fallon, Aiden Dooney, Darragh Concannon and Mike Lynch. Captain

Gary Egan was also voted Roscommon Sports Person for the Month of March 2012 and is in contention of being crowned Roscommon Sports Person of the Year in February.

The 2013 season is going very well so far with the 1st Team still unbeaten in the League, only dropping two points along the way and at the time of print in the last 32 of the FAI Junior Cup facing Castlebar Celtic on January 28th in the Curragh and also going strong in the Connacht Cup as well. We have high hopes for silverware this coming season.

On the underage front Ballinasloe are firing on all cylinders with trophies captured by U12, U13 and U15 teams. This success wouldn't be possible without the help of our fantastic parents, coaches and young players themselves. There are currently some very talented players in the club including U14 players Conor Layng, Jonathan Maloney and Jonathan Cunningham who are all vying for a place on this year's Kennedy Cup team.

On the girls side 12-year-old Heather Payne is one to watch after representing her club and school with distinction in provincial competition late last year. On the U15 Squad James Lynch and Glenn Kelly were both accepted to the FAI Emerging Talent Academy which takes the best players from the midlands coached by FAI coaches. With so many young stars in our club, it is safe to say that the future looks bright for Ballinasloe AFC. 

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# An Ex Garbally Hurler's Book on an Adult Hurling Experience

Writes Owen Dunne

Aiden Lenehan left Ballinasloe in the late 80s, like most from that era, to undertake his third level education. In his Garbally student days he enjoyed hurling and indeed played for his local hurling club, Kiltormer when in residence and subsequently for Pearse's when the family moved to Birchgrove.

He started working in the Car Rental industry at Dublin Airport, in which he is now the sales and marketing manager of the Budget Ireland Car rental group, employing over 300 people. He is married to Joan Byrne from Rolestown, North Dublin, where they live and have one son Michael, a 6 foot 12-year-old!

He quit the sport in 1992 and never got over the longing to go back playing, which he did in 2008. Aiden and a chap from Castlegar started an adult hurling team. They figured they'd never make any conventional team, so why not a new one and it just mushroomed from there, with incredible local interest generated. *There is an F in Hurling* chronicles the first five seasons. It is a story that 98% of GAA folk can identify with. A tale of a humble effort at a hurling renaissance. The characters in this true story come from all walks of life. The book relates their efforts at playing hurling from the early stages of a new formed team in 2008 until the 2012 season, against the back drop of a changing Ireland.

For most, it was their first time to play. The epicentre in this story is rural North Co. Dublin but it could be any village or town in Ireland. An inspiring story of the real GAA grass roots level, where a bunch of lads against the odds attempt to get the game kick started in a hurling wasteland.

Published by Ballpoint Press. *There is an F in Hurling* is stocked in Salmon's or can be bought on kennys.ie or easons.ie at €14.99. All proceeds are going to the further development of juvenile hurling at the Wild Geese GAA club.



Above: Drew Kettle (Dublin Co Board Chairman, Liam O'Neill (GAA President), Aiden and John Costello (Dublin Co Board Secretary).  
Below: Aiden with his wife Joan and son Michael visiting Áras an Uachtarán.



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# Profile on Ballinasloe Camógie

## Writes Aisling Brannelly

Founded by Dr. Ada English in the early 1900s Cumann Camógaíochta, Béal Átha na Slua is providing unprecedented opportunities for young girls in Gaelic sport as it enters into yet another season. The club now caters for well over 100 underage and adult players, consisting of a variety of age groups ranging from Under 8 to Junior A. In recent years the club has been working in partnership with Árd Scoil Mhuire as a venue for training and matches, with the use of two pitches and excellent indoor facilities and dressing rooms.

Recently the club have been lucky enough to produce some fantastic players who have gone on to represent Galway. These players include Aoife Doherty, Sinead Kennedy and Lisa O'Neill, who have played at adult level. Lisa also won an All-Ireland Minor medal in 2010 and was part of the Connacht Provincial team in 2012. Michelle O'Neill, Rachel Mannion, Michelle Jennings, Orla Kelly and Ele Doherty have also played at County underage. The club also awarded players of excellence, with Aisling Brannelly being awarded the Junior Player of the Year for 2012 and Sinead Carey and Niamh Parker also being rewarded for their efforts during the year.

Being part of the club is not always about training and playing matches, there are also a lot of other activities and team bonding outings that players take



Managers and Committee 2013. Back (L-R): Noel Gavin, Fiona Mannion, Michelle Kelly, Peter Dolan, Paul Doherty, Des Deeley and Diane Dolan. Front: Michelle O'Neill, Martina Dolan, Mary Parker, Enda Jennings and Aisling Brannelly.



(L-R) Sinead Carey (Most Improved Player 2012), Aisling Brannelly (Junior Player of the Year 2012) and Niamh Parker (Most Dedicated Player 2012). These awards were sponsored by Cahalan's Jewellers Ballinasloe.

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Rhona Balck and Neola O'Neill, two of the girls who helped out at recent bag packing in Tesco.

part in. It is tradition for the underage players to go to the All-Ireland Camógie finals in Croke Park every September. The club have also gone on various trips to places such as Belfast to as far afield as France as well as team bonding in the widely popular ASPIRE centre in Clara, Co Offaly.

With the increasing amount of Health issues we face today, exercise is becoming more and more important in our lives. Playing Camógie can be an enjoyable way for you to get fit and stay healthy in a safe and structured environment, without a hefty price tag. Playing Camógie is also a great way to make friends and develop excellent social and teamwork skills, as well as having fun at the same time! Camógie is also brilliant for developing your coordination, balance, agility, flexibility and speed. In addition, being part of a team can also develop discipline, dedication and determination.

2011 U14 Féile Panel.



With the start of the Camógie season upon us it is a perfect opportunity to join one of our teams. Don't worry about buying gear at first as the club can provide hurls and helmets to the underage, just come along to the training sessions.

**Managers for 2013 are as follows:**

- U8, U10, U12: Michelle Kelly and Peter Dolan
- U14: Des Deeley
- U16: Enda Jennings
- Minor: Paul Doherty
- Junior A: Noel Gavin, Adrian Feehily, Niall Kelly, Padraig Ryan, Gavin Hynes.

**Indoor Training:**

- U8, U10, U12: Wednesdays 6.30-7.30
- U 14: Wednesdays 7.30-8.30
- U16, Minor, Junior: Tuesdays 7.30-8.30 and Fridays 8-9.

Training currently takes place in the Emerald Ballroom but will be moved to Árd Scoil Mhuire later in the year.

Registration will take place on Sunday 17th February from 5-6.30pm in the Árd Scoil Mhuire Hall. We would also like to thank all of our sponsors for their generosity over the years.

For more information regarding training or if any parents are interested in helping out please contact Mary Parker, Club Secretary on 087 2650418 or check us out on Facebook at Cumann Camógaíochta Béal Átha Na Slua.



Team Building Weekend in the ASPIRE Centre Clara, Co Offaly



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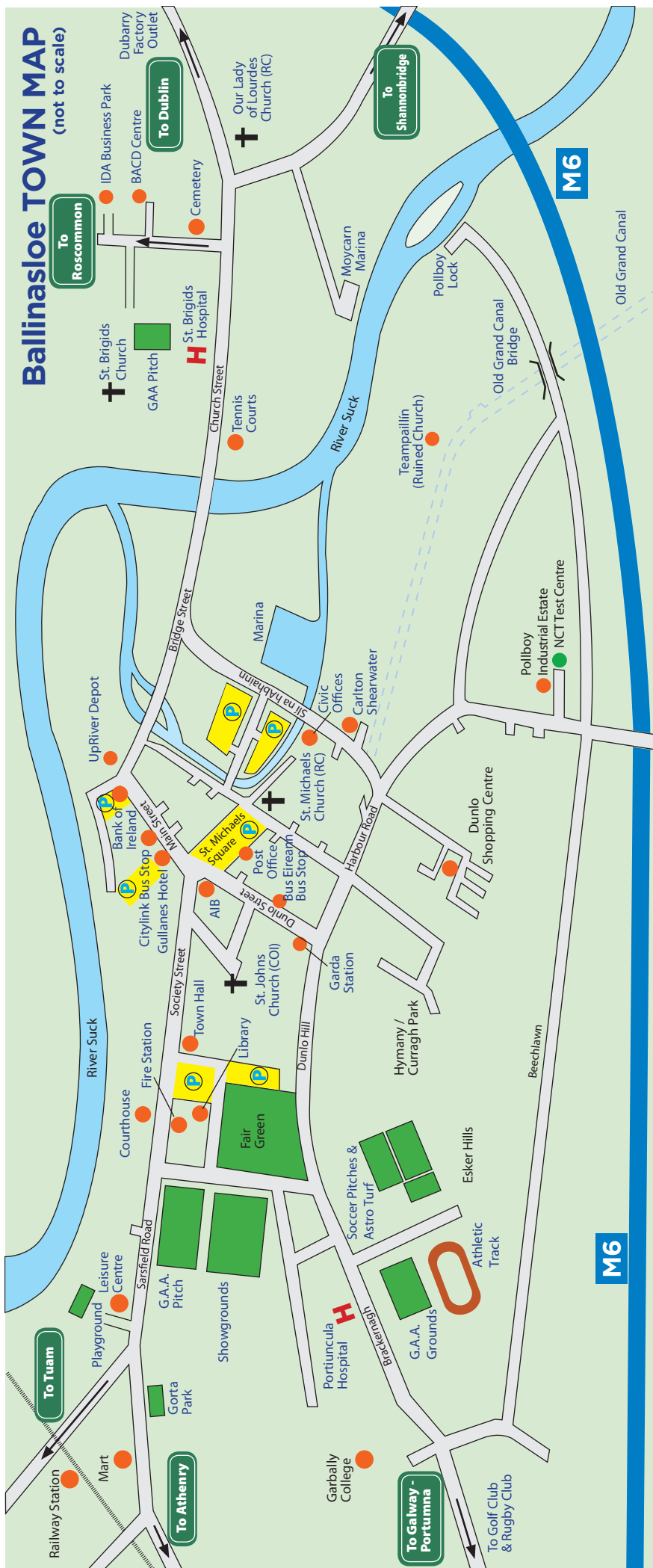
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# Ballinasloe TOWN MAP

(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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