

BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 3 Issue 1: April/May 2013



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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 3 Issue 1: April/May 2013

REAMHRÁ



It's been a quarter full with the white noise of All-Ireland Club finals! In both codes and at all levels, with the town winning our first ever Junior Club title and our young trainee Reporter togging out as a committed panellist with the loosing Kilcormac-Killoughey side on St. Patrick's Day.

Whilst a lot has been written, commented and analysed about the Croke Park Victory, for me from the Stand, in the presence of another Club Giant,

Mattie Ganly (complete with his father's 1925 All Ireland Medal) what was wonderful was the passion and nobility of our town's athletic youth in the flush of celebrations, able to invoke and acknowledge the spirit of those that had taught them and supported the scaffolding. Keith Kelly's eloquent acceptance speech (after a quick jersey swap!) was a clarion call to those lucky enough to have been there to set the bar high, plan, dream, graft and deliver. His weaving into the speech of the memory and encouragement of GAA stalwart the late Joe Keogh who only passed away this Spring was a fitting testament to a squad of players and their supporters; that these moments of success always require inter generational support .

The Soccer Club competing in their first FAI Junior Cup quarter final is another great milestone achievement, built on community DNA. Veteran RTÉ Broadcaster Donacha Ó Dualing at 81 years of age, stepped away from his broadcasting mike lately with Dev's quote "If you are good to your Parish you are great for your Country"! The All-Ireland Club Series and FAI Junior Cup, all stoke and flame that passion that together we are unbeatable! This Magazine into its third edition will continue to illuminate, engage and inform all of us of what (even in these times) there is still much to be positive about!

*Le gach Dea Ghuí,
Colm Croffy, Editor*



It is great to find people on the doorsteps waiting for the delivery of Ballinasloe Life, please bear in mind we require many inputs and once a delivery has taken place work begins on the next edition. For Volume 3 we have secured a solid basis of funding but will need further ongoing subscribers and advertisers during the course of the year to ensure our viability and we ask everyone that has an advertising budget to make some available for this very positive initiative.

We continue to find that many clubs / organisations are weak at promoting their offerings and we encourage you to put pen to paper along with a few photos if you are a member of these silent entities.

Congratulations to BEST winners which had 100 applicants from 5 schools. The development of entrepreneurial skills should form part of the secondary school curriculum as we need more Irish Entrepreneurs to fill the jobs gap which will be left by Multinational companies.

It is said a rising tide lifts all boats and following on from the success of the Junior GAA team our Junior Soccer team have done tremendously well, as has our Senior Cup Rugby team in Garbally who reached the final for the first time since the departure of the boarders. Likewise there are some good news stories coming through from local Business so let's hope that the tide is on the rise here as well.

I wish to congratulate our Company Manager Lyn Donnelly and her Husband Justin on the birth of a baby daughter Hannah.

*Seamus Duffy, Chairman,
Ballinasloe Area Community Development*

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BEC

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An Initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community

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Glebe National School, Aughrim

The Glebe NS is a small, co-educational, interdenominational primary school under the Patronage of the Church of Ireland. It is located Aughrim, 5km from Ballinasloe. It has a low pupil teacher ratio, large spacious classrooms, high tech IT facilities and a state of the art building. It offers extracurricular activities including French, Cookery Skills and Gardening. It has a spacious yard with a large green area. A bus service is available serving Ballinasloe and Aughrim. The school's Open Day is taking place on Saturday April 27th from 12pm to 2pm. This will be a wonderful opportunity to see the school and meet the staff and pupils. There will be refreshments and treats, playtime, ICT activities and much more! For more info contact Glebe NS at 090 9673650, email them at info@theglebens.com or check out the website www.theglebens.com



Ballinasloe Town Council

Comhairle Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe



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Joint Winners in *BEST* Awards

Writes Owen Dunne

Young entrepreneurs of the future gathered in the Carlton Hotel recently for the fifth Annual BEST awards night. There were numerous different business ideas on display from washable Golf Shoe soles to Slurry Aeration systems. Guest speaker and Minister for Training and Skills Ciarán Cannon was highly impressed with the ideas on show. He thanked and congratulated the Schools and parents who made it all possible. "I want to congratulate the commitment and hard work by the students, as well as the Schools and families who helped facilitate the projects. I think that the work on show here today can be used as an example for the rest of the country and one which we can all build on."

The BEST Awards have become a real high point on the local business calendar. BEST Judge (Former Connacht Rugby CEO) Gerry Kelly believes that the Enterprise Competition is one that should be rolled out nationwide. "I think the BEST awards are a great idea and they give brilliant encouragement to our young budding entrepreneurs. I commend Michael Staunton for coming up with the idea, it really should be franchised." He also noted the great tradition of business in the town. "Business has always been strong in the town and I think that if the local business people can help mentor our young entrepreneurs business in the town will grow stronger."

Because the quality of the projects on display the judges found it impossible to pick one winner. As a result joint winners were announced; Laura Creaven for her Removable/Washable

Football boot sole and Sally-Ann Parsons for her healthy snack *O'Kale Krisps*. Both girls were delighted with the win. "All the kale used is produced in Una & Pdraig Fahy's farm in Beechlaw. I hope to try selling this product in some of the local shops" said Sally-Ann Parsons. Other joint winner Laura Creaven who was away on a TY trip was represented by her sister Gillian who thanked local business *EasyFix* for helping them create the proto type. "*EasyFix* have been a great help to us. We hope to get the Connacht Rugby Squad to test out the proto-type which we are really looking forward to."

RESULTS OF BEST AWARD

JUDGES AWARD (Runners Up): €150 and Cert

Mobile Cattle Crush: Sean Kelly, Shane Hughes and Stephen Naughton (Colaiste an Chreagáin, Mountbellew).

Farm App: Martin Cunningham and Mark Naughton (Garbally)

Baby Car Seat: Viktorija Maksimchika (Árd Scoil Mhuire)

Recycling Bin: Eoghan & Niall Donaghue (Coláiste an Chreagáin)

Survival Kit: Rachel Greene, Sharon Dolan (Árd Scoil Mhuire)

TOP PRIZE (Joint Winners) €750 and Cert each.

Football Boot/Golf Shoe Protector: Laura Creaven (Árd Scoil Mhuire)

O'Kale Krisps: Sally-Ann Parsons (Árd Scoil Mhuire)

Special presentations were also made to teachers involved in the Projects: Thomas Burke (Garbally College), Eilish Finnerty (Árd Scoil Mhuire) and Breda Barrett (Colaiste an Chreagáin).

Gillian Creaven, Sister of BEST Award Joint Winner Laura Creaven (who was on a Transition Year trip) with a prototype of Gillian's Washable Football boot sole, receives Gillian's Award from William Duthie (Director BCU) and Seamus Duffy (BACD).



BEST Award Joint Winner Sally Ann Parsons from ASM with a sample of her O'Kale Krisps, receives her Award from William Duthie (Director BCU) and Seamus Duffy (BACD).

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Fletcher's Welcome Corrie Star

Writes Owen Dunne

Coronation Street star Samia Ghadie who plays popular character Maria Connor will swap the cobbled stone road of the famous soap for a day when she visits Fletcher's Electrical store, Society Street on April the 20th.

The well known actress will arrive at Fletcher's at 1pm and will stay to sign autographs and meet locals until 3pm. The Corrie favourite will officially open the newly revamped electrical store.

The visit of Ms. Ghadie is part of a trip to Ireland which will see her appear on the Rick O'Shea show the day before her Suck side visit. The arrival of the Corrie star has been generating a huge amount of interest both locally and nationally. "I've been talking to numerous people from around and further afield, including the UK who will make sure to be here on the 20th" said Proprietor Sean. There will be a large media presence on the day with Galway Bay FM and RTE due to make live broadcasts from the store.

This media exposure is not uncharted territory for Fletcher's as they have featured on TV and Radio numerous times. This is mainly down to Sean's relationship with a number of media organisations, most notably RTE, where Fletcher's are the no. 1 prize givers for the Rick O'Shea Show on 2fm. "We're the only store across the country that link up with the Rick O'Shea Show to supply all the prizes for their competitions. We




have been doing that for over 2 years now and have just signed another year long contract which will make it the longest Store/Radio Show relationship in RTE."

Fletcher's media connections did not come about by chance however as Sean is a well known figure among media circles. He currently acts as an agent for the well known 2fm Roadcaster as well as managing his own website 'ModernMedia.ie' with which he organises and promotes large scale music events. He has worked with a number of well known bands such as The Lambrettas, Purple Hearts, The Jam and The Truth.

Sean's 'ModernMedia' website is only expanding at the moment and he has a number of gigs lined up for this year. "On May the 11th I'm organising a big gig in the Village, Dublin which will feature Bruce Foxton from The Jam and Simon Townsend from The Who."

Despite the constant doom and gloom Sean is optimistic about 2013. "We hope to have as good a year as 2012. Hopefully the visit of Samia on the 20th will bring some good publicity for us and the town." Sean also believes that it is in hard times financially that the best comes out in Business people. He believes that a number of initiatives should be set up to keep local shoppers in the town. "I think the major gripe with shoppers at the moment is paying for parking. In our store we offer customers a 30 minute free parking ticket giving them time to take a look around our shop and if they purchase anything they can get it down to their car without any extra cost." Sean noticed the huge impact the Free Parking initiative during the Christmas had on local shoppers. "People were delighted with the free parking incentive during the Christmas. Every shopper was commenting on how great it was. Personally I think it was a master stroke by the Council, but I appeal to them now to make parking free all year around to ensure people Shop Local!"

Fletcher's are now looking forward for what promises to be an exciting 2013. *Coronation Street* followers who are looking forward to Ms. Ghadie's appearance can also be assured that it won't be the last. "We also have another Corrie Star lined up to pay us a visit sometime in late October. We can't name names as of yet but we can assure fans that it will happen." 

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The Carlton Apprentice Awards

Writes Owen Dunne

Congratulations to the young aspiring team at the Carlton Hotel Group who gathered at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel for the National Apprentice Awards ceremony 2012. In its third year this fantastic challenge was undertaken by an aspiring and motivated young professional; this opportunity offers a change for the winner to undertake and develop their career in Sales and Marketing. Congratulations to this year's winner Conchur Finnegan. Winners were Mary Gibbons, Carlton Shearwater Hotel, Conchur Finnegan (Carlton Blanchardstown) and Roisin Kearney (Carlton Dublin Airport).

Galway Roses who have, in the past, won the coveted title of Rose of Tralee are:

- Sheila O'Hanrahan (1980)
- Niamh Grogan (1992)
- Luzveminda O'Sullivan (1998)

Various events are held as part of the Galway Rose Selection, including social get-togethers, judging interviews and a briefing which gives you a chance to meet your fellow entrants and find out a bit more about what's involved. The winning Rose then goes on to represent Galway at the Rose of Tralee Regional Festival, along with the other Irish Roses and Roses from around the world.

If want in find out more about this year's event or have any questions, please email us galwayrosecentre@gmail.com or leave a message on 087 147 4100.

Galway Rose Centre Supports Croi
Croi has been to the fore in the fight against Heart Disease and Stroke in Galway and the West of Ireland since 1985. Croi is funded entirely through its fundraising campaigns and is dependent on the ongoing support of people in the community to continue its quest for improved services & facilities and delivery of preventative measures for people who are at risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. In 2012, the charity opened the country's only dedicated heart and stroke centre based in Galway. The state-of-the-art facility focuses on prevention, rehabilitation, screening, research and education, family and patient support and accommodation.



Kevin Ryan (General Manager Shearwater), Mary Gibbons (Winner) and Michelle Ryan (Sales & Marketing Manager Shearwater).



Above: Michael Kearney (Exec. Chair Carlton Group), Kevin Ryan (Gen. Manager Shearwater), Gina Quinn (Group Sales & Marketing), Mary Gibbons (Winner) and John Varley (MD Carlton Group).



Below: The victorious Ballinasloe Football squad and Management of their Main Sponsors, Carlton Shearwater Hotel.

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FINE GAEL

Census Stats, A Local Snapshot

Writes Owen Dunne

Last year the Western Development Commission (WDC) and the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) launched an interactive mapping tool of the west. The internet supported tool allows for the mapping of Census population data in detail, at Electoral Division (ED) level, for the 7 counties in the Western Region. It shows spatial patterns for the 2002, 2006 and 2011 census results.

The map includes data on Population, Age, Nationality, Employment, Education Levels, Transport, Housing and Disability. It will be a useful tool for planners, policy makers, researchers and anyone interested in understanding regional economic and social activity. The new tool is very user friendly. With a simple click of a button you can swiftly breeze through a huge amount of information on your locality from the comfort of your own living room. Many interesting facts and figures about Ballinasloe are available on the map. Some of the information that can be found includes the following:

POPULATION		
2006	Ballinasloe Urban: 6,049	Surrounding Rural: 2,798
2011	Ballinasloe Urban: 6,449	Surrounding Rural: 2,822
Slight increase in population both urban and rural.		
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH A COMPUTER		
2006	Ballinasloe Urban: 936	Surrounding Rural: 528
2011	Ballinasloe Urban: 1,460	Surrounding Rural: 654

This unsurprising statistic shows a good increase in the number of houses with a computer in the town with only a slight increase in the countryside. With computers becoming more and more affordable and user friendly it has become more of a necessity than a luxury in the modern Irish household.

NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH BROADBAND ACCESS		
2006	Ballinasloe Urban: 313	Surrounding Rural: 76
2011	Ballinasloe Urban: 1,238	Surrounding Rural: 521

It is clear from these figures that the old dial up internet is a thing of the past with more and more houses availing of the much faster broadband access. Internet users around the locality will also be delighted to hear that an even faster fibre-optic broadband network will become available to the region within the coming year.

IRISH RESIDENTS IN BALLINASLOE TOWN	
2006: 93.67%	2011: 81.14%
UK RESIDENTS IN BALLINASLOE TOWN	
2006: 5.35%	2011: 5.78%
POLISH RESIDENTS IN BALLINASLOE TOWN	
2006: 0%	2011: 5.98%

These figures show a real sign of the times with emigration and immigration evident here. Irish population has decreased by over 10% with many searching for work abroad. There has also been a large influx of Polish residents since 2006 with many having achieved work now settling long term.

Also included in the CSO generated stats were the live register Figures from January 2008-January 2012. These figures show a doubling up in the number of people signing onto the dole in the Ballinasloe region. In 2008 1,048 people were on the register and in 4 years it has more than doubled to 2,549. However this is a decrease from the 2011 January Figure which showed an all time high in the region with a total of 2,692 signing on. Although these may seem like drastic figures they are well within the average of every other town, not just in the western region but across the country.

The figures should not surprise many with the current economic situation and the changing lifestyles both technologically and financially. Whilst the growth in long term unemployed is stark and challenging; an increase in population both in the town and country side, an increase in people adapting to technology and an increase in a more diverse population in Ballinasloe culturally are positive elements.

It would like to avail of this online tool just visit this website: www.airo.ie. There will also be a link to the site on the *Ballinasloe Life* Facebook page and on our Wordpress blog www.ballinasloelife.wordpress.com 

Tom Fox Michelin Certification

Writes Owen Dunne

Ballinasloe Tyre Centre, owned and managed by Thom Fox, was one of 11 tyre specialists to receive Michelin Certified Centre status and have the standard of their service recognised by the world's leading tyre manufacturer. His achievement was recognised at a seminar which took place recently in Malahide at which best practice, business trends and issues facing the tyre industry were discussed.

Established in 1999, Ballinasloe Tyre Centre is located on Harbour Road. It is a busy three-bay operation with facilities to handle two cars and one agricultural tractor simultaneously. It has a staff of five who together have a combined total of more than 50 years' experience in the tyre business. Besides managing his business in Ballinasloe, Thom Fox is Treasurer of the Irish Tyre Industry Association which has a membership of 270 tyre retailers countrywide. Becoming a Michelin Certified Centre recognises the achievement of Ballinasloe Tyre Centre

in providing the very best levels of service, professionalism and expertise that is approved by Michelin's Europe-wide accreditation scheme. To qualify for certification and attend the seminar – which was hosted by Michelin UK and Ireland Commercial Director, Malcolm Scovell – Ballinasloe Tyre Centre had to successfully pass a stringent, independent audit of its operations. The audit assesses the quality of the workshop and buildings, levels of customer service and personnel requirements including training and skill levels. Speaking at the seminar, Thom Fox said: “this Michelin Certification is a tribute to our excellent staff and a tremendous boost to our business. It has re-energised us and raised our operation to a higher level. It will inspire us to go further and achieve similar forms of recognition within our industry.”

In total, 11 retailers met the required standard for accreditation – eight from the Republic of Ireland and three from Northern Ireland – totalling 13 individual retail outlets.

Redundancy Pension Options or for Employment Change

Writes Mark Scannell

If being made redundant or changing employment you need to take care and seek professional advice as to how to treat their paid up pension funds. If you leave your money in your old employers pension scheme you may have problems dealing with the Trustees of the scheme and company at retirement, or worse still, they may not even be around.

On top of this you will have no control over the investment decisions nor will not be able to use your funds until normal retirement age (usually age 65). If you transfer your pension to that of a new Employer then your old fund becomes bound to the rules of the new scheme and you would have no access until you retire from the new

employment. Accessing benefits from a Buy Out Bond does not require a person to retire from employment. By transferring to a Buy Out Bond you get full control of the fund and under the guidance of a professional advisor you can chose funds and investments strategies that are best you. Another benefit is that by using a Buy Out Bond you can normally access some of the funds from age 50 under certain Revenue imposed conditions.

Basically, all pensions can be extremely complicated, but if used wisely and to your best advantage, pensions can be hugely beneficial. It is my, somewhat biased, opinion that you should take independent advice so that you fully understand your benefits and rights and how best to use your pension savings best.



MeetWest Networking Event Picks Up Award

Galway Co Council's work with agencies in job creation was awarded at the Local Authority Members Association Awards. These Awards recognise the work by communities and local authorities. The Council received the Award for Best Economic Partnership for their work on the *MeetWest* event, which is a collaborative effort between the 4 local authorities, 3 County Enterprise Boards, Enterprise Dev. Agencies and Chambers of Commerce in the Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. It is a business networking event which brought together over 300 companies primarily from Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. The two day event also has a conference element including a number of speakers with the focus being a full day of co-ordinated one-to-one business meetings. www.meetwest.ie



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B.A.C.D. Reviews Successful Year

Writes Owen Dunne

The Annual General Meeting of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd was held recently. The meeting was attended by TD's Frank Feighan, Denis Naughton, Senator Micheal Mullins as well as local Councilors Pat O'Sullivan and Johnny Walsh, Directors, members and local business interests.

BACD Ltd. is a charitable company founded in 1999 by four local groups: Chamber of Commerce, Credit Union, Town Council and Creagh Community Development Council, to stimulate local enterprise through the provision of services and incubation space at its centre on the Creagh Road. The main aim is to create sustainable employment within the community. The company aims to achieve this by promoting enterprise and supporting projects that encourage investment into the area.

Mrs. Lynn Donnelly, in her manager's report, said that one of its major tenants, Electrical Mechanical Control, had now moved to bigger premises in Oranmore - a testament to their success. The BACD Campus now has an occupancy rate of 85% with 11 enterprises employing over 165 people. The roofing project was completed with 75% funding coming from Galway Rural Development and 25% from the Town Council. In the last twelve months it has completed the roofing project, the removal of asbestos, upgraded fire safety and disability access and installed new signage at the entrance. They now have a building fully compliant with building regulations and with improved energy efficiency.

BACD accounts showed an increased profit last year with funding for its projects from membership, rental income and grants from Galway Rural Development, the Town Council, the Credit Union, Galway Co Council, Galway City & County Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland, Creagh Community Development Council and RAPID - Dormant Funds Accounts.

Ms. Donnelly referred to the success of Ballinasloe life magazine, this free glossy magazine distributed to every business and

household in the locality. She thanked the publication team, subscribers, contributors and volunteers who ensured the distribution of 4,500 copies within two hours on publication day. Ballinasloe Life magazine is fully available on the web and has had 2,600 hits or an average of 220 hits per issue.

The other successful projects handled by the BACD included the hugely successful 'Shop Local' Campaign which was launched before Christmas in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Council. The same bodies were also involved in the inaugural Christmas Festival event with an afternoon of free entertainment on the Gig Rig provided by local schools Newtown, Creagh, Scoil Ui Chéithearnaigh and Scoil an Croí Naofa National Schools as well as Junior Sean Nós Dancers, Treasure Island Pantomime and the local Folk Group. She thanked all the groups who contributed to the event; The Fair and Festival Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Town Council, the Show Society, the Musical Society and Panto Crew as well as the local Vintage Club.

Future priorities are to sustain occupancy levels, financial stability, the retention of existing clients and attraction of new clients. They will endeavour to raise the profile of the centre and BACD Ltd through marketing, through its membership of the National Association of Community Enterprise Centres and by strengthening its links with Enterprise Ireland, Galway County and city Enterprise Boards as well as AIT and GMIT.

The company's presence on social media has also increased with over 8,000 hits on their webpage and 5,500 different users. Chairman Seamus Duffy thanked Lynn Donnelly for her work, paid tribute to all who had contributed to another successful year for BACD and in conclusion noted that it was a very positive season for the town not only in Business but also in sport.

New Directors to serve for the coming year were elected: Mí Dolan, C. Concannon, D. Clarke, J. Lyons, D. Dowling, S. Duffy, K. Ryan, A. Mc Grath, and P. Hargadon.

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Wood Farm Winning with Wood

Jason (left) and John English



Writes Owen Dunne

30 years ago John English developed a Sawmill and wood treatment system in Ahascragh to serve the locality. Today *Wood Farm Fencing Supplies* is a popular Family Run Business supporting and serving the wider community. The business recently took part in the SFA (Small Firm's Association) Awards and although they did not emerge victorious their enterprise was highly commended.

Managing Director and son of John English, Jason, was very grateful to AIB who nominated them for the award. "We were very kindly nominated by our local bank AIB Ballinasloe. We would like to thank all the staff in AIB Ballinasloe for their support and confidence in our business. We were very fortunate to be shortlisted in the manufacturing category. Although we didn't win it was a fantastic achievement to be one of only 6 small businesses in the country to qualify to the final stage of the competition."

Like all good businesses *Wood Farm Fencing* have developed and updated over time. Although all business have been feeling the pinch in these recessionary times this small business is still paddling well above water.

"Over the past five years we have been developing our product range, making improvements to our facility and our machinery. All these factors and much hard work have allowed us to increase our customer base. Business has been good for Woodfarm over the last few years, a testament to our loyal customers without whom it would not have been possible" said Jason.

They have a very good customer base and have developed many loyal fans both locally and nationally during their time in business. "Our customers come from near and far. Our local hardwares and co-ops are the backbone of the company as many of them have been doing business with John English over the past 20 to 30 years and they have always proven loyal to us," explained Jason English.

Although they supply many people from outside the locality the English Family see it as important to help the local economy by employing many from around the area. "We currently employ 23 full and part-time staff. All our employees are living in the locality between Ballinasloe and Mountbellew. We are delighted to able to provide jobs in our rural area. It means that our younger employees do not have to leave the country in search of employment elsewhere" stated the M.D.

From what started out as a small business 30 years ago it's hard to see anything stopping *Wood Farm Fencing Supplies* progressing through the next 30. "In the next 30 years we would like to see *Wood Farm* progressing and developing. We would like to be in a position where we could offer more jobs in our local area. There will always be improvements to be made so it will be a constant process of keeping up to date and competitive. We would like to thank all those who have supported our family business down through the years" commented Jason.

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Sandra and her Berge de Bré and good friend Gucci.

Sandy's Dog Grooming Salon

Sandy's Dog Grooming Salon is open for business. Located in Church Hill, it was opened in 2012 by Sandra Mularska who has many qualifications in the sector. "After finishing secondary school, I completed my Diploma in a renowned Dog Grooming School in Poland. Since then I have been a qualified dog groomer." Sandra's experience cannot be questioned as she has worked with Dogs all over Europe. "I used to work in many different grooming parlours in Europe. I participated in different type of dog grooming courses and seminars in Ireland and Poland." Sandy's Salon is a truly professional organisation as is highlighted in their mission statement: "Professional grooming, in a low-stress environment that will leave your pet feeling happy, healthy, and rejuvenated." To have a chat with Sandy about booking your dog in just give her a call now on 086 6654069.



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Town Hall Theatre Society AGM

Writes Owen Dunne

The AGM of Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre Society took place recently in Gullane's Hotel. Many issues were discussed including the Development of the Town Hall, the Financial progress, as well as the nominations for a new Town Hall committee. Chairperson of Charitable LTD Company and Society formed in 2010, Mary O'Connell addressed the gathering and welcomed everyone including 2 new assistants in the Town Hall, Shraon Jets (Theatre & Special events assistant) from Holland and Owen Dunne (Press & Communications Assistant) from Kilcormac.

Ms. O'Connell went through a number of the achievements, including the 35 year lease which they contracted with a tax exemption. She also noted the work completed by Architect Roddy Mannion in the development, including repairs inside the building. She also noted the importance of some organisations helping to create income for the building including the Weekly Country Market, Centre Stage and AOIFE (Association of Irish Festivals and Events) offices who all provide revenue towards the upkeep.

Ms. O'Connell made clear the groups ambitions for the Town Hall Theatre Development as she stated: "Our end Goal is to have a multifunctional theatre and arts centre. It is important that we be creative and explore different avenues in search of these goals."



She paid tribute to all the performance groups and organisations that continue to use the facility without whose support it would not be possible to continue and stressed that the board fully understood the limitations and frustrations with working around what was now in place.

She also thanked the friends of the Building who the society communicates with regularly through ezine and facebook and relies upon for fundraising and hoped that in time more activities would generate more engagement. She also specially thanked the Emerald Ballroom FÁS Team for the maintenance support services they continue to provide to the Theatre.

Mrs. Claire Curley the Appointed Auditor made her annual report to the group where she presented the detailed annual audited accounts. During the year under

review the Town Hall had an income of €16,000. The expenses of the Town Hall were in the region of €10,000, resulting in a surplus of €6,000. "The Company received 'Charitable Status' in September 2012. But as is part of the regulations we have to wait 2 years after the application until we can receive tax efficient donations from September 2014 onwards" said Claire.

A detailed presentation was then made concerning the projects work and milestone achievements to date. A variety of funding avenues are currently being examined to undertake a priority roof replacement which will cost in the region of €200,000. A project management contract is in place with BACD Ltd. to assist in the detailed business planning & implementation of the project. Once this is achieved, the plan is to incrementally ramp up usage from its current 45 performances a year to at least 90. "The roof is the main priority. After that we can focus on developing the rest of the Town Hall into a Hybrid Arts Venue that we can all be proud of" said Mary.

Elected to serve for another year as the Society Management Committee and interalia the Directors of the Company were Mary O'Connell, Gerry Sweeney, Pat McGovern, Eamon Donoghue, Fr. John Garvey, John Boland, Brendan Tully and Colm Croffy. The Committee have powers to co-opt additional skills if necessary.



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Garbally View in its 20th Year

Writes Owen Dunne

Garbally View Nursing Home in Brackernagh, was opened by Tony and Theresa Whyte in 1993 and this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. From what began as a small 6 bedroom bungalow it now caters for nearly 40 people and is considered one of the finest nursing homes around.

In the mid 80's and early 90's Nursing Homes were very few and far between. Elderly people were usually cared for in their own home by their family. Garbally View Proprietor Theresa Whyte and husband Tony Whyte cared for two elderly people in their own home before the idea of a nursing home came into their heads.

It was this experience that sparked the idea of a nursing home. In the early 90's, Tony (who was CEO at Portiuncula hospital for many years) proposed to the Hospital Board that some form of non-clinical house be built for patients recovering from operations or for the elderly who could no longer live at home. "I proposed that the board build a nursing home style facility that would accommodate such people but the idea was turned down. So as a result, myself and Theresa were left with no option but to go it alone." And so they did, soon after they bought a beautiful bungalow for £8,200 built by local contractor Hubert Hardiman (who's Grandson Ciarán now works in the home). The 6 beds quickly filled and led to the

Whyte's extending the home, adding 14 more rooms in the mid 90's and then a further 17 in the mid 00's.

With 37 residents, Garbally View has come a long way from the 6 bedroom home it started as in the early 90's. Tony and Teresa's daughter, Therese, who is assistant manager spoke of the good atmosphere among residents. 'All of the residents are very happy here, especially one Annie Dylan who joined us in June 1993 not long after we opened! She is a remarkable woman and turns 99 this summer! She's a great character and keeps us all on our toes!'

The Nursing Home employs 37 people both Full-Time and Part-Time, including: nurses, carers, ancillary staff, kitchen staff and an activities co-ordinator as well as a physiotherapist. With Head Nurse Mary Dudgeon the main port of call for all nursing matters. It's clear that the quality of the staff in Garbally View has played a major role in their successful 20 years. "The staff here are brilliant. They are the reason we are still here 20 years on. The work everyone puts in every day is tremendous." said assistant manager Therese Whyte.

It's a very open nursing home and visitors are always welcome. "Most of our residents were brought up in an Ireland where house to house visits were an integral part of life. They love to see people coming in and out to fill them in on the local gossip." said Mrs. Whyte.

Garbally View is a very local Nursing Home with all residents coming from around the hinterland and the majority

of its staff living close by. "I think that because we're a local family is important too. Our residents feel comfortable because they know the people around them, whether it's the carers or other residents. We like to keep everything here as local as possible from our working staff to our food suppliers. For many years Joe Hayes supplied us with all our meat. Now we mainly deal with local butcher Tony Carroll. Pdraig Concannon always kept us up to date with supplies also."

The nursing homes aim is to make life for their elderly residents as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. This is clearly shown in their mission statement which says: "We wish to bring wellbeing, sanctuary and rest to the mind, body and spirit of all those who require our care". Because of its top quality care and genuine good will, the pleasant and serene atmosphere in the home does not come as a surprise. There is no doubt that Garbally View can be considered as a real "Home from Home" ensuring another 20 years in Brackernagh.



Paddy McCormack, Sarah Hynes, Julia Carthy, Julia Keogh preparing for St. Patrick's Day.



Bridie Mannion, Paddy Burns and Jacki McDonald at St. Patrick's Day Celebrations.



The Lovely Ladies Julia Keogh and Gretta Nannery preparing for Easter.



Garbally View Staff with Annie Dillon, Paddy McCormack, Sarah Hynes, Julia Carthy and Julia Keogh preparing for St. Patrick's Day.

Millars of Ballydangan 179 Years of Roadside Hospitality



Staff of Millars receiving Fáiite Ireland Award from TD Denis Naughten.

Writes Owen Dunne

Millars Bar, Ballydangan has been a meeting place down through the years for all walks of life, businessmen, traders, commercial reps, friends, relatives and revellers. Millars Bar and the Golden Millar Restaurant are situated on the old Athlone to Ballinasloe road, once the N6. At the Golden Millar Restaurant they understand the difficulties facing customers in the current economic climate and strive to provide the best quality food and professional service at reasonable prices.

Proprietor Gerry Kelly states "We can cater for all parties and events no matter how big or small, with a helpful and friendly staff who ensure a level of professionalism." Originally founded in 1834. Millars Bar and The Golden Millar Restaurant have recently been awarded The Fáiite Ireland Approval Award, a standard of excellence in all areas of the bar and restaurant operations, which employs 14 fulltime and parttime staff.

The Golden Millar Restaurant offers ongoing specials on a daily basis and can be found on their Facebook page, they also have an ongoing offer on Sundays which is exceptional value. For only €18.50 you can avail of a four course Sunday Lunch. The Sunday lunch menu is served from 12.30 to 6p.m.

and includes roast joints, poultry, fish and steaks and all are included in our unbelievable four course price. Sunday Lunch can be very busy so booking is highly recommended.

The Golden Millar Restaurant also specialises in outdoor catering and have a full range of menus and packages to suit all requirements. So for parties, home gatherings, christenings, communions and confirmations they can cater for your needs so you don't have to. All our catering is fully H.A.C.C.P. Compliant and is covered by full public liability insurance.

Restaurant Manager Philip Gordon stated the reason for Millar's success by saying: "The main reason as to why we've been so successful over the years is because we hold with traditional pub values. We like to describe the atmosphere at Millar's as cosy and convivial with open fires, comfy seating and soft lighting. However in the self-contained bar area we provide pool, darts and a jukebox for the livelier contingent. All sporting events are shown live on our numerous large screen televisions."

They can provide for functions and parties of all sizes with the option of full menus, barbecue or finger food menus available. There is free WI-FI provided throughout the bar lounge and restaurant. Check out the facebook page - the goldenmillarrestaurant, or give them a call to get the schedule of live music. The lounge is fully self-contained with its own dance floor and with ample space makes it ideal for functions, fundraisers, table quizzes and of course The Gathering. At Millar's you can avail of a generous car park that can facilitate numerous vehicles including buses and coaches, they also have a facility to get you back home with a taxi service.

If you require more information from Millar's don't hesitate to call in or contact them at: 0906 9673523. In this the year of The Gathering Millar's promise to go that extra mile to ensure your homecoming event is a success.

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GMFV* (Guaranteed minimum future value)	€8,689
Finance amount	€15,760
Cost of credit	€1,812
Mileage per annum (km)	20,000km
Borrowing rate (fixed)	4.9%
36 monthly repayments	€244.99

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Upriver Set for A Busy Summer

Writes Owen Dunne

Following an outstanding season in our new location last year, Upriver.ie are in full swing for another energetic, adventure filled return to the local waterways. This year will see upriver hit a new milestone as this is their eleventh successful year of running camps, courses and outings on the river in Ballinasloe and around the country. This is year 2 of their affiliation with Waterways Ireland, having been awarded an operating license for the town marina and surrounding navigation channel, a move which opens up untouched areas of the river.

"When starting from our base in Croffy's Yard, our groups will be able to follow the river around by the Old Norman castle, underneath the town bridge and finish in the Marina itself, all from a town centre location" says Eoin Croffy, Manager of Upriver.ie. "Our Kayactivity camp members and adult learners will now get to see the local river from a new, exciting perspective. This year our Bridge has a new haircut as the sluice gates were trimmed up allowing an earlier start to the season." Many Kayactivity camp members travel from Athlone, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Athenry and even from Cork with families staying in Ballinasloe.

A big focus this year is on keeping active and encouraging a healthy eating policy during the camps. "Fizzy drinks including sports drinks aren't welcome on our camp. All camp members are kept active all day through our river trips, you



simply don't sit back and do nothing on this camp. You are in charge of your own craft and work to control it as you learn the 'ins and outs' of the river."

"It's easily the best camp I've been on, I've learned so much, made great friends, I was wrecked at the end of the week but I'm coming back for more this year" says Sean Whyte, 5th Class (Athenry). "My favourite bits were the bank jumping and going under the bridges!"

Upriver also run a kayak assessment week for the older and more adventurous. This sees the participants take on the river for the week and gain a "Canoeing Ireland" certification at the end of the week on completion of an assessment. A great addition for any CV. Suitable participants are often chosen from this week to guide and help with the rest of the camps and Upriver are always looking for energetic workers for the summer season!

This year sees an earlier start to the season for upriver simply due to the demand for adult lessons and courses. Many adults are looking to get out and about and try a new hobby, learn new

skills and meet new people. Kayaking is a great way to exercise, outside in the fresh air seeing new places, exploring and burning calories without even knowing it. Upriver offer one off lessons or courses to people which can see them gain a qualification in a few weeks or simply advance through the syllabus at their own rate. Lesson times are tailored to suit the needs of the individual with many lessons happening during the evenings and weekends. "Many people have hectic work schedules so they can simply phone ahead and book whenever it suits them." It's a great way to socialise and exercise at the same time.

This season Upriver are launching their open top and canoe hire, ideal for fishing or just for a group outing. Many "Gathering" groups have already booked up looking for something different to do with the cousins when they arrive this year. Upriver are available for birthdays and all types of group outings with some scout troops and teams already booked in for the coming season. It will no doubt bring much needed activity to the town centre this year!

For dates and information contact Eoin on 0858607825 or visit www.upriver.ie



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Hymany-Curragh ticks all Boxes

Writes Owen Dunne

Hymany-Curragh Park was built in 1979 and today stands high on a list of priority housing estates in the Ballinasloe Region. Gone are the days where many people may have turned their nose up at the words 'Hymany-Curragh'. With a new park, playground, all-weather football pitch and within walking distance from every single amenity available in town Hymany-Curragh park ticks all the right boxes.

Hymany Curragh resident Nancy Carr was the first to move in: "I moved in May 1979. I was the first resident to move in. There was a row of 19 houses. At first there was a huge demand for houses at the time and as a result they were all filled in the wink of an eye. I love living here, there's a great community feel to the place. It's also becoming a more popular housing estate and we see many people who originally grew up here coming back to raise their own family."

One of those who left and returned is Natalie Mocklair who spent her childhood in Hymany and after spending some years away decided to come back and settle down where she grew up. "I spent my entire childhood here and only recently came back just 2 months ago. It has changed a huge amount since I last lived here. It's now a much quieter estate and a lot cleaner than before. All the new facilities make it a top class housing estate."

Joe Ward who is a settled traveller has lived in Hymany for 40 years. "I moved in way back in the 70's and I've never looked back. A lot of people speak badly about the Estate but I've never seen or had any trouble here. I raised 7 children who all grew up to be fine adults."

Hymany-Curragh has its own committee which organises various activities throughout the year. These events include Christmas Parties, Easter Egg Hunts and Summer outings for children and parents. The committee consists of 13 residents. Joan Walsh is secretary of that Committee and has been living in Hymany/Curragh for many years. "I moved in not long after Nancy and I've been here ever since. The estate has always had a bad name which is very unfair on the residents here. It has changed a huge amount in recent years. It has come a long way from the estate that had that bad reputation."

The Estate's Committee work tirelessly to improve life for their residents. They hold a collection each month culminating in briquettes delivered to houses. They have worked in successfully installing ramps on the estates roads as well as enhancing the entrance to the estate.

"We also got our playground upgraded and it is now safer for the children. We have the 'Yellow Box' where soccer and games can be played. The residents committee also fought hard to get the park on our estate despite opposition." said Miss Walsh.



"There will be an open day on Friday, April 5th commencing at 2pm at the new Park development. This is to officially launch the opening of our newly built park and other facilities. There will be plenty of fun activities on the day and we ask people to come along and join us on the fun filled occasion." said Ms. Walsh.

Attending the opening on April 5th will be the Mayor Carmel Grealy, Town Councillors, Garda Superintendent, community Gardai, local TDs, Council Staff as well as the residents of Hymany-Curragh Park.

Mayor Grealy will officially open the park. The ceremony will then be followed by plenty of fun activities including a 5-a-side soccer tournament for U-10's as well as face painting and other games. Refreshments will be provided for all on the day. All are welcome.



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Queen of the Fair to Represent Ballinasloe in the Galway Rose

Writes Owen Dunne

Alison Duffy, who was crowned Queen of the Fair last year, will represent Ballinasloe at the annual Galway Rose Selection Night in the Carlton Shearwater this April. Alison is honoured to be able to represent the town at the event and is still amazed that she was crowned Queen of the Fair. "It was totally unexpected to tell you the truth. I work for Concannons Part-Time and they asked me to represent the shop to which I duly obliged, not expecting to win. Once I heard my name called out though it was like a dream come true."

Since becoming Queen of the Fair the local notoriety has been something Alison has found amusing. "It was really funny in the shop because when I was working at the counter there was a big poster of me and all the customers were commenting on it not knowing it was me! It has been a surreal 7 months."

Alison has received a huge amount of support from so many around the locality and recognises that she wouldn't



be where she is without this support. "I just want to thank everyone who has been so helpful and supportive towards me during the year. I want to especially thank my Sponsors Conconnan's, UTAH, Dubarry who all contributed towards my clothes and accessories. Linda Hayes has also been great and looked after my hair for the Fair. Mary Phelan has been amazing as well and has helped me so much. Ballinasloe Fair & Festival and Gullane's Hotel have also been very supportive. Not forgetting my friends and family as well."

Although she is excited about the big night the 19-year-old Medicine student admits that she has little time to be nervous as she studies in NUIG. "I've had little time to dwell on the night to be honest so nerves haven't really been a problem. I'm busy studying for exams at the moment. Maybe it's good to have a distraction." The possibilities are endless for Alison as she bids to become the first Queen of the Fair to represent Galway at the Rose of Tralee Regional's since Marian Naughton in 2005.

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Meals on Wheels Since the 70's



Meals on Wheels Co-ordinator Kay Cunningham (Far Left) and Social Services Administrator Teresa Coughlan (Far Right) with members of the Day Care Centre.

Writes Owen Dunne

Ballinasloe Meals on Wheels, now in its 41st year, was set up by Dr. Joe Tarpey along with a number of nuns from the Sisters of Mercy. They began to distribute dinners to people who were not able to cook for themselves. These meals were distributed to houses within the town. Today however, the organisation delivers over 80-100 meals a day to a much wider area including the hinterland.

The *Meals on Wheels* initiative is part of a number of organisations run by the Ballinasloe Social Services, who also host a Day Care centre for the elderly. Social Services administrator Teresa Coughlan noted the importance of both initiatives for the elderly. "The Day Care Centre is hugely beneficial for locals. They love coming in here for the chat and the bit of company. They also get a lovely meal which is delivered everyday by Kay Cunningham and the *Meals on Wheels* team."

Lizzy Carroll is a regular attendee of the centre "I love coming to the centre and meeting so many people while getting a lovely meal at the same time. The Day Care Centre is the best thing that has ever happened to me!"

Meals on Wheels Co-Ordinator Kay Cunningham has been working with the organisation for over 28 years. "I began working with the *Meals on Wheels* on a voluntary basis for about 6 years. Then I took up the job as Co-Ordinator which I have been doing ever since."

The service is invaluable to the community and the surrounding area with all their customers delighted to have the company while getting a beautifully cooked meal and bowl of soup at the same time.

"It's a first class service! I've been getting the *Meals on Wheels* for the past 8 years now. I'm no good at cooking myself and after my wife passed away I couldn't cook. But thankfully I came across Kay and she has made life an lot easier for me! I would be lost without the *Meals on Wheels*." said Brendan Glynn (88) from Cappataggle.

"It's a great service for the elderly who are living alone and can't really cook for themselves. We just want to give a hand in helping them stay independent while giving them that little bit of comfort and happiness." says Kay Cunningham.

"Since I started working here our numbers have increased 400%. It's a big job to serve our customers but one that we are more than capable of doing because of the brilliant, predominantly voluntary crew we have."

Ballinasloe Social Services receive a lot of core funding from the HSE but the rest is attained through fundraising and as a result they employ only a certain amount of staff with a lot of help from volunteers.

In total *Meals on Wheels* has 15 volunteer drivers. One of those voluntary drivers is Nuala Noone who wanted to make use of some of her spare time. "I've been driving for *Meals on Wheels* for a year and a half now. I started when the kids moved to secondary school which gave me spare time which I wanted to use productively. I really enjoy the work and love meeting all of the interesting people."

Well known local musician Tom Quinn, aged 94, is one of the customers of *Meals on Wheels*. "The *Meals on Wheels* has been a great help to me. My wife started availing of the service about 5 years ago until she passed away so I kept using them. It has been a great help to me cause I was never any good at cooking. I love the company and the chat and it helps pass the time. It's a great meal at a very reasonable price."

Tommy Leonard from Eglishe (aged 77) is a huge fan of the service. "In October of last year the doctor advised me to give the *Meals on Wheels* a go because I wasn't cooking healthy enough food for myself. Ever since I got that first meal I haven't looked back! It's a brilliant service that brings company as well as a good meal. I'm living in Eglishe which is a nice bit from Ballinasloe Town so I'm delighted they can come out this far."

Although *Meals on Wheels* have a large customer service they have the capacity to help many more. You can find out more information about *Meals on Wheels* on the Social Services website at: www.ballinasloesocialservices.ie or you can contact Kay directly at 0872325163.

The Ballinasloe Man in *Ulysses*

Writes Barry Lally

In the south aisle of St. Michael's Church, next to the chancel arch, is a stained-glass window bearing the legend: "In honour of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Of your Christian charity pray for the souls of Junius and Frances Horne. Erected by their son Sir Andrew Horne. A.D. 1915." Who was this Andrew Horne? He was, in fact, one the leading obstetric and gynaecological physicians in the Ireland of his time, born on 8th August 1856 in Society Street. His father, described as a general merchant, owned several properties on the street.

Educated in Clongowes Wood College and the Carmichael School of Medicine, Dublin, after which he studied for a year in Vienna (1883-4), Horne returned to Dublin and set up an obstetric and gynaecological practice at 28 Harcourt Street. In 1894, as a founder member, first joint master and ex officio governor of the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, he was, from its beginnings, largely responsible for the management of the institution. A pioneer in obstetric procedures, he performed the first caesarean section at Holles Street in 1901.

Horne served as President of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland from 1908 to 1910, and was re-elected joint master of Holles Street in 1909 and 1919, presiding over a period of medical development and expansion of the institution which later became the largest maternity hospital in Europe.

He married Margaret Norman in 1884, and the couple had five children, two of whom followed their father into the medical profession. When his wife had a leg amputated in 1918, Horne preserved the severed limb in formaldehyde and on her death in 1920 placed it in her coffin.

James Joyce featured Horne as a character in chapter 14 (*The Oxen of the Sun*) of *Ulysses*, where his name appears ten times and he also subsequently received a mention in the same author's *Finnegan's Wake*. Horne, though, never read *Ulysses* and was seemingly unappreciative of the bestowal of literary immortality, for it is said that on one occasion he had Joyce thrown out of the hospital when he caught him snooping about in the maternity ward.

Sir Andrew Horne died on 5th September 1924 at his home 94 Merrion Square, Dublin, and was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery.



Sunday Lunch Offer

All 4 courses only €18.50

STARTERS

- Cream of Vegetable Soup with Crusty Roll—€4.00
- Warm Cajun Chicken Salad with Chilli and Orange Dressing—€5.00
- Crispy Torpedo Prawns with Sweet and Sour Dip—€5.00
- Creamy Chicken and Mushroom Vol au Vont—€5.00

MAIN COURSES

- Roast Sirloin of Beef with a Rich Roast Gravy—€11.95
- Roast Stuffed Turkey and Honey Baked Ham—€10.95
- Grilled Darné of Salmon with a Dill and White Wine Sauce—€11.95
- Panfried Breast of Chicken with Garlic or Pepper Sauce—€10.95
- Chicken and Smoked Bacon Penne in a Cream Sauce—€10.95

8oz Sirloin Steak, cooked to your liking and served with sauté Mushrooms 'n' Onions with Pepper Sauce—€12.50
All above served with fresh cut seasonal vegetables and creamed potatoes

DESSERTS

- Selection of desserts—€4.50
- Tea/coffee
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Crèche Move A Great Success

Writes Owen Dunne

It was a real case of out with the old and in with the new in September 2011 as the Community Crèche closed the doors of their old cramped residence in Society Street and moved up the road to the state of the art building in Poolboy industrial estate. It was a big move by the manager Valerie Coughlan and her team but one that was badly needed.

“The conditions of our old facility were terrible. It was extremely cramped and as a result we could only cater for 18 children. But thanks to the tireless work by so many locals on the specially formed committee, we were able to receive a massive grant from the government for this new building, which at its busiest can hold up to 50 children.” says Mrs. Coughlan In March 2012 it was officially opened by the minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald. A year later and the crèche is thriving. They have settled into their new home very well and are taking on more children than ever. “Since we opened in Sept 2011, we have had an increase in numbers due to capacity. In these difficult times it’s great to see our numbers up so high.”

Open 7am-7pm Monday to Friday employs 9 staff, all of whom have the required qualifications. “All childcare staff have FETAC level 5 and 6 in childcare and other mandatory qualifications applicable to the job. The Montessori staff also have the



Staff Mary & Debra in the toddler room with Isabell, Molly, Zoe, Logan, Cameron and Alan.

appropriate qualifications as does our chef who provides nutritious healthy meals for the children.” The purpose built facility has a number of rooms which cater for different age groups including: The Baby Room (4 months – 1 year), Wobbler/Toddler Room (1.5 – 2 years) Pre Montessori (2.5 – 3.5 years) and Montessori (3.5 +).

The crèche has a real community feel to it with many staff and children coming from the locality. However not all children are just from Ballinasloe. “The majority of our children are from the town, however we have children coming to us from Taughmaconnell, Aughrim, and Dysart to name but a few.”

Their prices are easily affordable. “Our fees are set annually at affordable rates for parents. Many can avail of the Government Schemes available e.g. Childcare Subvention (CCS) which allows parents to avail of reduced fees depending on their personal circumstances. Some Other schemes available at our Service are the ECCE Scheme where age appropriate pre-



In the Afterschool Room Back: Hannah, Liam, Zoe & Amy. Front: Jasmine, Amy & Abigail.

school children can avail of a free pre-school year in Montessori. The CETS Scheme is another where some parents participating in approved training courses through FÁS or the VEC can avail of substantially reduced fees.”

The staff at the Community Crèche are aware of the importance of keeping Children active from a young age. This is clearly instilled in the day to day programme of the crèche. “We provide day trips/tours for our Montessori class before they leave to start primary school in September. We involve the children in cookery, music, art activities, Christmas concerts and other activities. Our Children and staff are also introduced to other languages and cultures with varied nationalities attending the crèche.”

The Community Crèche is the epitome of a well planned and well managed organisation. With the excellent facilities and staff, it is no wonder that every child has a smile on their face. For parents who are interested in finding out more information you can contact Valerie at: bsloecommunitycreche@eircom.net

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Our St. Patrick's Day Parade

Writes Owen Dunne

The annual Parade took place on St. Patrick's Day and was a great success with many colourful, entertaining and interesting floats on display. Despite the cold conditions large crowds gathered along the streets to witness the yearly event.

Councillor Johnny Walsh was very happy with this year's parade and the fantastic turnout. "We were delighted with the day, it was a tremendous success. It was also great to see such a big crowd at the parade which can only have benefitted local business." Mr. Walsh also took the opportunity to thank those involved in making the parade a success. "We want to thank the Town Council who have been a huge help in organising the event. We also want to thank our sponsors: Ballinasloe Vintners Club, Chamber of Commerce, AIB and Thomas and Caroline Gullane."

Mayor Carmel Greally paid thanks to the work put in by all involved and also paid tribute to the Sporting bodies of the town for their participation. "A huge effort was put in by everyone and I want to thank all involved. I think that special recognition must be given to the Sporting Organisations in the town for their involvement in this year's parade. I think their participation was a great encouragement to the young onlookers to take part in Sports in our town which we know can be the life and soul of a community."

There were 5 categories in the 'Hostings and Welcomes' themed parade as well as prizes for Best decorated windows.

PARADE AWARD RESULTS:

EDUCATIONAL	CULTURAL
1 Newtown NS	1 Cúl na Mearagáin
2 Scoil an Croí Naofa	2 Sean Nós Ballinasloe
3 Wheels/Cycles (Creagh)	3 Comháltas Group
VOLUNTARY	BEST DRESSED WINDOW
1 Active Retirement	1 Stepping Stones
2 Civil Defence	2 David Manning
3 E. Galway Cancer Support	3 Niall Hogan
COMMERCIAL	SPORTS
1 Clarke & Sons	1 Ballinasloe GAA
2 Oops-A-Daisy	2 Ballinasloe AFC
3 Hogan Trailors	3 Ballinasloe RFC
BEST HERITAGE WINDOW	BEST DECORATED:
1 Gibbons' Pillar House	1 Karriba's Coffee Shop
2 Downey's Bar	2 Clarkes & Sons
3 The Black Pig	3 Hubert Dolan's

The Overall prize went to the Active Retirement group for their brilliantly unique portrayal of an American Wake/Homecoming. The amazing party scenes on the float made it impossible to tell if it was a going away party or a homecoming. All we know is they were having a great time! There was also a merit award up for grabs which in the end was won by Rebecca Cawley. Well done to all involved on the day!



Ballinasloe Active Retirement Not For The Slippers Brigade!



Active Retirement Members on a recent Trip to Westport.

Writes Owen Dunne

Now in its 11th Year Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association is becoming more and more important to retired locals. The organisation attracts many retirees from all walks of life.

Many people crave the day when they leave their place of work for the final time but it does pose many challenges, as founding member Chris O'Flynn points out. "For most people, retirement creates a huge void in their lives. You lose your identity, your sense of belonging and your status in life. You often lose touch with the friends you've made throughout your working life. All this can result in isolation, loneliness and depression." As a result the Association was set up in 2002 and since has enjoyed great support and success. It now boasts nearly 200 members and has become one of the fastest growing and most successful organisations in the locality.

The Local Association are part of a much wider National Group as PRO Douglas Rafter explains: "We are members of Active Retirement Ireland who have 25,000 members in 500

groups. We often come together with a lot of these groups for different activities. One example of this would be the concert we performed with a number of other Retirement Organisations from around the region in conjunction with the 'Bealtaine Festival'. After many weeks of practice we performed in front of a large crowd in the Town Hall Theatre which was a great success."

For a tiny annual sum of €25, members can avail of many different benefits from the association.

"Members can take part in a range of activities including outings, socials, learning programmes, informative talks, sports and community works. Activities include: Walking club, Indoor Bowls, Bridge, Book club, Singing group, Knitting group, Aquarobics, "Pitch and Putt", says Chris O'Flynn. The Social Committee organise many memorable holidays and short breaks both at home and abroad. Concerts, theatre and social outings are also extremely popular.

The association take part in many initiatives including the greatly successful heritage project "Fado Fado" where an online archive of video and audio recordings were made of local people as they reminisced on their childhood memories of rural life in Ireland in the first half of the 20th century."

With technology becoming a pivotal part of our everyday life the association recognise the importance of computers in today's world and hold numerous Computer and Internet Awareness courses. "The role of the association will become more important in the future, especially in the field of communication, with computers and technology becoming so integral in our daily lives. We hope to continue to play an important part in the life of the community as we move into this fast world of technology." As a result of their computer awareness the association created their own website where one can view all the latest news and events by logging on to www.ballinasloeactiveretirement.com

The association hold official meetings in Gullane's Hotel on the first Wednesday of every Month at 3pm. They also hold casual meetings every other Wednesday also in Gullane's at 3pm. If you are interested in joining then head along to one of the meetings as new members are always welcome!



Active Retirement Founding Committee: Back (L-R) Eamon Fallon, Jimmy Crehan, Nicolas Power. Middle (L-R) Mary Greally, Nancy Ward, Margaret Hilliard. Front (L-R): Chris O'Flynn, Betty Ring, Anne Divilly.

APRIL / MAY Events Guide

APRIL 1st		
Easter Monday		
APRIL 2nd		
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Bake and Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
APRIL 3rd		
Trad Session (Frank, Bobby & JoJo)	An Táin	10pm
APRIL 4th		
Bruno Groening-Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Ciorcail Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Kids 6.30-7.30pm)	
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Adult 7.30-8.45pm)	
Jukebox Gypsy	Maud Millar's	10pm
APRIL 5th		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & friends)	An Táin	6pm-9pm
Open Trad Night	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Comhltras	Emeral Bar	9.45pm
The Rivulets	Maud Millar's	10pm
Bojangle	Carlton	10.30pm
Big Tom & The Mainliners	Carlton	9.30pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
APRIL 6th		
Shauna Keane	An Táin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	Downeys	9pm
Pink Panther Jazz Band	Pillar House	10pm
Kensy Three	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Ken & Steve	Carlton	10.30pm
Live Music	Maud Millar's	10pm
Country Comfort	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
APRIL 7th		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St. Gabriel's GAA	3pm-6pm
Pony Jumping	Duggan Park	10am
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
Trad (John Wynne & Frank Kelly)	Pillar House	6pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millar's	10pm
Country Dancing: Mike Denver	Carlton	9.30pm
One To One	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
APRIL 8th		
Ciorcál Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
APRIL 9th		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Bake and Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
APRIL 10th		
Flower and Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
APRIL 11th		
Bruno Groening-Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Presidents Prize	Bridge Centre	8pm
Ciorcail Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millar's	10pm
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Kids 6.30-7.30pm)	
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Adult 7.30-8.45pm)	
APRIL 12th		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & Friends)	An Táin	6-9pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Comháltas	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millar's	10pm
Vinny Mongan	Carlton	10.30pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
APRIL 13th		
Bug and Ben	An Táin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Comhaltas Workshops	Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh	11am-4pm
Live DJ	Downeys	9pm
Gaegan Pagans	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Shawn&Paul Allen	Pillar House	10pm
Keith & Johnny	Maud Millar's	10pm
Chequers	Carlton	10.30pm
Mary P & Liam	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
APRIL 14th		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St Gabriels GAA	3pm-6pm
Pony Jumping	Duggan Park	10am
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Country Dancing - Jason Travers	Carlton	9.30pm
The 2 Q's	Maud Millar's	10pm
APRIL 16th		
Ciorcál Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Pottery Classes	Kilconnell	7pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
APRIL 16th		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Bake and Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
Breast Support Group Talk	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm

APRIL 17th		
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
APRIL 18th		
Ciorcál Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Presidents Prize	Bridge Centre	8pm
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millar's	10pm
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Kids 6.30-7.30pm)	
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Adults 7.30-8.45pm)	
APRIL 19th		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's and Friends)	An Táin	6-9pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	All Night
Comhltras	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
The 2 Q's	Maud Millar's	10pm
Michael Regan	Carlton	10.30pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
APRIL 20th		
Newtown & Attytory 1st Communion	Creagh Church	10.3
Shtick Her Down	An Táin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	Downeys	9pm
Prostate Cancer Talk	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
The Silk Cut Blues	Pillar House	10pm
Wedding Showcase	Carlton	12-2pm
One To One	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Washout	Maud Millar's	10pm
2 Tall Paul	Dunlo Tavern	All Night
Steve Brennan	Carlton	10.30pm
APRIL 21st		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St Gabriels GAA	3pm-6pm
Pony Jumping	Duggan Park	10am
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Country Dancing: Robert Mizzell	Carlton	9.30pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millar's	10pm
APRIL 22nd		
Mothers Union Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Pottery Classes	Kilconnell	7pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
APRIL 23rd		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Bake and Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
APRIL 24th		
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
APRIL 25th		
Ciorcál Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Presentation	Bridge Cente	8pm
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Kids 6.30-7.30pm)	
Karate Classes	Hayden's Hotel (Adult 7.30-8.45pm)	
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millar's	10pm
APRIL 26th		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & Friends)	An Táin	6pm-9pm
Alan & The Accident	Maud Millar's	10pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Comhltras	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Paschal Brennan	Carlton	10.30pm
APRIL 27th		
Creagh NS First Communion	Creagh Church	10.30 a.m
Felix Sonnyboy Wilson	An Táin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	Downeys	9pm
The Pink Panther Jazz Band	Pillar House	10pm
Last Man Standing	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Keith & Johnny	Maud Millar's	10pm
One to One	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Tony Henshaw	Carlton	10.30pm
APRIL 28th		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St Gabriels GAA	3pm-6pm
Show Jumping and Dressage Event	Duggan Park	10am
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
Country Dancing: Gerry Guthrie	Carlton	9.30pm
Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millar's	10pm
Liam Doyle	Carlton	10.30pm
APRIL 29th		
Ciorcál Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Pottery Classes	Kilconnell	7pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
APRIL 30th		
Bake and Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
MAY 1st		
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
Healing Mass	Portiuncla Chapel	7.30pm
MAY 2nd		
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's	7pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's	10pm
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Kids 6.30 - 7.30pm)	

APRIL / MAY Events Guide

MAY 2nd (continued)		
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Adult 7.30 - 8.45pm)	
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	10pm
MAY 3rd		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & friends)	An Táin	6pm-9pm
Paul Burns	Carlton	10.30pm
Ada English Summer School	Gullane's	7.30pm
Open Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Live Music	Maud Millars	10pm
MAY 4th		
Tepid Wind(Downstairs Bar)	An Táin	9.30pm
Live DJ(Upstairs Bar)	An Táin	9.30pm
Vinny Mongan	Carlton	10.30pm
Women in Irish Song	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Ada English	Gullane's	
He's Not Me	Hayden's	10pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars	10pm
Gaelscoil 1st Holy Communion	St Michaels	11am
MAY 5th		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St Gabriels GAA	3pm-6pm
One To One	Downeys	9pm
Pony Jumping	Duggan Park	10am
Kensey Three	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Chequers	Carlton	10.30pm
Christy & Mike	Hayden's	10pm
Music (John Wynne & Frank Kelly)	Pillar House	6pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Pillar House	10pm
The Rivulets	Maud Millars	10pm
Johnny Brady	Carlton	10.30pm
MAY 6th		
Pottery Classes	Kilconnell	7pm
MAY 7th		
Bake & Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
Tea Dance	Gullane's	9pm
MAY 8th		
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	Gullane's	9pm
MAY 9th		
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's	11am
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	10pm
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Kids 6.30 - 7.30pm)	
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Adult 7.30 - 8.45pm)	
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's	10pm
MAY 10th		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & Friends)	An Táin	6pm-9pm
Ken & Steve	Carlton	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Washout	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
MAY 11th		
Christy Moore	Carlton	Show 8pm
Bug & Ben	An Táin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Michael Regan	Carlton	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Live Music	Maud Millars	10pm
Hickory Wind	Pillar House	9.30pm
One to One	Hayden's	10pm
MAY 12th		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St Gabriels GAA	3-6pm
Paschal Brennan	Downeys	9pm
Pony Jumping	Duggan Park	10am
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millars	10pm
Music (John Wynne & Frank Kelly)	Pillar House	6pm
Nathan Carter	Carlton	10.30pm
MAY 13th		
Pottery Classes	Kilconnell	7pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's	9pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's	7.30pm
MAY 14th		
Bake & Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
Tea Dance	Gullane's	9pm
MAY 15th		
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
MAY 16th		
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's	7pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's	10pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	10pm
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Kid's 6.30-7.30pm)	
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Adult Class 7.30-8.45pm)	

MAY 17th		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & Friends)	An Táin	6-9pm
Chris Nash	Carlton	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Ceili Dancing	Hayden's	10pm
The 2 Q's	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
MAY 18th		
Shauna Keane	An Táin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Tony Henshaw	Carlton	10.30pm
Creagh & Newtown NS Confirmation	St. Michael's	11am
Shawn & Paul Allen	Pillar House	9.30pm
Night Owls	Hayden's	10pm
Keith & Johnny	Maud Millars	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
MAY 19th		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St Gabriels GAA	3-6pm
Trevor Kavanagh	Downeys	9pm
Pony Jumping	Duggan Park	10am
Derek Ryan	Carlton	10.30pm
Music (John Wynne & Frank Kelly)	Pillar House	6pm
The Sumbrellas	Maud Millars	10pm
Gaelscoil & Scoil Croi N Confirmation	St. Michael's	11am
MAY 20th		
Pottery Classes	Kilconnell	7pm
Ceili Dancing	Hayden's	10pm
MAY 20th		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's	7.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's	9pm
MAY 21st		
Bake & Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
Tea Dance	Gullane's	9pm
MAY 22nd		
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
MAY 23rd		
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's	7pm
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's	10pm
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Kids 6.30 - 7.30pm)	
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Adult 7.30 - 8.45pm)	
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	10pm
MAY 24th		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & Friends)	An Táin	6-9pm
Liam Doyle	Carlton	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
MAY 25th		
Mike Carty	An Táin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
The Legends	Carlton	10.30pm
Bo Jangle	Hayden's	10pm
Streetwise	Maud Millars	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
MAY 26th		
Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies	St Gabriels GAA	3-6pm
Live Music	Downeys	9pm
Pony Jumping	Duggan Park	10am
Music (John Wynne & Frank Kelly)	Pillar House	6pm
One to One	Hayden's	10pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millars	10pm
Jimmy Buckley	Carlton	10.30pm
MAY 27th		
Pottery Classes	Kilconnell	7pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's	9pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's	7.30pm
MAY 28th		
Bake & Share	Cluain Mhuire	10.30am
Tea Dance	Gullane's	9pm
MAY 29th		
Trad with Frank, Bobby and JoJo	An Táin	10pm
MAY 30th		
STSA Choir Practice	Cluain Mhuire	7.30pm
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Kids 6.30 - 7.30pm)	
Kenpo Karate School	Hayden's (Adults 7.30 - 8.45pm)	
MAY 31st		
Trad and Folk (Beahan's & Friends)	An Táin	6-9pm
Ken & Steve	Carlton	10.30pm
One 2 One	Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm

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U.S. Mayor's Ballinasloe Roots

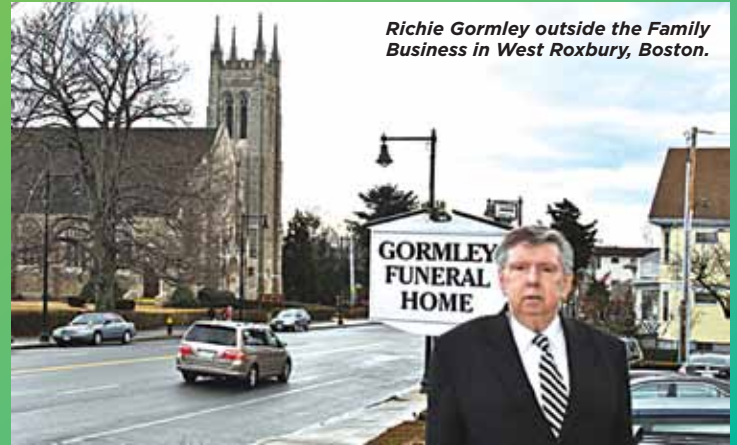
Writes Owen Dunne

Richie Gormley, Mayor of West Roxbury, Boston is an Irish American with Ballinasloe blood. He has always been proud of where he came from and is honoured to bring a number of people over to Ballinasloe as part of the Gathering 2013. He has seen a lot in his life from fighting in Vietnam to helping out with security at the October Fair.

105 years before the Famine Richie's great-great-grandparents left the green fields in search of a more prosperous life in the USA. There they established a successful Funeral home business named "Gormley's Funeral Home" in Boston. The Gormley name has come a long way since then with Richie an established and well liked member of the West Roxbury community which has a population of 50,000 and is the most Irish orientated community in the States. As well as being Mayor of the locality he also runs the family business; in the town.

He may play an integral part in the West Roxbury community but he has never forgotten where he came from. He makes sure to visit the Suckside town as often as possible where he stays in a holiday home in the place he originated from; Lecarrow. "I visit Ballinasloe several times a year especially during the October Fair where I help out with security. I stay in my holiday home in Lecarrow but I always make sure to visit my good friend P. Grenham who always stays with me when he's over in Boston." His popularity in West Roxbury is clear to anyone who pays a visit to the Boston suburb as did local Garda and good friend to Richie, Joe Haney. "I met a lot of people from around who had emigrated to Boston and they couldn't praise Richie enough because he helped them in no small way by aiding them in obtaining the green card and getting employment over there."

He has seen a lot in his lifetime and it is hard to imagine that this kind, soft spoken man once fought in Vietnam with the US 1st Marine. The memories of that awful war were obviously still fresh in his mind as he refused to delve too deep into the



Richie Gormley outside the Family Business in West Roxbury, Boston.

subject. Richie was honoured for his heroics in the war "I was awarded the Cross of Gallantry during the war for combat action. It was a great honour for me and my family. I was finally discharged from Vietnam in 1970."

Even though Richie is a product of the Irish Exodus he is saddened to see so many people saying their long goodbyes in Terminal 2. "It's not nice seeing so many leaving this country. It's a great place so think twice about leaving it!"

Richie intends on sharing his pride of place with many others from his town. On the 10th of June he will arrive back into the town with a fleet of 50 friends from the Boston suburb. "We'll be in Ballinasloe in early June. I'm bringing over a bus full of 50 people. For most of them it will be there first time to come over. We'll be getting a Garda escort from Millar's pub on the Athlone road (which will be organised by owner Gerry Kelly) with a fleet of 25 vintage cars, just as our ancestors did"

Richie's love and pride of native place is infinite. He has a deep respect for the area his ancestors were born and it will forever have a special place in his heart. It is clear that Richie will return again. But why does he keeps coming back? As he simply put it himself: "It's the people of Ballinasloe."

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Ciorcáil Comhrá Gach Déardaoin



Ciorcáil Comhra founder
Pádraig Ó Chéithernigh

Scriobhann Eoin Ó Duinn

Every Thursday morning between the hours of 11am and 12pm Gullane's lounge is transformed into a mini Ghaelteacht as Irish language enthusiasts from around the locality join for a chat in the weekly Ciorcáil Comhrá. The Group was originally set up by Pádraig Ó Chéithernigh, who along with other locals noticed the interest in Gaeilge in the town. "Ag eascairt as a lán ceisteanna ó dhaoine éagsúla faoina gcuid Gaeilge a úsáid, shocraigh mé Ciorcáil Comhrá a bhunú ar bhonn trialach i Mí an Mheithimh seo caite. Labhair mé le mo chara Tomás Gullane agus mar is gnáth dó, chuir sé seomra ar fáil dom don teacht le chéile."

So Ceard e an Ciorcáil Comhrá? "Is é atá i gceist ciorcal, fáinne nó grúpa daoine a

thagann le chéile ar feadh uair a chloig uair amháin sa tseachtain chun comhrá a dhéanamh lena chéile, faoina rogha ábhair, ach gur i nGaeilge a bhíonn an comhrá. It's a relaxed atmosphere so it's nothing like the old Irish classroom."

The members of the Ciorcáil Comhrá see Irish as an important part of their identity and make sure to keep their cupla focail alive. Duirt duine amhain: "Tá grá mor agam don teanga Gaeilge. Nuair a bhí me sa scoil. I remember doing all the old Irish focloir stories like Diarmuid agus Grainne which I loved."

Everybody attending Ciorcáil Comhrá has seen a huge improvement in their spoken Irish. "Tá fheabhas mór ann" another woman said.

The group welcomes all types of levels to join. "Freastalaíonn gach cineál duine ar an gciortal. Ní do dhaltáí scoile é ach bíonn tuismitheoirí, daoine ar scor, daoine go bhfuil meirg ar a gcuid Gaeilge agus daoine le Gaeilge mhaith daoine gur mhaith leo a gcuid Gaeilge a chleachtadh ar fáth amháin nó eile. Most people who come are reluctant to speak but soon enough everyone is chatting away to each other and there's a fine noise of Gaeilge coming from the room."

All of the members are of the opinion that if you start speaking Irish, soon enough you will begin thinking Irish, or in the case of some of the members "Thosaigh tu ag brionglóid (dreaming) as gaeilge."

People can often be reluctant to immerse themselves in the language for fear of making a fool out of themselves. Deir duine amhain eile: "Some people think that they have no Irish but deep down everyone has a bit of a gaelgoir inside of them. Once they begin to make the effort and start speaking Irish they'll soon notice, Beidh said in ann labhairt gan stro!"

"I'd love to but I'm afraid I'd make a fool of myself" is a phrase that Pádraig has heard too often. "I gcás teanga bímid ag foghlaim i gcónaí agus mar sin níl aon duine go bhfuil gach rud ar eolas acu agus tá daoine sásta cabhrú lena chéile. Everybody makes mistakes in the group! We're here to learn from one another and help each other out. Ni neart go chur le cheile!"

Local, Maureen Waters who was born in the Ghaelteacht in Connemara noted the importance of our language by saying: "The Irish language is so important to us. Is Cultúr é! It is part of who we are and if we lose that then we lose part of our identity. Mar is fíor den seanfhocail "Tír gan teanga, tír gan ainm."

If you have an interest in reviving the Gaelgoir inside of you then head along for a bit of Comhludár, Cáint, Craic agus Cáife. The group meet every Thursday from 11am-12pm in the Lounge area of Gullane's Hotel. It's free for people to join with members throwing in €2 each into a kitty for a cupán tae no cáife.



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A Full Range of Youth Services



Writes Owen Dunne

Life as a teenager in modern day Ireland can be tough with many different problems rearing their ugly heads. Many try to face these problems alone which can often only make them worse. Locally however there are many different Projects and Services to help struggling teenagers.

These Projects and Services are organised by Youth Work Ireland, Galway and can be found in the Ballinasloe Youth Information Centre which is located at Marina Point.

Youth Work Ireland, Galway is a voluntary organisation that works with young people in Galway City and county. The organisation supports communities by setting up and delivering youth programmes on a voluntary basis, and by developing services to young people implemented by paid staff. They work in partnership with a number of community groups and statutory bodies in the development and promotion of youth services.

Some of the services that can be availed of include: *Teen Between* (A free listening Service for Teenagers), *Shout* (a service for teenagers questioning their sexual identity), *Shoutparents* (a service for parents with teenagers questioning their sexuality) and *Youth Counselling Services* (A free counselling service for people aged 14–21).

These services are funded by the state but have been dealt a major blow with recent cuts. Junction Project Co-ordinator Edel Kelly spoke of the implications of these cuts “Youth Services received a 10% cut to funding this year! This has drastic implications in terms of limited services and facilitates to young people both locally and nationally. We would greatly appreciate the support of our young people, parents, community and local politicians in lobbying and campaigning to save our Youth Services for our young people.”



These services are invaluable to the local community and are supported by various action projects listed below.

BALLINASLOE YOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE

The Youth Information Centre offers a free, confidential information service to young people and the adults who support them. This is done in two ways either through Work in the Centre in town or through the Outreach Programme which gives mentoring and training to students and parents.

Contact Helen Butler on 087 678 0640

Email: yicbsloe@eircom.net

EAST GALWAY PROJECT

The East Galway Project is located beside The Vault Youth Space in Ballinasloe town. It works with young people both in Ballinasloe town and surrounding areas. The project promotes the personal development and social education of young people within the 10–21 age group.

Contact Olive Shaughnessy on 087 770 7775

E-mail: ycr.eastgalway@youthworkgalway.ie

THE JUNCTION PROJECT

The Junction Project is a Garda Youth Diversion Project that works with young people ages 13 to 17 years. It is a community based youth project involving young people in developing themselves as part of their community. It is part of a network of Garda Diversion Projects to divert young people from being involved or further involved in anti social behaviour.

Contact Edel Kelly: 087-903000 or Paul Riddell: 087-2582748

Email: junction@youthworkgalway.ie

THE VAULT YOUTH SPACE

The Vault Youth Space formally known as D'Cube is also based in Marina Point. The Vault is a facility provided by Youth Work Ireland- Galway to facilitate many of the programmes provided by the local youth services. The Vault is also available to community groups, youth clubs, schools, sports organisations for hire at a nominal rate. The Vault is the ideal location to accommodate meetings / presentations / trainings. Facilities within the Vault include Cafe facilities, pool table, table tennis, seating areas, flat screen plasma TV, DVD player, X- Box, Wii, DJ box and meeting area.

Contact Noreen Connolly: 087-2346943

Email: ce@youthworkgalway.ie

For more information you can visit the Community website at www.ballinasloecommunity.com

It is evident that help in the town is not in short supply a point the Edel Kelly makes by saying “As you can see we have a wealth of supports and services available to our young people and we need to maintain what we have in order to continue to provide a quality service.”



Colleague, Teacher, Pastor, Bishop – A Lifetime of Giving

Writes Pat Johnston

It was on a Thursday morning we heard Bishop Cassidy had died having almost achieved his four score years. The morning's high wind and lashing rain reflected our feelings of loss and we understood what he had explained about pathetic fallacy in the class room all those years ago. Yes, we had known he was in ill health but he was with us still, always a presence in the community, and so the news when it came was sudden and shocking.

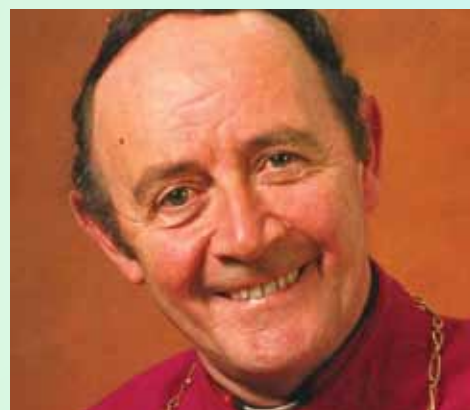
While the media spoke of the death of Archbishop Cassidy, he was to us Father Cassidy, then Bishop Cassidy. The people of Tuam may have had him in their midst for eight years but we had known him as teacher, colleague and pastor for most of our lives. Yes the diocese of Clonfert had poached him from Achonry at the time of his ordination but he had readily come to settle among us. To the people of Loughrea, where his parents had relocated, Ballinasloe and Moore he was one of our own.

So on Friday, St. Brigid's Day, as his remains left his Ballinasloe home to go to the Cathedral of the Assumption in Tuam, the fifth year students of Garbally College formed a guard of honour for the man about whom they had heard their fathers and grandfathers speak

with fond respect. How he had brought humanity and culture to Garbally, how he had held them spellbound in desk and church pew, how he commanded the respect of the students and the trust of his colleagues, his debating eloquence and his twinkling eyes.

On Saturday, Candlemas Day when Mary presented her son to God at the Temple and Simeon held the baby in his arms and said that he would be a light for the Gentiles, the people of Moore gathered to present Archbishop Cassidy to the Lord. In the increasing strength of the life-giving sun, as winter gave way to spring, the crowds assembled in Moore for the return of their beloved pastor. They waited in clear spring sunshine with quiet dignity and pride.

The senior pupils from Moore NS formed a guard of honour, marshaled, supported and comforted by their teachers. And as news came through the modern media of the progress of the funeral cortege the crowd swelled with the arrival of clergy, dignitaries of church and state and three generations of Moore people who had known him as their priest. Some recalled that he had baptised and confirmed them, more that he had officiated at their wedding, others that he had visited them during their illnesses, while others spoke of his compassion in their bereavements.



Fr Molloy welcomed all to the parish of Moore and Clonfad. He spoke of Bishop Cassidy's time in the parish where he ministered for fourteen years with the kindness and gentleness of Christ *Le Caoineas Chriost* his episcopal motto. Then the final prayers were recited ending with 'in peace, let us bring our brother to his final resting place'. His nephews carried his coffin out into the churchyard and he was laid to rest in a flower-lined grave beside Fr. Richie Horan, another Mayo man who had found his home in the welcoming community of Moore and Conrad. And in the crisp evening sunshine the elements spoke of hope and resurrection.

"At last, all-powerful master, You give leave to your servant. To go in peace, according to your promise."

Friends in The House of Lords!

Writes Owen Dunne

The House of Lords recently played host to a delegation from Co Galway which included members of Galway Comhairle na nÓg. Aidan Judge and Kate Butler from the *Get Lippy Youth Democracy Group* attended a reception in The House of Lords in Westminster, London. The event was hosted by Baroness Margaret McDonagh and her sister Siobhán who is an M.P., both of the British Labour Party. The McDonagh sisters are second generation Irish. Their parents hail from Oughterard.

The event showcased the work of Ireland Reaching Out and the Irish Elderly Advice Centre providing an opportunity for Irish groups from both countries to network. Distinguished guests included two former Secretaries to Northern Ireland, Lord Peter Mandelson and John Reid and the Irish Ambassador to London, Bobby McDonagh. The reception was followed by a private tour of Westminster given by Siobhan McDonagh, taking guests throughout the historic building.

For Kate and Aidan, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity and they made the most of their time in London, taking in trips to the Tate Modern, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the Victoria & Albert Museum as well as trip down Oxford Street!

"We're very grateful to Mayor Tom Welby for the chance to be on this trip. He's the one that suggested us and he's a great supporter of Comhairle na nÓg." said Aidan Judge.

Co. Galway Comhairle na nÓg is a youth project that allows young people from across the county get involved in issues that affect them and to meet with and influence decision-makers. The Ballinasloe branch, *Get Lippy*, meets in the Youth Information Centre at Marina Point and is co-ordinated by Youth Work Ireland, Galway. If you're interested in joining, Call Helen at 087 678 0640 or email to yicbsloe@eircom.net.



Aidan Judge and Kate Butler in The House of Lords

Out and About in Ballinasloe



Celebrating Ballinasloe's Junior All-Ireland Success were Dublin based ex-pats.



Can you name the 1957 hurlers?



New executive members of the Ballinasloe and District International Soroptimists with Outgoing President Mary Magee and incoming president Margaret Mullane.



Residents of Hymany-Curragh at the opening of their new playground.



Bishop Kirby Reverend John Garvey ADM and concelebrants with altar servers and readers at the rededication ceremony of Our Lady of Lourders Church, Creagh.

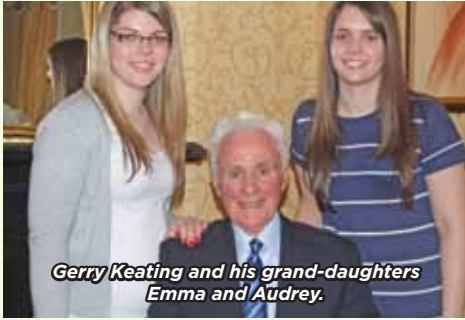


Mary Madden retires after 23 years as principal of Newtown NS, Ballinasloe with her past and present pupils who provided the entertainment for her retirement party at Gullane's Hotel recently.



Tráith na gCeist winners, Scoil Uí Chéithernigh, organised by Conradh na Gaeilge for Seachtain na Gaeilge. Back (L-R): Máirín Ní Thuairisg, Odhrán Dooley, Aóife Dudgeon, Saoirse Ní Thuairisg, Ruairí Ó h'Anluain. Front: Adam O'Connor, Evan Burke, Ben Kelly.

BMS Celebrates its 90th Year



Gerry Keating and his grand-daughters
Emma and Audrey.

Writes Colm Croffy

While the final night of a wonderful run of performances of BMS's *The Pirates of Penzance* was drawing to a close for one audience member it marked the closing of a 57-year gap. In attending the 90th Anniversary of the foundation of the Society, Fermoy native Gerry Keating had travelled from Cork, with his two grand-daughters as a special guest, having last been on stage in the Town Hall Theatre when he was a young butcher with Paddy's Lamb in 1957!

He was a professionally trained butcher who had recently returned from Oz when he answered an ad and suddenly found himself in lodgings with Mrs. Maloney on Station Road. He always had a strong interest in singing in his native Cork and was cajoled to join the production of the *Student Prince* when found singing in a local hostelry. The sprightly octogenarian reminisces with glee and a roguish twinkle in his eye "I couldn't recall the pub but there was a lot of Red Billy Australian Wine drank!"

Playing the part of Count Von Detlef, he was also understudy to Sean Gaugau's PRINCE. He recalls the fun and banter he had with members of the Society – the late Norbert Colbert who played Von Asternat, the late Joe Brennan who played Ruder, the redoubtable Liam Keller as Lets and Billy Flanagan in the chorus amongst over 45 more.

Musical Director for the Society and Show was Breezy Sheridan and she was extremely thorough with her preparations of the cast and crew for their interpretation of the libretto. "Paddy went on short time and we were let go, it was four weeks to the performance and instead of me going home, Breezey offered me lodgings in her house! "I was well sick of the bloody score by the end of the weeks run, it was Student Prince for breakfast, lunch and tea!" he claimed.

The *Student Prince* was a huge success playing to five shows in May and was as good as Athlone's production of the very first amateur performance of the White Horse Inn that season. His Mother and sister got the train to Ballinasloe to see him in the show and a Doctor from Portiuncula kindly loaned him his car to bring them around. With the Show behind him Gerry set off for Ballymena to train butchers with Ulster Fatstock for the lamb trade in France. He soon became disillusioned with the trade and transferred to London to train as an Oil Fired Service Engineer in the sixties.

However he made sure to find himself a young lady for romance, back in Fermoy and a certain Maria Hurley agreed to be his bride in 1960. He continued with his love affair of Musical's taking part in the White Horse In Cork and his stage highlight was singing with Brendan O'Dowda in the Everyman Palace. He returned to work with Cork Shell in 1964 and settled back in Fermoy where he indulged his another passion, fishing serving for years with the Munster Fisheries Board and assisting with competitions and stocking programmes in Killarney lakes and elsewhere.

Gerry's warmest memories are of the Society and the town he only spent 5 months in "Everywhere I went I could not surpass the fun and the warmth of the people I met in the Society in town. They even held a surprise 24th Party for me on the last night of the Show, but it wasn't at Breezy's house!"

His sister, in Philadelphia was clearing out her attic when she came across the Musical Society Programme and sent it back to him. He had his grand-daughter Google the Society and he made contact with Frances Leahy who arranged the visit to Ballinasloe after a very long gap. His sister also found a black and white photo, she took of him in Station Road with three little hurling players, they have no names for them the lads are most likely in the late fifties now. *Ballinasloe Life* would like to see if we can help find or identify them!



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Group 8 Exhibition A Success

Writes Owen Dunne

Local-based professional artist collective *Group 8* launched their fourth annual exhibition of art and writing, *The Group 8 Gathering*, recently in The Regency Room in Hayden's Hotel. The free event attracted a lot of interest from local art supporters. Group member and writer Nuala Ní Choncuír spoke of their origins. "We are a town-based professional artist's collective. We have 9 members - 7 visual artists and 2 writers. We began the group because we wanted to inject some artistic life into the locality. We hold an annual exhibition and one literary event every year."

The exhibition always attracts good attention and this one was no different. "The event was a great success. I Radio presenter and Local, Fergal D'Arcy launched the evening. There were performances from various artists throughout the day also. Many Writers, artists and locals turned out to support us. We provided wine and food, readings and music, lots of art and food for thought. The Gathering theme yielded some wonderful artworks, including Joyce Little's installation called *Wish You Were Here* which was comprised of over 1000 postcards." continued Nuala. The Group of artists always enjoy the opportunity to showcase their work to the public. "Our aim is always the same: to show the local community that there are professional, full-time artists living in the town and working here. This is our opportunity to showcase work that is relevant to the locality." Said Ms. Ní Choncuír

The group based their theme on the 2013 Event of the Gathering. " We chose this theme because it evokes thoughts of emigration and returning home. It was appropriate in this year of The Gathering. We started meeting seven months prior to the annual exhibition and early on we pick a theme and throw around ideas about it. This one seemed a natural fit for 2013, " according to Nuala.

Other members of the group also expressed their feelings about the theme including local sculptor Tommy Campbell: "No family in Ireland has been immune from emigration. My



parents and their brothers and sisters all emigrated. Some have never returned and have lived their lives abroad. Indeed their children have never set foot on this green isle. I have cousins I have never met, some I've never heard of, living God knows where. My work is in honour of these people."

Times are tough for artists at the moment. The group do not have a huge amount of money at their disposal with only a small amount of funding coming from Galway Co. Council. "There is less money in the pot and less demand for commissions, which is particularly difficult when you are self-employed, as artists are. We get a small amount of funding from Galway County Council and we each contribute to the group as well." Said Ms. Ní Choncuír

Followers of the local group can be assured that the exhibition won't be the last, with two other Gathering themed exhibitions planned for August and October. If you would like to learn more and find out what *Group 8* are up to next you can take a look at their blog at: thegroup8.blogspot.ie

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Passing of A Great Character

Writes Kevin Boland - Kingston, Surrey, UK

I was deeply saddened to hear the news last week, that local publican, and one of Ballinasloe's best loved characters, Minnie Sullivan, had passed away. Although I left Ballinasloe in the late 80's, it was not before I had spent several late night sessions in Minnie's Bar on Main Street, Ballinasloe. For me it represented the epitome of an Irish pub, old-fashioned, and no-nonsense, but always warm and inviting, and a place where there was constantly the sound of Irish music.

My connection with Minnie started when I was about four years old, when my family rented a small house in Moore and Clonfad belonging to Minnie and her husband Dermot, while my father was involved in building our new house. My parents became good friends with them both, and in the years that followed, so did I.

Now while I can't deny that I did my fair share of chasing girls around *The Palm Club* in Hayden's Hotel circa 1984, the scene never really appealed to me. Far better to huddle around the fire in Minnie's, and enjoy a good music session instead.

Behind a high counter and surrounded by walls adorned with photographs of musicians and beaming locals, stood the matriarch everyone had come to know and love. Her sense of humour and love for life were matched only by her passion for Irish culture, especially traditional Irish music.



Frank Owens, Minnie and Declan Kenny.



The Late Minnie Sullivan and her husband Dermot.

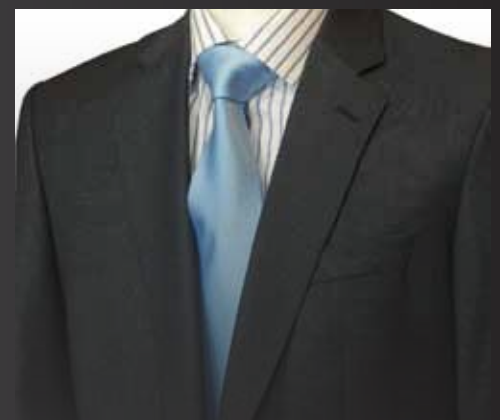
Musicians and singers would regularly come from far and wide to play and listen, and I must admit to (badly) singing my favourite Christy Moore and Dubliners songs on more than one occasion. I was lucky to meet and listen to some very talented musicians, Chris Kelly and Maureen Fahy to name but two. On the odd occasion, but to much delight, Minnie would agree to a quick little dance, as the music reached its toe tapping crescendo. She loved the music and the musicians loved her.

I can remember eating lashings of freshly made ham and tomato sandwiches made by Minnie herself, and handed around the bar, late at night, which did a great job of soaking up the booze! It was a place where, on the eve of a big game, a certain gentleman would come around selling badges made up of little pieces of maroon and white material held together with a safety pin, and in an attempt to get you to buy one would remark on how 'salubrious' you looked. Unforgettable.

These were very special times indeed, which I have stored away in my mind and thought about, when miles away from home, in more gritty surroundings. It was a time of innocence and great nationalism, far removed from the stresses and austerity of today. It's just a great shame that Minnie is not here to welcome back the diaspora, myself included, in this year of *The Gathering*. May the souls of the faithfully departed rest in peace. Amen.



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3rd Ada English Summer School



Writes Owen Dunne

The Soroptimists International Ballinasloe and District Branch are preparing to host the third annual Ada English Summer School which takes place on the 3rd and 4th of May in the Gullane's Hotel. The two day event will explore the life and times of one of the town's forgotten historical giants, revolutionary, politician and feminist pioneer Dr. Ada English.

This year, organisers are again going to mount a second small display of artefacts, photographs, uniforms and memorabilia of St. Brigid's Hospital, in the hotel, for the weekend. They are calling on past employees or families whose members were on the staff of the hospital to loan artefacts from all periods to the colloquium.

The objects will be digitally recorded, folioed and mounted in the temporary exhibition before being returned to the owners the week after the Summer School. The objects will be insured during their time with the school. All families will be acknowledged for their assistance in helping to create the second Exhibit.

Memorabilia for use will be selected by a heritage panel and can be left in to the Town Hall Theatre Dispensary Office during the hours of business up to 26th April. Sharon Jeths the School Co-ordinator will screen on site any rare or valuable photographs at the Town Hall Offices. Outgoing Soroptimists President Mary Magee sated "This event is really open to



everyone, not just those with a passing interest in history or women's issues, there is always wide ranging debate and lively discussion at the school and we hope that we get a good response."

The Summer School will open on Friday evening at 7.30pm with a panel discussion. The School will then launch an Artefacts Exhibition and there will be an informal gathering of all past and current staff of St. Brigid's. It is hoped that many families in the locality who have strong connections with the hospital will attend this hopefully annual event.

A series of presentations on the four key perspectives around the school will take place on the Saturday: (1) Psychiatric Health, History and Service in Ireland (2) Key Trends Irish Women in Medicine (3) The Living Legacy of St. Brigid's (4) 1914-1924 History. The School has invited many distinguished scholars, historians and writers to come and reflect on the role of this outstanding woman of the first half of the last century. The School will finish up on Saturday evening with A Singers Circle evening on Woman in Irish Ballads in the Dunlo Tavern that night.

The full programme for the school will be available on blog: www.adaenglishspringschool.wordpress.com. It is hoped that many, even with just a passing interest in St. Brigid's will come along and support the project. If you require more info contact Sharon at: 090 964 3779 or email sharon@aoifeonline.com or contact any member of the Soroptimists.

Garbally View Nursing Home

Garbally View Nursing Home is a family run business providing convalescent, respite and long term care for the past 20 years in Ballinasloe. The Nursing home is registered with HIQA and provides a variety of services for its Residents.



If you require any further information please contact the Nurse in Charge on **Phone: 090 9642622 Fax: 090 9644278** or **Email: garballyview@gmail.com**

Creagh School Science Project



A small gesture of thanks to the Convent Girls and Mrs. Fletcher

Writes Katie Ward & Clodagh Duffy

We are two members of the Creagh N.S. Science Committee. There are 50 members in the committee who are extremely interested in science and are hard working. The purpose of the group is to show how passionate we are about science and we want to share our knowledge and experiences with you.

We want to show you that science isn't boring but it is extremely fun. The people in the science committee are so dedicated and never let each other down. We range between the age groups of 9-12 years and we all get on so well. We want to share with you our experiences all through the year.

The 1st trip we went on was to Galway to a Sea to Sky exhibition where we saw lots of the underwater world. There were loads of experiments and fascinating facts that we never heard of before. That was a brilliant trip. The next event we had was Science Week 2012. We were getting ready for that event for weeks. We prepared online activities for all classes about bones, space, health and animals. There were also lots of Knex challenges.

On Monday of Science Week, Ard Scoil Mhuire fifth year students came to our school with their teacher Teresa Fletcher and showed us a lamb's heart and a sheep's liver. They did lots of experiments including volcano like explosions. It was a great day. The following day, 8 Garbally College fifth year students visited us with their teacher, Amanda Hurst. They

had prepared loads of experiments for us. Some of them included seeing if worms reacted to the heat of a torch or the coldness from ice, looking at tiny animal particles through a microscope, generating energy, volcanoes and eggs in a cup and how they float in different water. Every child in our school got the chance to be engaged in hands-on science activities thanks to the hard work of these students and their teachers, so thanks a million from us!

The last day of Science week was probably the best because the whole day was dedicated to experiments performed by the whole science committee. One of the experiments was putting milk, washing up liquid, food colouring and cotton buds into a small basin. We first put milk into the basin and then 3 drops of different coloured food colouring. We put a bit of washing up liquid on the cotton buds and dipped it into the milk and all of a sudden everything swirled into different circles without anything else moving. On the Friday a bubble magic man came to the school and brought loads of different shapes for us to make bubbles with. The show was spectacular in every way because he made loads of giant bubbles and made them float to the back of the room. The best bit was when he made a cube bubble with smoke in it.

The next trip we went on was to the Galway Educational Centre for Engineers Week. There were two workshops, a Scratch Workshop and a Stent Workshop. The Stent Workshop was all about cholesterol in the body and blood pressure. They showed us how to insert a stent in your body and how it can be any size. After the slideshow they passed around plaque in a big lump and let us touch it. They also passed around stents. After that we had to do a Knex Challenge to try and make a stent and a filter. Then we went on computers and 2 engineers showed us diagrams of transport and buildings in 3-D. We then had a go and we made our own stents with our names in them!

Since Wednesday the 6th March, 24 brand new chicks have hatched in the school. There are 16 yellow chicks, 5 coloured chicks and the rest are striped or speckled. They are being kept in a plastic box under an infrared lamp. Miss Sullivan, Miss Blade and Miss Power's classes are all taking wonderful care of each and every chick. They are getting lots of attention from both pupils and teachers and we all wish that they could stay that small and never leave. Our Science Committee has great fun and is making great progress. At the moment we are working on getting the Primary Schools Science Excellence Award and we are looking forward to all the great plans Ms. Bleahane has organised for us.



A couple of our new additions just in time for Easter.



One of the many Knex projects

All-Ireland Junior Champions

By Mike Riddell & Jackie Dolan



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



Connacht
Frank Reynolds Memorial Cup



All - Ireland
Corn Craobh Mhairtin



County Galway
The Irish Purity Cup



North Board
Corn Cuimhneachain



Our Footballing Heroes Return!

Writes Pat Johnstone

A full moon rather than a blue moon shone over the town as the crowds gradually gathered in the biting cold to welcome home their heroes who had done them proud in Croke Park. There were those who had returned early from the capital as well as those who hadn't travelled but who now wished they had as they heard each new arrival's version of what they saw on the pitch.

Down in Joe's Bar which was thronged with revellers Martin Gavin could hardly contain his excitement. "It was a good, clean game, only three yellow cards. The keeper was absolutely class. Lord it was lovely to see 'Ballinasloe' on the scoreboard in Croke Park and there was great support from neighbouring clubs!"

Many spoke of the huge support from the locality and of the sign which asked "Who's minding the town?" and everyone spoke of the jerseys! How could anyone forget the jerseys? A good job they all went to Mass together at 9am in St. Michael's. And it must have been a miracle that Jason Sherlock was able to produce a set of jerseys belonging to Na Fianna, a club that never lost an All-Ireland in that jersey. But didn't Mattie Gantly say that those were the colours of the first Galway team to win in Croke Park in 1925 and Mattie had made it up for the match today. What spirit for one man! There was talk of last minute flights from the Lebanon and the message from Abu Dhabi that reached the club before

the match started reminding someone where exactly the jerseys were. Then another fella lamented all the time his mother had spent sewing medals into the original ones. Well, we may have forgotten the jerseys but we didn't forget our football!

Outside, the children dressed in their club colours with balloons and teddies and the odd dog ran around to keep warm and while the parents worried about the cold and school in the morning, nobody was going home. Not until the bus came.

Twitter said they had just left Kinnegad, they'd be here in forty minutes. They weren't but that didn't matter because they were coming home and nobody would begrudge them the full tour and then we heard they were up in St. Brendan's, drawn to the bonfire no doubt. Then it was Nutfield Cross and Derrymullen and the crowd in St. Michael's Square was getting bigger and even though there was only one guard to be seen nobody was worried as they cheered passing CIE busses and garda cars and anything else that passed.

Mayor Carmel Greally stood with all the locals. "Its absolutely brilliant" she said. "These young lads have made history. I saw people crying with pride and joy and excitement in Croke Park today. The atmosphere was electric and don't forget that during the long dark winter months those young men lifted the town, gave them hope and today they delivered." Then a huge cheer erupted



Darragh and Derry Burke, Eugene Canavan, Eileen Burke, Marian Canavan and returned Lebanon Defence Forces Member and player, Gary Canavan.

as the bus came round the corner from Society Street and the boys were home at last. And as the bus stopped and the door opened we got our first live view of the cup (Corn Craobh Mháirtín) as Captain Keith Kelly emerged followed by the delighted faces of all the fine young men and in the black shirts and amber ties they looked like real All-Ireland Champions such as we had only seen before on TV. Only there were no WAGs. They stood quietly among the crowd waiting for the first glimpse of their partners and spouses, those women who had patiently supported their men and minded their children and probably washed the gear and were now being hugged and kissed as the kids danced proudly round their daddies.

But it was nearly 11pm now and it was cold and nobody had sent word that the schools would close tomorrow, though the kids thought they should; so the crowd dispersed with a head full of memories and a heart full of pride.



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Civic Reception for GAA Heroes

Writes Pat Johnston

The Mayor Cllr. Carmel Grealy and the Members of Ballinasloe Town Council hosted a Civic Reception in Ballinasloe Civic Offices to honour the All-Ireland Junior Football Club Winners 2013 recently. Ms. C. Morgan, Town Clerk welcomed the Ballinasloe Junior Football Team, All-Ireland Winners for 2013, their Manager and Management Team to the event and she thanked them for bringing this great honour and glory to the town of Ballinasloe.

Mr. K. Kelly, Town Manager congratulated the Team Members, Their Manager and Selectors on their great win in Croke Park and thanked them for bringing this great honour and glory to Ballinasloe Town.

Mayor Carmel Grealy acknowledged their unique achievement of winning the All-Ireland Junior Football Title 2013 and to also being the first ever Ballinasloe Team to win an All-Ireland Final in Croke Park. She said that the game itself was a wonderful exhibition; there was a terrific atmosphere at it and wonderful comradery between the two sets of supporters. She said that they had lifted the hearts and spirits of the People of the Town and gave them a sense of enjoyment and excitement and that historic win will be remembered and spoken about for generations to come.

She praised the Management and Back Room, who played such a vital role on achieving this win. She acknowledged the presence of two of Ballinasloe Greats, Cyril Dunne and Sean Keeley, legends of glorious Galway teams of the past and she said she looked forward to members of this present team following in their footsteps. She also acknowledged Mattie Ganly, who has given a lifetime commitment Ballinasloe football.

A presentation was made to each of the team and their management in honour of the achievement. A presentation of a Framed Picture featuring pictures of the Winning team and the homecoming was made on behalf of the Staff and Members of the Town Council to Ballinasloe GAA Club.



Mayor Carmel Grealy makes presentation to Pat O'Sullivan (Ballinasloe GAA), Eoin Fenton (Vice-Captain) and Seán Riddell (Team Manager).

Mr. Sean Riddell, Manager and Mr. Eoin Fenton (Vice Captain) spoke on behalf of the team and team management. They thanked the Council for organising this fantastic event in their honour and stated how much it was appreciated by all. Cllr. Pat O'Sullivan, Chairperson of Ballinasloe GAA Club spoke of the great success of the club and how proud they were of the winning team and emphasised the importance of keeping the team together and his hope that they would find employment in the immediate area so they would be able to build on the success into the future. Mr. Donal Scannell, President of the Chamber of Commerce commented on the huge boost this historic event had for the businesses of the town and how well the town looked with the colourful decorations & bunting. This was a day that the town would never forget.

Ms. C. Morgan, in conclusion, thanked everyone present for attending and was delighted with the high turnout on the night and that the Town Council were deeply honoured to hold a Civic Reception for such a wonderful team. She thanked everyone who helped organise the event.

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The August Homecoming

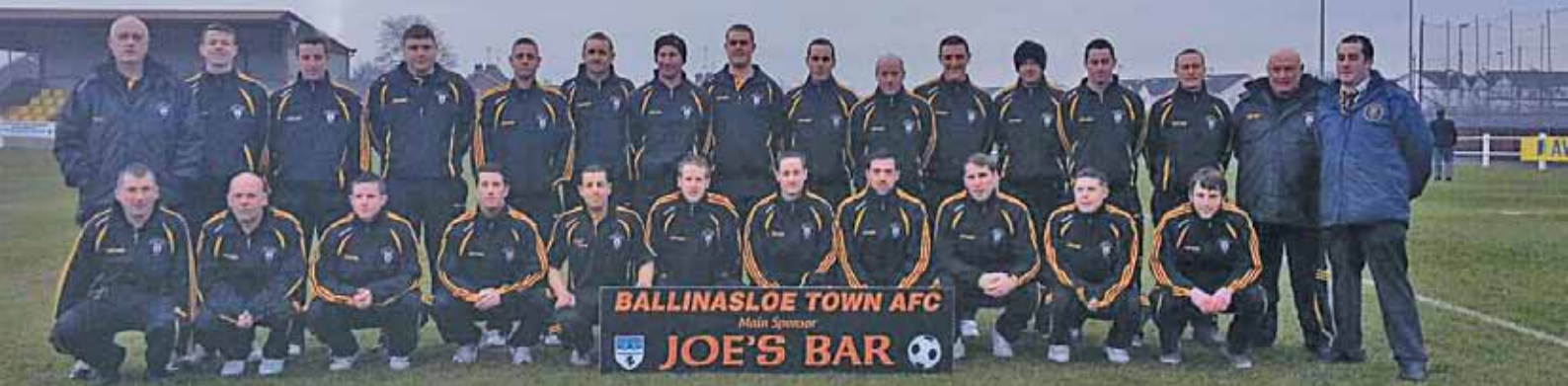
This year is all about *The Gathering*. Ballinasloe's *Gathering* event takes pace on the last weekend in August, Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th. It will be a weekend of music in Ballinasloe Town's pubs and hotels. Incorporating 3 nights of music, with Brendan Shine, *The Conquerors* and Declan Nerney.

As well as *The Gathering* music in 3 pubs per night and a céilí dance and a tea dance in the afternoons. People are coming from all over the world as well as from all over Ireland to partake in this special music festival. There will be some thing for people of all ages. There will also be day-time activities over the weekend. Boat trips on the river from the Marina and dance classes with new activities being added all the time, like exhibitions and guided historic walking-tours around the town. Tell your family and friends of this great *Gathering* weekend.

The weekend is a Bank Holiday in the UK so it is seen as a great opportunity for Ballinasloe people to get back to town for the festivities. Organiser Thos Ryan said, "It's great to have one weekend to focus on. In other years friends and family came home at different times and always seemed to miss each other's visits. Now we have one Summer weekend where we can invite everyone to come back at the same time, so everyone can meet up. It's going to be great."

More info on Facebook 'Ballinasloe August Homecoming'

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By Owen Dunne

All roads led to the Curragh Park as Ballinasloe Town AFC took on Kilbarrack Utd. in the Quarter-Final of the FAI Junior Cup. Unfortunately it marked the end of their cup campaign as they went down 2-1.

The game itself was one of two contrasting halves with Killbarrack taking a stranglehold of the game early on by bagging two goals within the first 15 minutes. At this stage one would have been forgiven for thinking that an onslaught was on the cards but The Town had other things on their mind. They were a different outfit in the second half, creating numerous chances that on another night may have gone in. They did grab one back with 10 minutes left on the clock and were unfortunate not to grab the equaliser.

Once again the local support came in large numbers to cheer on another inspirational sporting outfit. It was clear that no matter the outcome everyone was still going to be proud of the team. "It was great to see the amount of support here tonight. The whole town really got behind us the last 2-3 weeks, unfortunately we couldn't get the win but we'll be back" said Manager Enda Concannon. Club founder Brendan Mc Nally was also delighted to see the huge crowd at the game; "I was out around the ground before kick-off and people were coming in the gate in their hundreds, support was fantastic throughout the game. It's great for the town as well in

these recessionary times to have these sporting occasions, especially on the back of the Gaelic Footballers great win. The support was just brilliant here tonight from the locals as well as the travelling fans from Kilbarrack. It was just great to see such large crowds turning out on this freezing cold night" noted Club Treasurer, Barry O'Connor.

Although they left the Curragh with one less Cup to compete for, Ballinasloe Town can be proud in the knowledge that they reached the last 8 of a major soccer tournament as Deputy Mayor Johnny Walsh pointed out: "I think it's important to note that this tournament is the largest in Europe as regards entries with over 500 teams entered, and to make it to the last eight is a real achievement." Club PRO Jason Fallon was also extremely proud of that same fact and attributed the recent cup progression to the quality youth system in the club; "You can't help but be proud of a club like ours. It all stems from youth football as a lot of the lads playing there tonight would be coming from the youth system."

The result does not mark the end of the soccer club's season as there are many cups still up for grabs with the F.A.I Junior Cup coming as a bonus as Chairman Noel Lyons pointed out: "At the start of the season we sat down and we set out our stall of what we wanted to win and the big one for us is the Connacht Cup. We also wanted to retain our 3 domestic trophies that we won last year. We're still in the Quarter Finals of the Connacht Cup, we're top of the table in the Premier Division and we're still in the Roscommon Cup and

the Divisional Cup so we're going strong on all the 4 fronts that we set out at the start of the season. Although we're bitterly disappointed to be out of this competition it was a bonus and it was great to get this far."

The game signalled yet another major sporting occasion on the local calendar with huge media interest around the town on the night including Jackie Hurley of RTE. "We had RTÉ television around the town before the match for 2-3 hours getting some footage around the town. The game here today really brought a great buzz to the community. This type of national exposure has to be good for the local economy" stated Deputy Mayor Johnny Walsh.

To progress to the Quarter-Final of the FAI Cup has been an amazing journey for the Suckside men and although they will not progress to the Semi-Finals manager Enda Concannon feels that the experience will stand to them in the future: "I'm very proud of all the players. They worked hard to get this far, and I know they're down at the moment but they'll bounce back, there's no doubt about it. I think tonight has been a great experience and we will learn from it both as a management team and a club."



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Swim Club as Popular as Ever

Writes Owen Dunne

30 years ago Ballinasloe Swimming Club was founded and today stands in a very proud space as a hugely successful and popular club in the town. It currently has 70 members and runs over 3 terms a year, 3 evenings a week: Monday 5pm-6.30pm, Wednesday 5pm-6.30pm and Fridays 5pm-6pm. Unlike other swim clubs children have the opportunity to swim 1, 2 or 3 days a week.

The club coach there is Gerry Downey who is supported by a dedicated and hard working staff. "I have been involved in the swimming club for the past 15 years and feel very proud of this facility in Ballinasloe. I receive ample help from Maria Jordan and Martina Grenham, who are the assistant coaches. It is run by a very hard working and dedicated committee: Irene Coyne, Noelle Reynolds, Mary Whyte, Declan McKeown, Ann Mahon, Caroline Gullane and Sinead Doherty and the chairman Kevin Larkin."

The club makes sure to aim high and always tries to get the best out of every member. "The objective of the club is to bring out the optimum potential in each participant. It is a rigorous training schedule: all aspects of swimming techniques are taught." said Gerry. There is a high competitive emphasis and numerous galas and competitions are held throughout the country during the year. Most years a boys and girls team participates in the Community Games. The club also have a number of talented individual members who also compete. One example of an individual who has gone through the ranks is Ciara Farrell. "Ciara started with the club as a child and advanced through the ranks to international level. She took part in European Championships and was very successful and triumphant in her field." relates Gerry.

The Swim Club is highly costly to run and there are many fees to be paid including insurance costs, Swim Ireland Registration and Connaught Fees along with the paying of coaches and

hiring of the pool. In order to pay these fees the club hold many fundraisers throughout the year including the annual fundraiser in October and Bag packing which they did in Tesco in early January. The swim club were also kindly sponsored by the Credit Union which subsidised swim bags for the child members, supplied by Noel Mannion.

Much like a lot of sports, dedication is required. Swimming has always been renowned as a sport that boasts the most dedicated athletes with very hectic schedules and early morning sessions but the local club make sure that it becomes as enjoyable an experience possible. "Ballinasloe Swimming Pool trains every member for 5 hours each week. Some individuals reach a high standard with the above schedule and they can further advance their training regime by going to Athlone Swimming Pool for another 7 hours per week." Unfortunately Ballinasloe are unable to facilitate these high achievers. "At the moment funds do not allow us to provide this extra level of training and sadly we lose our promising swimmers to Athlone's Greater Advantage."

People who are interested in joining the club must be sure to have some basic swimming levels. "Prior to joining the club each participant must be able to swim one length of the pool in at least 2 different strokes. Eligible candidates then join



At the recent community games Girls U14 Freestyle (L- R): Hannah Gullane, Aoibheann Reilly and Emma Loughnane.

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U10 Freestyle (L-R):
Ava McKeon, Tara
McKeon, Ruth Dolan.



**U10 Relay team that finished 3rd in All-Ireland
Schools (L-R):** Fionn Doherty, Fionn Darcy,
James Mooney, Adam McGreal.



Boys U12 Freestyle (L-R):
Niall Costello, Daithí Ward
and Killian Murphy.

the development squad.” Gerry is head of the development squad and makes sure that all members have a grasp of the 4 main strokes. “In the development Squad each student is meticulously taught all drills in 4 different strokes: The Front Crawl, Back Crawl, Breast Stroke, and Butterfly. This makes a solid foundation from which to train on.”

There are many advantages to joining the club. Not only do members become efficient swimmers but they are also introduced to a wide variety of opportunities. “Many of the



Boys U10 (L-R): James Mooney, Adam McGreal, Abdulla Hadid.

members further their skills by taking a lifeguard course. Some go on to careers in the sporting field and specialise in PE and Sports Recreation. Some young members gain employment in swimming pools during their school holidays both at home and abroad and use their skills in a very pragmatic manner.”

Gerry Downey believes that everyone has the ability to become a good swimmer and it is his job to harness that ability. “Each child has a unique potential and this must be nurtured very delicately so that children do not become discouraged and throw in the towel. The mental and physical health of each child must be taken into consideration in each training session. A constant steady approach is important in the training sessions so that fatigue and burn out is avoided.”

Behind every young swimmer though are very supportive parents and without them a lot of what Gerry does could not happen. “Thanks and appreciation to all the parents who sacrifice so much to get their children there on time week after week and a special cheer for each dedicated member of the club.” The fees per term are as follows: 1 evening a week €90, 2 evenings a week: €130 and 3 evenings a week: €150. For anyone wishing to start the club there is a 6 week development class which takes place on either a Monday or Wednesday from 4-5pm. Following completion and an assessment by the coach participants may progress to the club.

If you are interested in joining the club and availing of this fantastic facility then take a look at the Kingfisher Website at: www.kingfisherclub.com

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Ballinasloe Credit Union Talent Competition

Ballinasloe Credit Union will once again be organising the CU factor talent competition in April 2013. In recent times, talent shows have become a notable genre of reality television. 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. The competition will be run in a similar format to last year. Auditions will be held in mid April with the top acts progressing to the final at the end of April. The overall

winner and runner up will progress to the Galway final, which will be held in the Town Hall Theatre Galway in May. 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.

To see highlights of last years final logon to the BCU website www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie, or see it out on our Facebook page. Entry forms are also available to download on the site.

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Garbally Senior Rugby Finalists



Writes Owen Dunne

Garbally College recently contested the Connacht Senior Schools Rugby Final in the Sportsground, Galway for the first time since 2007. Unfortunately the result didn't go their way as they were beaten by Marist College, Athlone on a scoreline of 23-11 but many positives can be taken from their progress. Principal Stephen Reilly noted how proud the School were of the team and mentors. "We are very proud of the team who represented us heroically. The effort they made throughout the year was fantastic and their commitment has to be admired."

Team manager Mike Horan was disappointed that they fell at the final hurdle but also believes that the best is yet to come from the Garbally boys. "We have a very young team with some talented young players. A lot of this year's squad is still underage with Jack Codyre, Sean Horan, Peter Claffey, Sam Holland and Dylan Connolly all available next season."

Garbally's appearance in the final did not come around by chance however with a lot of hard work as well as brilliant support from friends, family and the school community. "The support at the semi-final and final was absolutely outstanding. The atmosphere was brilliant. To see almost 1,000 people turning up for both games was outstanding." Said Mr. Horan. Captain of the side, Jack Codyre was also wowed by the amazing support "It was inspirational to say the least. It was great to hear the crowd singing all the chants so loud. They

gave all the lads a great lift especially when you heard your own name being chanted which gives you a great buzz."

Garbally College's proud rugby tradition is well known with 43 Senior Connacht Titles including a famous 7-in-row between '86 and '92. However success has not been as prominent in recent years with their last title win coming in 2001! This can be mainly attributed to the phasing out of the boarders in the mid 00's but manager Mike Horan believes that the local talent is there to reclaim the Glory Days of old. "The loss of the boarders hasn't been a help to rugby in Garbally but I believe that the local talent in Ballinasloe is more than enough to help us win that senior title. I've already had a number of kids coming up to me interested in playing rugby in Ballinasloe." The strong relationship between Garbally College and Ballinasloe RFC has also been a major contributor to the recent success. "Luckily we have a great association with the club. We can work together to help build on the great achievement this year and hopefully go one better next year."

This team is certainly not short on confidence or experience and feel they have what it takes to put Garbally back where it belongs as Jack Codyre pointed out: "At the start of the year I felt that we could go all the way. We were talking about the Senior Cup and getting to the final and when we got there it was a dream come true. Unfortunately the result didn't go our way but I think the experience of playing in the Final will stand to us and hopefully we can go all the way next year."

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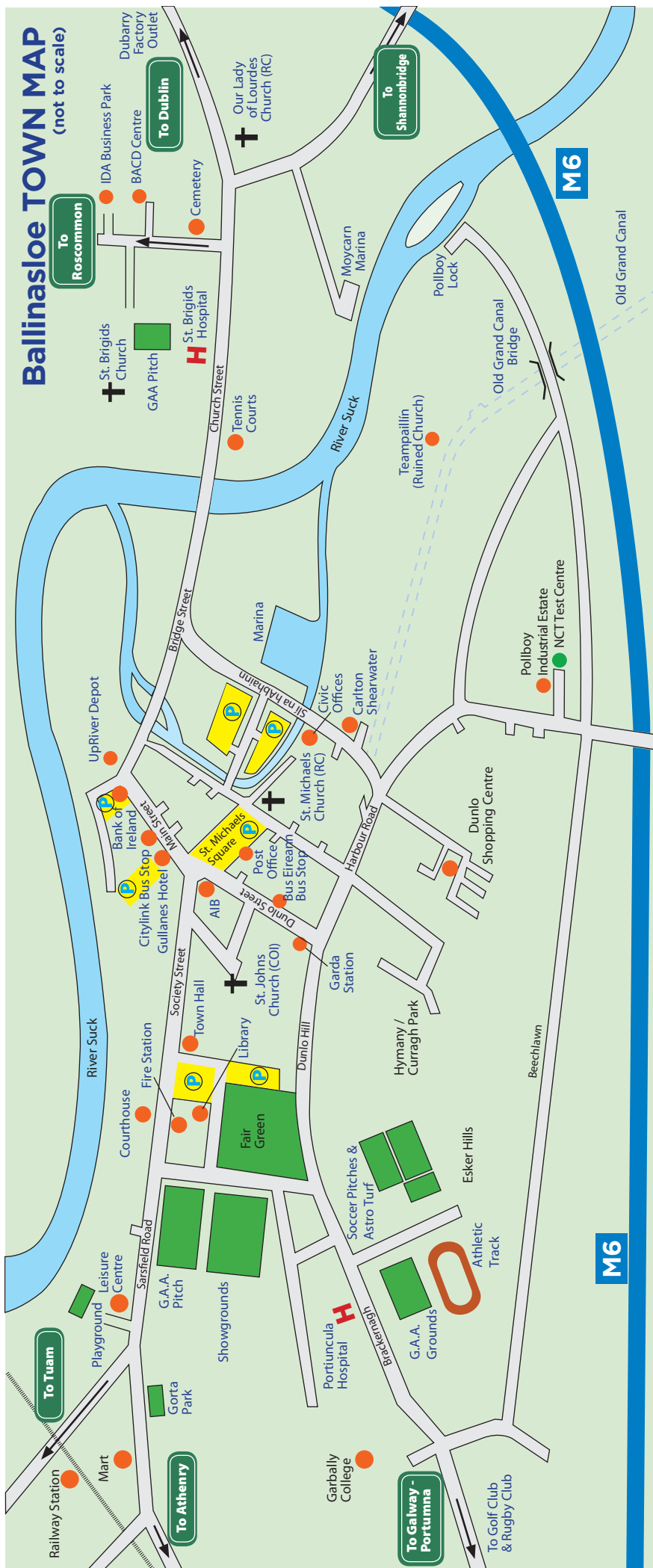
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Ballinasloe TOWN MAP

(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 window. Of particular quality are those of St. Patrick and St. Rose of Lima, of 1925, by the renowned Dublin Stained glass artist, Harry Clarke and *The Raising of the daughter of Jairus* by Patrick Pollen, inserted in 1958.

6 – From St. Michael's Church now walk up St. Michael's Square back towards the Man with the Horse Statue. Take a left into Dunlo Street, an important street in the history of the town, which contains, together with other buildings of about the same date, the late-Georgian Garda 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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Credit Union Quiz Winners

Congratulations to Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál, Creagh, who were winners of the Under 11, Chapter 15 School Quiz. The team consisted of Chloe Johnston, Anna Kelly, Matthew Devine and Oisín Carroll. They will now go on to represent Ballinasloe Credit Union in the All-Ireland final in the RDS on the 7th April.

Photo on the right (L-R): Charlie O'Rourke (Longford CU and Chapter 15 Chairman), Áine Bleahen (Teacher), Niall Clarke (BCU), Chloe Johnston, Matthew Devine, Oisín Carroll and Anna Kelly.

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