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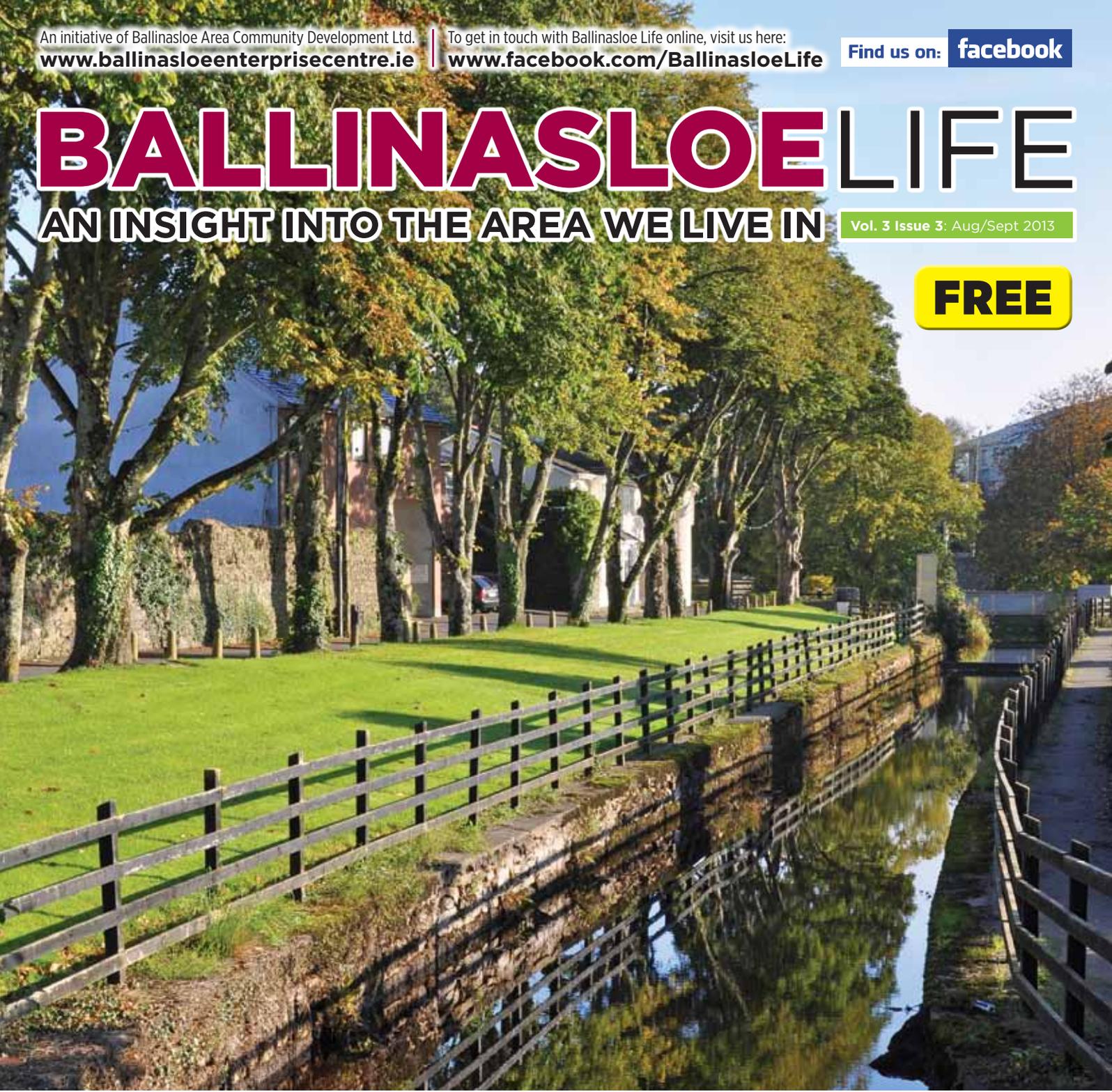
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AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 3 Issue 3: Aug/Sept 2013

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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 3 Issue 3: Aug/Sept 2013

REAMHRÁ



"Keep your face to the sunshine and you will never see the shadow" said Helen Keller and eight short weeks ago I penned a hope that after a long winter, we would be visited by some summer weather! How lucky we have been. A heatwave of over 16 days duration, balmy almost Tropical conditions has bathed our shores and proved welcome relief and enjoyment to all bar the Farmers who naturally would rather the nights cooler and a bit wetter! With the Hay in and the Turf Up, Ballybrit should prove a bumper week!

Hopefully the fact that the nation has enjoyed a bit of heat after the 60 months of doom and gloom, we can face the waning of the summer days and autumn antics of an October budgetary process with a new sense of optimism. Watching the crowds at the river, marina, beach and lake in the past few weeks and listening to the coastal and tourist reliant centres, there is no doubt that while numbers are up yield is most definitely down. Gone are the days when every family outing for a sunny day were spent stocking up from local stores, there is now a more frugal approach to spending. It is also obvious that the town empties of citizens when the sun is high!

Climatologist say these summers will now be the norm! Whilst we are lucky to have two fine indoor swimming facilities, is it not odd that with over 8km of quality freshwater flowing through the town, the only accessible places for a swim are the Moycarn Marina and the River St Bridge. Speaking to local Swimming enthusiasts Tomás Gullane and Davey Rafter, they can recount over a dozen places that young people could swim in the 50s, 60s and 70s all sadly gone now with development and private right away access. Might it be an idea that in looking for Capital investment projects (before Phil Hogan consigns our Town Council to the dustbin) that the relevant agencies earmark a fund for a Blue FLAG type bathing area, similar to the one in the wonderful Loughrea lake that had locals heading to in droves? In any event enjoy the Hols or as they say in the Media world, the silly season!

Le gach Dea Ghuí, Colm Croffy, Editor



Business in Ballinasloe is not just about the Urban Area, it covers an area reaching from Loughrea to Athlone and from Mountbellew to Portumna and hence we are increasing our production numbers of Ballinasloe Life to 6,000 copies bimonthly to get the positive messages about the area we live in to a wider audience. We are asking community groups in the outer catchment areas to send us articles and pictures of recent events and details of what is going to be happening in the coming months for inclusion.

To promote the town and the businesses in same, BACD Ltd are co-ordinating weekly draws in local retail shops where by buying locally you are in with a chance to win substantial sums of money in any of the three town weekly Lottos draws by the GAA, Soccer and Camogie clubs. See inside for more details. The promotion is a follow on from the 'Think Local, Shop Local' campaign initiated last year. We wish to thank Owen Dunne (our reporter for the past seven months) for the work he has done and welcome on board Pamela Ryan for the next few editions. Please continue to send your news and articles to ballinasloelife@hotmail.com, items not printed will be added to our Facebook page.

*Seamus Duffy, Chairman,
Ballinasloe Area Community Development*

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Third Term for Town's Last Official Mayor

Writes Owen Dunne

First elected in 2004 and subsequently in the 2009 local elections, Brackernagh native Mike Kelly has been keenly involved in local community issues and organisations from his earliest years.

Currently living in Derrymullen with his wife Anne and daughter Niamh, Mike was first elected Mayor in 2007 and this summer was elected the 'town's first citizen' for the third time, having previously served on two occasions as deputy Mayor.

Practically a full time representative and a baker by trade, Mike has had many hobbies and interests spanning from sports and culture to the theatre. He has a keen love of stage and has been involved in many productions with Ballinasloe Musical Society, Ballinasloe Panto, Relays Drama Group and Acorn Drama Group through the years.

Mike is also Chairman of the Ballinasloe Joint Policing Committee and the Town Twinning and has served on various Committees at Council and personal level. "I see the role of Mayor primarily to promote our town in a positive way, promoting all our town has to offer so as to attract investment and tourism, while also acknowledging the achievements and immense contribution that many groups and organisations in our town make to community life. It is important that this work and commitment is acknowledged and for that reason I launched the inaugural Mayor Awards in 2008." he said.

For the Mayor the biggest challenges facing Ballinasloe are unemployment, the ongoing reduction of state services to families and the elderly, the protection of our medical services

and the winning back the passing trade from the M6. Our natural waterways are a major resource that need to be further promoted, enhancing tourism and leisure facilities and the promotion of the town as a 'Gateway to the West'.

Since first elected in 2004 he has seen many significant changes in the town and has been involved in the many projects driven by the Town Council, who have adopted an open door approach forming a genuine partnership with many organisations in town to harness energies in the development and promotion of the town.

Mike believes one of the most positive aspects of our town would have to be our sport and recreational facilities. "Ballinasloe Town Council have invested over €1.7 million in sporting and recreational facilities over the last three years and I had the honour of officially opening our €1.2 million all weather athletics track and community pitch in 2011. Other positive aspects, which we can often take for granted are: Our excellent educational facilities, award winning hospital, excellent hotels, varied shopping facilities, the marina and the natural resource that is the River Suck. Our continued awareness and engagement with our Tidy Towns efforts has seen our marks improve over the last few years with all groups involved in protecting the environment and enhancing the visual impact of our town."

He is confident the Town Enhancement Scheme together with the water and sewage upgrade, presents a unique opportunity for the town, in the current economic climate, to increase the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and do business. "The water and sewage upgrade is an essential upgrade to the existing outdated inadequate systems. It makes economic and practical sense to undertake the town enhancement project in tandem with this essential work as we strive to enhance the visual impact of the town as well as maintain the essential services."

His priorities for the year ahead would include: "Focus on the capital projects such as the Town Enhancement Scheme, the inner relief road at the rear of Main St. and Society St. will open up an area of town beside the river for the future development and include riverside amenity park, the development of the Convent building and lands for community use, further

Ballinasloe Town Council Comhairle Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe



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land for development and leisure uses, facilitated transfers of lands to local sporting clubs, allocation of funding to Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre to support it in its quest to create employment, the leisure centre, our new all weather athletics track and community pitch, would not have happened without Ballinasloe Town Council's support according to Mayor Mike. It has invested over €1.7million in sporting and leisure amenities over the last three years, plays a major role in Tidy Towns, St. Patricks Day Parade, the Great October Fair and Festival and also supported various other festivals and events, while freezing business rates over the last few years. It is worth noting that under local control the town has the third lowest rate base in the country, and according to the Mayor, financed our Christmas lighting, supported many local clubs, groups and organisations on an ongoing basis, supported Town Twinning exchanges with our twin town in France, Chalonnes Sur Loire.

He is adamant that come what may, the elected representatives must continue to support where they can for as long as we can, however one has to ask who is going to support and fund all these projects, groups and organisations after the abolition of the Town Council. "In Europe, they choose to increase representation at local level and the powers that be here propose to abolish it. I am of the view that town councils should be retained and given increased powers and a greater range of functions: Local Representation for Local Issues."

development of the marina, maintaining all existing services at Portiuncula Hospital, resolving any remaining flooding issues, strive to achieve job creation with the support of state agencies and Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre.

On the subject of the impending abolition of Town Councils the Mayor is adamant this will have a seriously negative effect on our town. "I see the abolition of the Town Councils as a retrograde step. Ballinasloe Town Council and formerly Ballinasloe Urban District Council have been an integral part of this community - keeping logical democracy alive - driving and supporting the development of the town both on a social and a business level," stated Mayor Kelly.

Many local projects such as the Town Enhancement Scheme, the Inner Relief Road, the purchase of Convent buildings and

In conclusion and as it looks likely Mike will be the last Mayor of Ballinasloe he adds: "I would like to pay tribute to all the fine people who have served the community so well over the years as members of Ballinasloe Town Council and the former Urban District Council. They have given of their time and energy for the betterment of our town. I would also like to thank the council executive and staff for the co-operation and support. I look forward to working with my fellow members, the executive and all groups and organisations in the coming year with the common purpose of promoting our town.

"To the people of Ballinasloe I wish you all the best for the future. It is important we remain positive and promote our town and its positives. In my role as Mayor that's just what I want to do." 

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Heritage and Workshop Day

This September the first Annual Irish Heritage and Workshops Day will take Ballinasloe's traditional music scene by storm. Hosted by Gibbon's Pillar House Bar and Restaurant, on Saturday Sept 21st featuring a series of musical workshops and dancing classes.

Hosting the numerous musical workshops are John Wynne on flute and tin whistle; John McEvoy on fiddle; Sharon Connell on accordion and Jacinta McEvoy on concertina. Martina

Flannagan and Bridie Ruane will also be teaching Sean Nós dancing classes with a guest tutor, Gearoid Devan.

Gibbon's Pillar House Bar and Restaurant are hoping to expand the event next year and turn it into an entire weekend of musical madness. "We're aiming for this to become a centre for trad music in the area," said manager, Kathryn Gibbons.

Recitals of all class and workshop tutors will be held at 6pm and Irish language sessions will also be held by Ciorcal Comhrá. An open trad session will follow at 7pm and all are welcome to join. Enquiries can be made to Kathryn at (087) 904 6140.



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APTAR: Twelve Years A Growing



Writes Owen Dunne

Manufacturing giant APTAR are located in the IDA Business Park, Creagh and have become a large producer of many day-to-day products used by all households. They manufacture many different forms of dispensing systems, equipment worldwide and in a few short years are now one of the area's top manufacturing employers.

APTAR set up in November 2000. "Initially we operated in Poolboy but changed to this greenfield IDA Business Park in 2002. We have been operating here ever since. Initially the factory was 2,750 square metres but it was expanded by 6,100 square metres in 2008. By the end of 2013 we will have used all free space in our facility," said General Manager John Sullivan.

One of the first firms into the 39-acre Business Park which was jointly developed by the Town Council and IDA with a significant property transfer by the then Western Health Board, the firm occupies almost 9,000 square metres of plant to the left of the main gate, on the site of the old St. Brigid's Hospital farm.

The APTAR group makes moulded dispensing systems for liquids and powders. If you use ketchup or mayonaise with a flip-top container, an inhaler for orally taken drugs, or a perfume then it is likely that you are using one of the local factory's products.

The large haul of goods being manufactured in the IDA based centre is quite incredible. "APTAR Ballinasloe makes internal parts for pumps for perfumery, cosmetics and pharmaceutical applications. In 2013 we will mould over three billion of these items and will sell more than 800 million pump units worldwide. The factory operates 24/7 employing over 110 people," noted Mr. Sullivan.

Of the 110, a large majority are from the town and surrounding areas, including one such local Kevin Cunniffe who is the Health and Safety Officer in the factory. "We have many

employees from the town and the surrounding area. However we also have a number of employees coming from places like Westmeath, Offaly, Roscommon, Mayo, Limerick and Clare," said Mr. Cunniffe.

The factory has become a central global hub in its own market area. "Our products are consumed worldwide. In fact we have no direct clients in Ireland. In the last 3 years our business has grown rapidly. In 2013 our sales are 9% stronger compared to last year," said Mr. Sullivan.

Despite all the negative facts and figures that loom over business in Ireland, Mr. Sullivan is still quietly confident for what the future holds. "Over the last 11 years we have had steady growth. A lot of this growth was because we had a facility here in the IDA Centre with empty space. In the next 10 years we need to consolidate, continuously develop the technical competence of our people, improve the levels of technology and automation in our operations, and raise the efficiency of how we make our products. To remain competitive, we must continuously improve. As the facility becomes saturated, we must work intelligently to find ways to bring in new products."

APTAR Group will continuously invest in newer technology and new products. APTAR Ballinasloe must work hard to accept these investments. Working hard here means becoming more cost efficient in what we make and becoming more technically effective in how we make our products," stated the General Manager.

The IDA Business Park has been a great help to our continued growth. Mr. Sullivan is very appreciative of the positive impact the town has had on APTAR and believes that it still has a lot to offer many other industries. "Ballinasloe is a great town for our business. Over the years many services in Ballinasloe have continuously worked with us to ensure that we achieved our goals. My key message is that the locality has a lot to offer business and industry. What Ballinasloe needs is to be clear on what its advantages are and focus on these. Everyone must have a long term plan and on a daily basis you must understand your costs. You need to manage the day-to-day work but know where you are going," stressed Mr. Sullivan.

Same Day Printing at KPW Print

Thanks to a huge investment in Digital Printing Equipment, same day printing at KPW in Poolboy Industrial Estate, Ballinasloe, is growing at a very fast rate. The latest high technology facility can now offer customers 'same day' printing for certain types of orders. KPW, which was founded in 1949, now boasts one of the largest digital print operations in the country and among its top customers are the Jury Inns Group, who the Ballinasloe factory provides all their printing needs, for all the Irish and UK inns.

Despite the economic gloom, KPW's investment is regarded as a positive step to meet the ever-growing demands of clients

who want orders executed on the same day whether they be Thank You cards, baby cards, menus, flyers, tickets, business cards, invitations and memorial cards.

Manager Gabriel Naughton says: "This latest investment bucks the trend, with so many printing firms closing down. Now we can provide a same day service of printing for the first time ever in the West of Ireland. It's a major facility for many jobs that are required urgently", he said. Also, KPW are the only manufacturers of continuous stationery, i.e. cheques, payslips, invoices etc. in the West of Ireland and have customers in every county as well as several in the UK and Europe.

CUSTOMER INSIGHT WORKSHOP

KPW ran a very informative public workshop on electronic IFU's in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe on the 3rd of July last. The well attended event presented participants with the opportunity to understand the recently introduced EU regulation on electronic IFU's as well as present their own

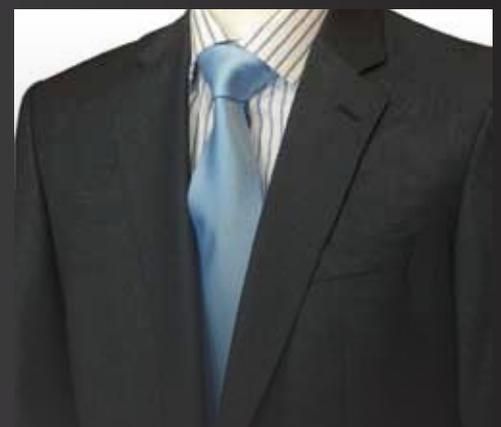
ideas on the future solution. KPW are currently working on the development of an Electronic IFU distribution system and the workshop proved very successful in generating excellent insights into electronic IFU's from both the manufacturer and end user perspectives. The workshop included participants from Portiuncula Hospital,

Covidien Athlone, Covidien Tullamore, Creagh Medical, Oxygen Care, Teleflex Athlone and Vitalograph. If you would like further information on the workshop or on electronic IFU's in general, please contact: Mr. Gabriel Naughton, gabriel@kpw.ie 087 2317475 or 090 9642297 Mr. Eoghan Kenny, eifu@kpw.ie, 087 6442653 or 090 9642297



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EMC Flying the BEC Nest!

Writes Owen Dunne

Electrical Mechanical Controls (EMC) were located in the Enterprise Centre Ballinasloe for over a decade. The 10 years based in Creagh Rd. benefitted the fledgling company no end, as they recently moved to a larger warehouse in Oranmore due to expansion. The once locally based company engineer and produce spare parts for many different appliances including electrical and temperature controls, electrical heaters and instrumentation. These implements are sold and distributed all over Connaught.

They were one of the first fledgling businesses to locate in the BACD Enterprise Centre in 2002, some three years after the property was acquired. The Centre's mission is to provide key incubation space for enterprises to begin their commercial life and then move on to the next level.

General Manager of EMC, Martin Curran, believes that the Enterprise Centre was an ideal place for them to start and grow their business. "We moved into the Enterprise Centre in 2002 and never looked back. It was a very affordable office space in a good location. The people in the Enterprise Centre were extremely facilitating to say the least. It's a great place for a business to start off as the rent is very affordable, the staff there are excellent and the location is very central. We were so successful there that we had to move to a bigger premises in Oranmore. We were always delighted with the support there and left on very good terms. It's also a great help to all businesses wishing to service areas in the West and Midlands," stated Mr. Curran.

EMC have reported a constant surge in business since they began in the Enterprise Centre. Their new warehouse, which is located in the Westlink Commercial Park, Oranmore has given them the necessary room they need to expand further. "When we first started we had three employees. That number has now risen to eight. Our turnover has also quadrupled in the last number of years. All of these positive figures are down to the great support we received from the Enterprise



Martin Cullen and Anthony Cunningham at the opening of the new EMC facility in Oranmore.

Centre and the town in our early years," noted Mr. Curran, who is appreciative for the support given to his business by the Enterprise Centre and the town. With many local businesses finding it difficult to stay afloat, Mr. Curran believes that the town needs to assess its options before it's too late.

"Ballinasloe is certainly struggling. However, it can survive if they take a leaf from other country's books. I've seen the 'satellite model' work in many towns around the world where small areas become satellite towns to the larger surrounding cities. For this to happen, Ballinasloe must start attracting some of the smaller industries and companies who will act as feeders to the larger scale businesses in the bigger areas," said the General Manager. EMC is the latest firm to move out from the Centre to a new expanded site to facilitate growth.

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Earlspark School Reunion

A reunion of those who attended Earlspark NS between 1925 and its closure in 1978 will be held in Gullane's Hotel, Ballinasloe on Saturday, 10th August at 7pm. The evening will begin with mass, followed by a buffet and dancing to *Midnight Melodies*. Among those expected to attend the function is a former pupil, 100-year-old Lucy Tuohy, originally from Clonulty but now living in Athlone. All past students, as well as their families and friends are invited to attend. Tickets are available from Peter Mulvihill at 087 2660389 or any committee member.

New Chef at Pillar House

New Chef Vik Haulkhory joined Gibbon's, the Pillar House Bar and Restaurant recently. Vik has over nine years culinary experience, the Mauritian native has entirely recreated the lunch and dinner menus.



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An Post Means Business!



Manager Anthony Grenham outside An Post's new Mail Centre in Poolboy.

Writes Ken Kelly

Some forty mail staff from throughout East Galway will now operate out of the new An Post Delivery Service Unit, at the Poolboy Industrial Estate in Ballinasloe, which opened on July 29th. However counter service will still continue to be provided at the Post Office in St. Michael's Square.

The new state of the art premises in Poolboy is part of a national change programme, aimed at improving the efficiency of An Post's mails collection and delivery service. The move also marks a significant investment by An Post in its mail operations in East Galway.

Undelivered mail and parcels, heretofore collected in St. Michael's Square will in future be available for collection at the Poolboy Depot. An Post staff from Eyrecourt, Killimor, Ahascragh, Gurteen, Ballyforan, Woodlawn and Kilconnell will now work at the Poolboy Centre with the 25 mail staff that, up to now, have been based at the Ballinasloe Post Office in St. Michael's Square to give a new impetus to delivery services.

For a number of years, An Post has been consolidating local mail delivery operations, which have often been traditionally based at the back of a post office, into larger purpose-built facilities. These custom-designed delivery offices can now provide a better quality and more efficient service for customers and adequately meet the logistical, health and safety security requirements of the modern-day business.

An Post say that despite recent mail volume declines, due in the main to the economic situation nationally, mail volumes have increased substantially over the past 10-15 years and the format of mail items has changed too. Envelope sizes have increased, as has the proportion of larger packets and parcels, much of it due to online and catalogue shopping.

What a year it has been for An Post in Ballinasloe. In March they won the third An Post's Champion League Regional Title, a prestigious prize which goes to the best performing mail office in the country. Delivery Services Manager, Anthony

Grenham, has quite a record in the Champions' League, having also been part of the award-winning team, when he was previously posted in Athlone.

The Ballinasloe Post Office has also grabbed one of An Post's *Customer Plus* office of the year awards. This recognises excellence in retailing and customer service at Post Offices around the country. Under new Branch Manager Conor Moloney, the Ballinasloe office has been doing brisk business providing a broad variety of postal, financial and communications services.

Delivery Services Manager at Poolboy, Anthony Grenham, said: "This operational change has no impact whatsoever on the thriving Post Office outlets in the area and will have little impact on customers, who will continue to be served by the same postpersons as before. There will be no change in job numbers or to the services provided."

Mr. Grenham added: "In addition to letter and parcel services, the Post Office in St Michael's Square provides banking services, state savings, social welfare payments, passport express and *BillPay* products. In addition *One Direct* insurance, *PostFone*, *One 4 All* giftcards and commission free dollars and sterling, cash and *PostFX* cards are also available."

WIN €100 One-4-All Voucher

To mark the opening of their new Mail Centre, An Post have graciously offered a prize to one of the Readers of *Ballinasloe Life*, of a €100 *One-4-All* Voucher, who can answer the following question:

NAME THE LOCATION OF AN POST'S NEW MAIL CENTRE IN BALLINASLOE!

Entries, on a Postcard please, to An Post Competition, *Ballinasloe Life* Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, Creagh, Ballinasloe, to arrive not later than 12 noon on Friday, 6th September 2013. The winner will be announced in the October-November issue.

Alternative Therapist Returns With Practice

Writes Owen Dunne

Ballinasloe native Julie Pickering who has extensive experience in the field of alternative therapy has returned home to set up her own practice. Julie lived in Kent, England, for the past 29 years and has practised various types of therapeutic massage for the past 18 years. She is proficient in the skills of deep tissue massage, L.T. Reflexology, Indian Head Massage, Reiki, Hopi treatment and as a baby-massage instructor.

Julie is based at the All Core Sport-Strength and Conditioning Gym at Sarsfield Road, Ballinasloe, every Wednesday and Friday from 10am-6pm and also holds Baby-massage instruction classes in Gullane's Hotel every Thursday from 12-1pm.

In the 1980's Julie decided to pack her bags and head over to England for a new life. "I attended School in the Convent until I left to go to England. I started working in Hammerson House as a care assistant. After three years I was promoted to an auxiliary nurse," said Mrs. Pickering. It was from working in this nursing home that Julie realised that she wanted to open up her own treatment facility. "I really enjoyed working with people and catering to

their needs. I had been keeping an eye on the masseurs who used to come into the home and realised that I'd love to be able to do that!" recalled Mrs. Pickering.

Not long after this realisation Julie set up her own spa in Kent where she worked until she decided to come home and set up shop here in town, "I came over last year to 'test the waters' so to speak and saw the opportunity to open a business here in the town. I'm very excited about its prospects," noted Julie.

Included in Julie's treatments is "Candle Treatment" which offers significant relief for sufferers of sinus, glue ear, headaches and migraines. Julie is the holder of several internationally recognised qualifications in the field of alternative therapy. One can also book a half hours massage for their hands, feet, head and shoulders from as little as €25.

As well as massages to assist with de-stressing and relaxing for adults, Julie is also skilled in techniques for calming restless infants and children. "The Baby-massage classes are an hour long which consists of me demonstrating on a mannequin baby and then letting the parents try the same. Not only is it beneficial for mums and dads to know these therapeutic skills but it's also beneficial for them to meet many more young parents in the area. The



classes consist of four sessions (one every Thursday) costing just €10 per session," said Mrs. Pickering. Julie is also available for home visits to cater for clients with mobility problems.

Julie has noticed a change in the town she left in the mid 80's. With local spirits now a bit deflated she hopes her treatments can give people that much needed lift. "It's much quieter these days and everyone's down in the dumps. I think it's important for everybody to take that little bit of time to sit back and unwind for a while. This sort of therapy is a great way to release some unwanted stress and tension. Even if it is just a 30 minute massage, it can make all the difference!" stated Mrs. Pickering.

If you would like to book a session with Julie or just want to find out more information contact her at 087-2488137

Sen. Michael Mullins

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Local Sports Club's Lottos To Help Jobs

Writes Owen Dunne

A retailer weekly draw has been set up by Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd. The lotto draw is being supported by a number shops and retailers as well as the local sporting organisations who will be giving shoppers the opportunity to win their weekly lottos.

Chairman of the BACD, Seamus Duffy says it has been designed to help retailers primarily. "This lotto draw has been set up to support our local shops. Many local sporting bodies have joined with our businesses to give their customers the chance of winning big in the weekly soccer, GAA, camoige and other weekly draws. Tickets will only be available in certain shops but we hope to expand that number in the coming months".

The aim is to attract shoppers back into the town to help business. "We hope that this draw concept will bring renewed focus to our shop local campaign. It's a great incentive to get people back into town and reminds supporters of the sports clubs of the importance of local jobs" said Mr. Duffy.

To be in with a chance of winning all you have to do is shop local. "Once customers spend money in a local store they will be handed a 'Weekly Shop Draw' ticket to fill in which will subsequently be inserted into a draw in the shop. Each shop has 1 winner each week which will be entered into the participating lotto draws" said Mr. Duffy.

Every shop will have different conditions for the draw with each retailer deciding who is eligible to enter. "The GAA, Soccer and Camogie clubs have been very helpful in implementing this new project. I can't see anybody turning down the chance to take home any of the clubs jackpots which often reach the €20,000 mark" stated Mr. Duffy.

A list of the designated shops is available on our blog ballinasloelife.wordpress.com/author/ballinasloelife or our Facebook page *Ballinasloe Life*.

BCU Leads The Way

Writes Niall Clarke

Ballinasloe Credit Union recently completed a software upgrade on their computer system and in doing so became the first Credit Union to sign up for the Single European Payments area or (Sepa). Sepa is a European regulation that will simplify financial transactions and make doing business easier. It will apply across 32 European countries and it will make it easier for clients to transfer and receive funds. SEPA comes into full effect on 1 February 2014.

The introduction of SEPA will have no effect on members that currently have direct debits in place and no action is required. Prior to February 2014 members may be asked to provide your IBAN and BIC number which is available from the credit union. Members that are registered for our FREE online service CUONLINE can see now see their unique IBAN and BIC numbers by clicking on their EFT current account on CUONLINE. In the future all members will be advised of their IBAN and BIC numbers which will be visible on their Credit union account statements.

Ballinasloe Credit Union continues to provide CUONLINE free. This Free online service gives members easy and convenient access to their credit union accounts via the Internet. Members can use CUOLINE to make payments to other accounts, pay bills and conduct their finances online with the added convenience of instantly updated accounts.

With powerful security features and protection for member's identity, the system also caters for members in providing them with a safe environment to communicate with BCU regarding their accounts. If you have not signed up for this free online service you can do so by clicking on the Register Tab on the credit union website www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie. For members that may perhaps be a little nervous about using the internet to view their accounts please don't hesitate to contact the credit union where a member of staff will take you through the procedure for signing up to CUonline.

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AIB Club and Society Showcase

Writes Owen Dunne

AIB are giving all local clubs, societies and organisations an opportunity to expand their audience and membership numbers with a first ever Clubs and Societies Showcase Day in Gullane's Hotel.

Scheduled for Sunday 15th September, Chief organiser Maeve Carty from AIB noted the importance of such an event. "The Showcase day (which will be free of charge) will be a great help to our local clubs in the community. Each group will have their own stand, manned by their members, to promote and showcase themselves and their goals to the public. It is open to all voluntary groups, sports clubs and organisations, who would like to self publicise and have an opportunity for exposure, which has not been available to them to date. It is also a huge chance for locals to chat with group representatives about the clubs available here."

These clubs and societies are very important in the development of the community and without the relevant support and facilities this cannot happen. However Ms. Carty believes that the necessary infrastructure is available in Ballinasloe. "We are very fortunate in the town and surrounding areas to have numerous excellent facilities, which enhance our appreciation for the area we live in. Many of these facilities are the result of the wonderful clubs, associations and organisations that are tirelessly working to build a strong community."

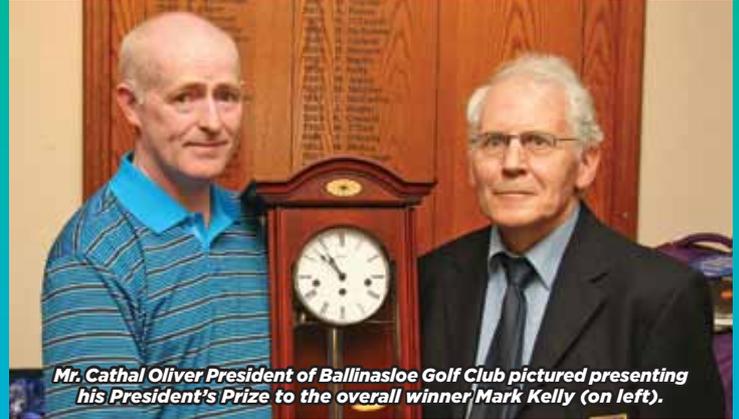
As well as facilities, members are the vital cog that helps run these clubs and that is something that Ms. Carty is well aware of. "Many of these organisations rely on their members to help carry on and support the work that they achieve. They are run by volunteers who give of their time, commitment and enthusiasm to ensure that the organisations work to achieve their goals. Organisations like these are dependent on members of the public to join in order to grow their membership. It is important for organisations to get their message out to a wider audience and to encourage other members to join. The clubs and societies day will help build

stronger bonds within the community that will ultimately be to the benefit of the town and surrounding area."

Participants will also get the chance to listen to speakers on the day who will be covering topics such as "Fundraising in difficult times" and "how to promote your own organisation using different types of media." There will also be an opportunity for each group to have a 2 minute "pitch" recorded by *Ballinasloe Life Magazine* which will then be aired via their Facebook page and can be used to continue to promote the organisation following the day itself as these recordings will be available for viewing to anyone who may be interested in joining.

The "Showcase Day" promises to be very productive and beneficial for all members of the community. Ms. Carty is hopeful that many will attend. "We are looking forward to this gathering and are also very grateful to Gullane's Hotel, for providing the venue for the day. We hope to see plenty of people in attendance on the day which is Sunday 15th September 2013 from 2pm to 5.30pm."

If you or your organisation is interested in joining in this event or require some further information please contact Maeve Carty in AIB Ballinasloe by dropping into the bank or 090 9642271 or by email maeve.a.carty@aib.ie



Mr. Cathal Oliver President of Ballinasloe Golf Club pictured presenting his President's Prize to the overall winner Mark Kelly (on left).

Would you like to profile your voluntary club, association or organisation at a public event taking place in **Gullane's Hotel**, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway on **Sunday 15th September 2013** from **2pm**?

This event is free of charge and will be a great way to profile yourselves in your community. For more information, or if you would like to take part in this event drop into the branch, phone, or email maeve.a.carty@aib.ie

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Social Services Mock Wedding

Pictured are Mark Cronin Assistant Manager of the Hotel, Alan Hogan, Secretary of the organising committee, Patrick Byrne, and Brian Derrane, actors, Diana Walsh, Chairperson of the organising committee and John Boland, Co-ordinator.



Writes Owen Dunne

Preparations are well underway for what promises to be the “Community Event of the Year” in town with a busy group beavering away on their organisation’s first foray into the nuptials shenanigans of comedy and farce.

The light hearted event is in aid of the local Social Services Day Care Centre who do fantastic work for the elderly in the town and surrounding area. It will take place in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel on Friday 1st November.

The event is the brainchild of Diana Walsh and Brendan Canney who are long-time employees of the centre. Speaking about the reaction it is receiving to date, Ms. Walsh said: “The Mock Wedding has caught the imagination of the community at large with complimentary services offered including a wedding band, DJ, actors, provision of wine, wedding invitations, tickets, vintage cars and a horse-drawn carriage. Also, to date a four course wedding banquet has been booked while the very talented group of local actors under the guidance

of the multi-talented John Boland are currently rehearsing their scripts.”

This most exciting of events is an ideal opportunity for a family or friends reunion, workplace party or indeed any kind of a gathering. Wedding guests also have the option of dressing up on the day as their favourite celebrity while the event organisers are very confident that at least one real-life celebrity will be in attendance on the day. Ms. Walsh also noted that the novelty of such an event should be enough to attract a large crowd.

“If you’ve always wanted to go to a wedding without the expense and hassle of purchasing a present for the happy couple, this is your opportunity. An added bonus will be that you’re supporting the tremendous and positive work of our very own Social Services Day Care Centre. It should be a fantastic night and we hope it will lift the air of doom and gloom and give us all something to smile about. So let’s all get behind it and fully support it.”

Updates on the celebrity mock wedding can be obtained on the Facebook page ‘Celebrity Mock Wedding’.

Tickets are affordably priced at €40 per person and are now available from Chairperson, Diana Walsh; 087 1387580, Julie Pickering 087 2488137, Johnny Walsh 087 9973008 or by calling to the Social Services Centre. Individual tickets or tables can also be booked.

Ballydangan’s Record Attempt



Writes Anthony Grenham

On possibly the finest afternoon of the 2012 summer, Saturday August 18th last year, Ballydangan played host to a unique event. Tom Colleran’s field adjacent to Millar’s Bar and Restaurant was filled with the largest number of tractors operating in the same field in the midlands at one time. What made this event unique was that a world record was set. The brainchild of Ballydangan man Anthony Grenham (Secretary Ballinasloe and District Vintage Club), was the operating of 84 vintage Finger-Bar Mowers simultaneously in the one field.

Mowers came from as far away as Monaghan and Clare but what was even more impressive was the number of local people that got mowers out of sheds, yards and even hedgerows to take part in an event that has never been staged before. At 7pm, 84 tractors took off mowing the field and what a sight to behold as the air was filled with revving sounds and the aroma of diesel, two and petrol fumes as they proceeded to cut for 10 minutes simultaneously being driven by people of all ages including one lady driver.

Building on the success of this, Ballinasloe and District Vintage Club are hoping to increase on these numbers of Finger-Bar Mowers in August 2013 coupled with a family orientated day featuring a vintage show, auto jumble (vintage vehicle parts and antiques) and live entertainment. Taking place on the 17th August they are hoping to break last year’s record number and already it is looking like a figure of over 100 will attend. They are asking people to get their tractor and finger bar mower or to bring their vintage car, motorbike etc.

To join them in what looks to be a very special evening. For further information or to join the Vintage Club, give Anthony Grenham a call on 086-4183131.

Tidy Towns Team Awaits Results

Writes Owen Dunne

The work of the local Tidy Towns has been plain to see as of late with clean streets, freshly painted walls and street lamps and railings decorated with flower baskets. The local committee now wait to see how their efforts have been judged hoping to add to the current upward climb in the scoring of previous years.

The Chairperson of Ballinasloe's Tidy Towns Committee Cllr. Carmel Greally is more than pleased with the recent efforts of the team. "The town aesthetically looks absolutely fantastic at present. I've never seen it looking so well. It's great to see all of our hard work finally coming to fruition."

The Tidy Towns initiative could not be the success it is without the partnership scheme which brings a number of local enterprises together with the common goal of making us a tidier town. "The partnership scheme brings together three different bodies who all help the Tidy Towns committee to achieve their goal. They are: the Town Council, the local FÁS scheme and of course our group of volunteers of whom there are 12. The Town Council are the leading group in organising cleaning initiatives. They look after the parks, the marina and all the flower baskets located around the town. The local FÁS scheme also help by picking up litter around the town, for which we are more than grateful. Patricia Tierney and Billy Ward are to thank

for this. Finally we have our group of volunteers who meet up every Thursday at 7pm to tackle the real 'black spots' of the town" said Cllr. Greally.

The improvement of the town's attitude towards littering has been evident in the marks received over the past number of years. "We are really on the up as our scores have increased by 44 marks in the last six years which is a dramatic improvement. If we can keep improving I see ourselves up there with the best towns in the country," noted Mrs. Greally.

Although the town finds itself in Group E (which contains Killarney and Westport) of the National Tidy Towns section, Mrs. Greally is confident that we can hold our own without the pressure of being expected to win. "We have to be realistic at the moment. We are not up to the standards of some other towns

across the country. However, we have been making great progress," stated Mrs. Greally.

To thank the public for their continued support the Town Council have sponsored prizes to the value of over €4,000. "We will be awarding cash prizes to winners who entered the various categories of our local Tidy Town competitions. Some of the categories include: Best Small Garden, Best Vegetable Garden, Best Residential Area and Best Business/Shop Window. We also want to thank Fergal Dunne and Eddie Kelly of Supervalu who have also helped in the judging and sponsoring of the competition."

An open night Presentation where the winners of the local awards will be announced will take place on the 2nd week of August in the Civic Offices.



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Country Market: Place of Plenty

Writes Owen Dunne

Every Friday morning the foyer of the Town Hall Theatre turns from a quiet, dark room to a buzzing area of chat, laughter and bargaining as the weekly Country Market hits town. This Market has become one of the 'go-to' places for anyone looking for local products, ranging from freshly baked bread to beautifully knitted children's garments.

The market is the place to be between the hours of 9am and 1.30pm every Friday. It is a totally not-for-profit organisation and is part of a network of 60 other markets around the country who are all members of the national co-operative group, Country Market Ltd. which was set up in the late 1940's.

One of the founding members of the town's own market is Lily Frisbee who is more than pleased with its progress. "Anne Byrne, Margaret O'Gorman and myself decided to join the co-operative and set up our own market here in the Town Hall. That was 18 months ago and since then things have really improved. Not only have you a huge selection of local produce from baking to paintings, but you also get the chance to meet up with others, sit down and have a chat," said Mrs. Frisbee.

There are over 16 stalls at the market from where customers can choose products including, bread, cheese, cakes, photographs, knitting, sewing and other hand-crafts. "The selection is always growing as more and more people want to join in. Because we are part of a co-operative organisation, everyone who has a stall or table pays a small €20 membership fee. All purchase payments are made over the one counter also," stated Mrs. Frisbee.

Besides all the buying and selling that goes on, there is also a huge social aspect as regular visitor Nancy Keogh points out. "I love the company. I've made new friends and they're mighty. I can come in here and get all the basics such as bread and eggs etc. without having to go to the bigger stores. It gives you that little boost to get up, get dressed and come down in the morning, rather than stay at home all day."

The decision to use the Town Hall has been hugely important to help the market grow. "The Town Hall committee have been brilliant towards us and they have been very facilitating. It's well located in a quiet area of town and it is easily accessed. I think that we have benefitted the centre and vice versa," stated Mrs. Frisbee.

Because of the fast pace of life these days many people find it difficult to meet and catch up. The Country Market however has given locals a one stop shop not only to buy a few groceries for the house and goods for the household but to also meet up with friends. "The social aspect to the market here is huge. It's always a great opportunity to get people together for a chat. Everyone looks forward to Friday because they can head in for a chat and pick up a few things for their weekly shop while helping the local economy," said Mrs. Frisbee.

If you are interested in joining or obtaining more information call into one of the crew on a Friday or check out the facebook page at www.facebook.com/ballinasloecountrymarket.



Nancy Keogh and Bernadette Donoghue

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The Power to Surprise

A Working Life: Dr. Kevin Connolly



Writes Owen Dunne

Retired Portiuncula Paediatric Consultant Kevin Connolly was born in an idyllic location in South Dublin city into a house of three brothers and one sister. His mother was May (home minder) and father Kevin (civil servant).

When he and his own family first moved Suckside in 1978 they knew nobody. Today however Kevin has earned the respect and admiration from not only the town but the entire medical profession.

Dr. Connolly retired as Paediatric Consultant in 2010 from Portiuncula Hospital, calling time on a career that spanned 32 years at the helm of the local children's ward. He was aware from an early age that medicine was going to be his choice profession. "I always knew that I wanted to go into medicine from about 5th Year in Secondary School. But it wasn't until 3rd Year studying the subject in UCD that I realised Paediatrics was for me" said Dr. Connolly. It was one early childhood experience that swayed his decision to pursue Childcare. "I distinctly remember being stuck in an adult's ward at 4 years of age for 3 weeks. There were no children's wards at the time. The child patients were only allowed visits at the weekends because they used to get

too upset and would disturb the other patients. It was a horrible experience but was a huge reason for my interest in childcare," recalled Dr. Connolly.

The retired Doctor who best describes himself as a 'minder' trained for five years after university in various hospitals such as St. Vincent's, Temple Street and Crumlin as well as spending a year in Bristol before he made the big move West in 1978. "It was a culture shock to say the least when I first arrived here. We bought a lovely house in Kilgarve Court, so our kids who were small at the time could play and make friends which they did. We knew nobody at first but it didn't take long to settle down," said the former Paediatrician.

Kevin Connolly arrived on the scene in the local hospital as a young exciting new face. The children's ward had just been opened and as a young doctor it was a challenge he relished as he said: "I was very excited to say the least, being the first Paediatric Consultant in the hospital. I was looking forward to expressing my views and opinions on how the children's ward should be run. It was a 'Green Field Site' so to say. I really saw it as the ideal position for me."

The ward, which became a home from home for Dr. Connolly, was very basic. Although it had 28 beds it had a small

amount of specialist equipment. "When I started working there, it was just myself and a junior doctor. For the first 8 years I was the only Consultant and as a result found myself doing long shifts as well as working on call. I remember one stage where I was on call 12 out of 14 nights after doing a full day's work. But I know I would do exactly the same again. I loved it because it was so challenging and so exciting." Within a few short years however the children's ward grew in size and importance. "We had many fundraisers in order to get in the equipment we needed such as ventilators, incubators and other necessary facilities. The generosity was huge among fellow staff, patients and their parents. Because of the great fundraising that was done Portiuncula very quickly had one of the best Special Baby Care Units in the country," noted Dr. Connolly.

Many changes have occurred in the childcare practice since Kevin first began, especially the outlook on baby death as he noted: "I began working in hospitals during a time where still born babies were not looked on as real people, who needed proper funerals and whose parents grief was enormous. They couldn't be baptised and as a result they were refused a ceremonial burial. I have many sad memories of saying prayers while carrying down the tiny coffins." There have been dramatic improvements in the prevention of baby deaths in recent times however. "When I first began, 30 out of every 1,000 babies born would die either before birth or shortly after. Today that number is down to just 4 per every 1,000 babies" A fact that shows the dramatic improvement in standards in the childcare profession as well as the improvement in maternal health.

The birth rates in Portiuncula have seen an increase also, compared to when he first began. "There has been a steady incline in birth rates with around 2,000 born in Portiuncula every year. That's up from 1,400 when I first began, however it did hit a high of 2,400 the year after Pope John Paul's II's visit in 1979," recollected Dr. Connolly.

During his time in Ballinasloe, Dr. Kevin Connolly became a hugely influential figure in the area of Childcare and became a member of many boards both nationally and internationally. He was heavily involved in the abolition of the restrictive visitation hours for children as well as the introduction of a more solemn and respectful view towards the stillborn.

Although his impact on the local hospital was immense the name Connolly had already been etched into its history books as he revealed: "My uncle Sean, who was a Schools Inspector notified me that my first Cousin John Connolly was actually the first baby born in the old



maternity hospital Mt. Pleasant in 1943. He lived in Duggan Avenue as a kid. He now lives in Dublin where he is a retired Prof. of Statistics.”

Retired is possibly too strong a word to use when explaining Dr. Connolly’s current status. Although his days as the main man in the paediatric ward are over he is still heavily involved in various medical groups and organisations. One such organisation ‘Immunisation 4 Life’ (which he joined three years ago) sees him fly out to Zambia four to five times a year with a group of 20 nurses and doctors. It is an experience that has given him a totally new perspective of life. “It has certainly put me well outside my comfort zone, but it is also hugely rewarding. These people are desperate for help. The poverty is just immense. We’re concentrating mainly on the management of malnutrition and HIV-Aids which are two terrible problems there. To compare the numbers of sick children in Zambia: For every 28 ill children in Portiuncula there would be 150 in Zambia!” said Dr. Connolly.

Outside his career and hectic schedule Kevin always found time for his family. “I have been lucky enough to have my wife Claire who has been so patient and understanding down through the years. I don’t know how she puts up with me at times! We have four children of whom we are very proud; the eldest is Paul who is a freelance journalist and writes regularly for the Irish Independent and Examiner. Next there’s Niall who is currently living in Chile after spending many years in South Korea and learning the language. Kev is living in Dublin, teaching English and plays in a band called ‘Herm’ and the ‘baby’ of the house Niamh is currently finishing a PHD in Mathematic Modelling,” proudly noted Dr. Connolly.

As a man who has lived in the town for nearly 35 years he has seen many changes. “It’s sad to think of how Ballinasloe is suffering at the moment. It’s not good seeing so many local businesses shutting up shop. However besides all the doom and gloom I can see many positives in the area. There is huge work being done by the local council, the Tidy Towns committee, the social services and the youth organisations. There is a great sports ethos in the town also with so much success of late. The sporting facilities and playgrounds have really improved as well. I think the only way for Ballinasloe to survive is to work together as a community. The desire for the town to prosper must come from within.” Stated Dr. Connolly.

When he looks back on a career that stretched over four decades in the town the one word he uses is ‘random’. “I just think it’s absolutely random that I ended

up where I am. I feel awful lucky to have found a job that I loved doing. I have had a great team behind me and a very strong woman (his wife Claire) and for that I am thankful. I can safely say that there is nothing I would have done differently during my time here” added Dr. Connolly.

Kevin Connolly was certainly the perfect man to get the ball rolling in Portiuncula’s Children’s Ward. Not only for the fact that his own blood was the first born in a maternity hospital here, but also because he had a special way of working with parents and children. His ability to shift from serious to jovial topics was refreshing and mainly down to his razor sharp wit. Parents who dealt with Dr. Connolly always felt in the safest of hands at extremely worrying times. People enjoyed working with him and he just loved doing what he did, as he stated himself: “I think it was Mark Twain who famously said: ‘Find a job you like and you won’t have to work a day in your life’ and I found that job!”



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New Bethany Park Opens



Pictured are those who attended the official opening of Bethany Park. Donor Betty Ring is just to the left of the plaque.

Writes Owen Dunne

Bethany Park, a new public amenity located in Poolboy (just across from St. Brendan's housing estate) was officially opened by the outgoing Town Mayor Carmel Greally recently. The opening event was attended by a large crowd with Ms. Betty Ring as a special guest. Refreshments and food were also served and epitomised exactly what the area was intended for.

The one acre piece of land which was used for the park was donated by Ms. Betty Ring early last year to the council with the request that it be turned into a park for members of the public to enjoy in the memory of the Ring family. "The Council was delighted to receive this donation from Ms. Ring as well as a generous sum of money to help fund the project. Within a short space of time a

plan was drawn up as to how we should go about developing the park. We hoped to have the park open to the public by summer which we can now safely say we met," stated Carmel Greally.

The overall cost of the development was in the region of €50,000 which included the costs for labour and materials. "Ward's Nurseries supplied all the gardening materials for the park and Town Gardener Anne Harte designed the greenery and planted all the shrubbery and trees etc. A huge amount of work went into regrading the soil, laying the pathways and placing seating at either ends," stated Mrs. Greally.

The new park contains a rugby ball shaped walkway, seating at each end, shrubbery, trees and a pelican crossing connecting it with St. Brendan's. "I think the project has been a great success.

We now have an ideal facility centrally located for people to visit at any time in order to take a break, sit down and relax for a while," stated Mrs. Greally.

The opening ceremony of the park also signalled the end of Mrs. Greally's term as Mayor. It was a bittersweet moment for the now former Mayor who although pleased with her terms work was sad to think that in a year's time no Town Council will exist in town. "It's sad to think that very soon the Town Council will be no more. A lot of hard working people put a lot of effort into making the Council the great organisation it is now but unfortunately it will soon be disbanded. Before the abolition of the Town Council we hope to have finished a number of ongoing projects such as the refurbishment of the Convent building, the Town Enhancement Scheme and the link roads," stated Mrs. Greally.



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August Homecoming Weekend

Writes Owen Dunne

The Gathering will pick up pace in Ballinasloe this coming few months as various homecoming festivals and reunions hit full swing. One of these Gathering events is the Ballinasloe August Homecoming which will see the town transform into a hub of music, song and dance.

The August Homecoming Weekend will take place from Friday, August 23rd to Sunday, August 25th. The weekend promises to be a feast of all things musical. The idea for such an event first came to mind when Mike Riddell approached Gerry Devlin. "Mike came up to me with this idea of hosting a large scale musical festival over the course of a few days back in November. It all just blossomed from there really," recalled chief organiser Gerry Devlin.

The festival sets out to pay tribute to two great locals who down through the years played a significant role in putting Ballinasloe on the map musically, both here at home and internationally. Their legacy will carry on in the hearts and minds of those who came into contact with them and experienced their love of music. "Minnie Sullivan and Lee Lynch contributed enormously to Ballinasloe and that is why we are celebrating their lives over the August Homecoming Weekend. By supporting this weekend you will be supporting

two great local charities: East Galway Cancer Support and Portiuncula ICU," stated Mr. Devlin.

A packed programme of events is guaranteed with some big names making the journey to perform for the memory of Minnie and Lee including Brendan Shine, Philomena Begley and The Conquerors. "The opening ceremony will take place on Friday 23rd at 6pm in Gullane's Hotel followed by a welcome home dance with Brendan Shine. Throughout the weekend then, there will be music in all the pubs as part of the big Minnie's Reunion. There will be boat trips on the River Suck on Saturday and Sunday on board the Shannon Queen, and a Saturday afternoon tea dance with John Joe Kelly in Gullane's later that night," said Co-Organiser Tomás Ryan.

As well as music there will be many exhibits on show in various locations throughout the town. "We hope to have a number of workshops and exhibitions in empty shops and buildings in the town. We will be using Crosby's at the top of Society Street as our main office where we will have a 'Wall of Fame' dedicated to Minnie and Lee," noted Mr. Devlin.

Many other events such as art exhibitions and historical walks are also planned for the weekend festival. Brochures with a list of the events can be found in all local businesses around the town. Readers can also check out the events calendar in this edition for a full list of everything that will be happening throughout the few days.

PERFORMERS AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING

A gathering of friends and musicians to play in memory of Minnie Sullivan and Lee Lynch.

GULLANE'S HOTEL: FRIDAY, AUGUST 23rd
Brendan Shine

GULLANE'S HOTEL: 4-7pm SATURDAY, AUGUST 24th
Afternoon Tea Dance (with celebrity guests)

HAYDEN'S HOTEL: SATURDAY, AUGUST 24th
The East and Late Night Dancing
The Conquerors

HAYDENS HOTEL: 4-7pm SUNDAY, AUGUST 25th
Monster Céilí (with celebrity guests)

CARLTON SHEARWATER: SUNDAY, AUGUST 25th
Philomena Begley



Philomena Begley



Paschal Brennan



Loose Rooster



Members of the August Homecoming Committee.
Back L-R: Thomas Ryan, Gerry Devlin, Michéal Breathnach.
Front: Jackie Dolan and Ciara Hogan



The Conquerors



Brendan Shine

Model Village in Clontuskert

Writes Owen Dunne

We've all cursed them at some stage during our gardening careers. Yes, weeds! The one part of a garden that never fails to grow. As many houses fight the losing battle with this annoying wonder of nature one such family decided to combat their weed problem in unique fashion.

Mother and daughter Victoria and Lynn Smith (originally from Wales) who live in Clontuskert, had a weed patch that they were tired of duelling against. They quickly tired of the ongoing struggle and decided to make use of the troublesome area of their garden by building a chicken coop. "We thought it was a great idea to have a few chickens to keep the weed patch clean as well as having the bonus of fresh eggs every day," noted Victoria.

Soon after the chicken house arrived, the weedy area was fenced off and the chickens settled in. "Everything was going great. There were no more weeds and we had fresh eggs every morning. Little did we know that our labours were being intently watched by some hungry local foxes, and it wasn't long until they broke in and took some of the chickens," recalled Victoria. So, with great sadness, Victoria and Lynn decided to send the remaining chickens to a safer farm.

As time passed, the weeds sprang up again quicker than ever, and soon enough the Smiths found themselves back to square one again. "We found ourselves back to where we started and didn't know what to do. Then one day a friend suggested that we put in a few miniature model houses in the garden area. I had seen a model village in Gloucestershire in England and I thought it would be a nice idea around our big old cherry tree, with a seating area," said Victoria.

They first bought a model house but it soon became victim to the wet conditions and fell apart. Then up stepped Lynn



who felt confident that she could build her own model house that would last much longer. "When I saw the other house falling apart I said to myself: 'I can make one of those'. So with my hand saw, jig saw and plenty of wood I soon got working" said Lynn. The mother and daughter team worked very well. Lynn became the carpenter and Victoria became the painter. Soon enough they had a number of model houses created and set up in the once disastrous area of the garden. "It kind of became a past-time for the two of us. We now have a miniature model village at the bottom of our garden, complete with a church, shops, schools and people. There's even a replica of Maud Millar's pub and Clontuskert Primary School," accounted Victoria.

Now that the weeds have fully disappeared, the only problem the Smiths have to contend with is the growing amount of model houses popping up in their miniature village. "We have the bug now so we will definitely be making more. We are very proud of our miniature village and we welcome anyone who would like to come a see it," declared Victoria and Lynn Smith.



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
- Tea and Speciality Coffees—2/€2.50

Sunday Lunch served from 12:30pm—6pm.

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Busy Season at Carlton

Writes Pamela Ryan

June saw many fun filled events for Ballinasloe's Carlton Shearwater Hotel this year, from wedding winners and celebrity radio broadcasters, to a visit from Irish Roses and fluffy pooches.

The Roses of Tralee made a recent charitable visit to the hotel to assist Dogs Trust in finding new and welcoming homes for 32 of their abandoned puppies and dogs. The event launched the hotel's new Facebook Rose of Tralee app that features photos and descriptions of the 32 homeless dogs, aptly named after the 32 Roses, and can be used to enquire about adopting any of the bundles of fur.

Dogs Trust, while based in Finglas, Dublin, seeks to bring a high quality of life to puppies and dogs nationwide and the Carlton Hotel group will continue to help the animal welfare group as its chosen charity for 2013. The app can be found at www.facebook.com/carltonhotelgroup

Well known Irish radio and TV personality Hector also broadcast *Hector's Breakfast Show* live from outside the Carlton Shearwater Hotel. Hector's appearance also saw the hotel's launch of the Mini Explorer Club, their Family Fun holiday packages and special birthday packages for both locals and tourists visiting Ballinasloe.

June also brought with it the announcement of the Midlands Premier Wedding Fair's Win a Wedding competition winners, Ciara O'Neill and Michael Monaghan. The couple won a wedding to take place at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel and received their delightful prize from the hotel's General Manager, Fergal Ryan and Galway Rose, Kate Kennedy.



Michelle Ryan, Sales & Marketing Manager, Wedding Winners, Sarah O'Reilly and Trevor Lynam, Annette Ryan Wedding & Events Co-ordinator

Hector Ó hEochagáin



Road to Tralee Starts at Queen of the Fair

It's a little known fact but the selected Queens of the Fair for the past number of years have been representing the area as one of the finalists in the Galway Rose of Tralee. The winner of the Queen of the Fair, which is scheduled to take place this year on 14th of September, some two weeks before the Fair; receives a substantial cash prize, a week of fun and frivolity during October and of course a once in a lifetime opportunity to enter as a one of the final contestants in the Regional Rose of Tralee Festival, which is held in Portlaoise on the June Bank Holiday weekend.

The Galway Rose of Tralee International Festival Centre Selection takes place around Eastertime in the calendar and seeks representatives of girls between the ages of 18 and 28 who can emulate and showcase the qualities of the original and current Rose of Tralee. The last time the Fair Queen won the Galway Rose title and went on to represent the Festival at the Regional finals was Drum native Marian Naughton in 2004. Current title holder Alison Duffy will be handing over her crown and sash on the 14th and will no doubt wish the new incumbent all the very best.

Entry Forms are available from the Festival Office or from Festival Secretary Mary Phelan at 090 963916. Closing date is the 11th September and contestants must be between the 21 and 28.

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AUGUST-SEPTEMBER Events Guide

| 1st AUGUST | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------|
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Gathering Festival | Fohenagh | 12pm |
| Open Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 9.30pm |
| 2nd AUGUST | | |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| Pascal Brennan | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Live Music | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| John Hogan | Eyrecourt | 9pm |
| Turf Footing, Donkey Derby & Family Day | Cappataggle | All Day |
| Gathering Festival | Fohenagh | 12pm |
| Buzz the Agent | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 3rd AUGUST | | |
| The Sumbrellas | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| The Legends | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Al O'Connor | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Hickory Wind | Gibbons' Pillar House | 10pm |
| Shenanigans in the Beer Garden | Egan's | 9pm |
| DJ Reuben Keeney | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Gathering Festival | Ahascragh | All Day |
| Turf Footing, Donkey Derby & Family Day | Cappataggle | All Day |
| Gathering Festival | Fohenagh | 12pm |
| Too Tall Paul | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 4th AUGUST | | |
| The Rivulets | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Jimmy Buckley Country Dancing | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| One 2 One followed by DJ | Downey's | 9pm |
| The Smokes | Gibbons' Pillar House | 10pm |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbons' Pillar House | 6pm |
| Chequers | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Gathering Festival | Ahascragh | All Day |
| Turf Footing, Donkey Derby & Family Day | Cappataggle | All Day |
| Gathering Festival | Fohenagh | 12pm |
| Tamlin | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 5th AUGUST | | |
| Car Boot Sale | Gullane's Hotel Car Park | 12pm |
| Camogie Tournament | Eyrecourt | All Day |
| 6th AUGUST | | |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Uni Slim | Gullane's Hotel | 5.30pm |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| 7th AUGUST | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| 8th AUGUST | | |
| Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Foster & Allen | Carlton Hotel | 8pm |
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Open Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 9.30pm |
| 9th AUGUST | | |
| Imposter | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Paul Burns | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| The Waves | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 10th AUGUST | | |
| Live Music | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Ben and Bug | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Ken & Steve | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| The Pink Panther Jazz Band | Gibbons' Pillar House | 10pm |
| Country Comfort | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Earlspark NS Reunion & Midnight Melodies | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Frank Sinatra & Michael Bubl  Night | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| Kiltormer Open Classic | Golf Club | All Day |
| 11th AUGUST | | |
| The Hoppy Bar Stars | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Sunday Session | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| The Davitts Country Dancing | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbons' Pillar House | 6pm |
| Nite Owls followed by DJ | Downey's | 9pm |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| 13th AUGUST | | |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| 14th AUGUST | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| 15th AUGUST | | |
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Bruno Groening | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Open Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 9.30pm |
| 16th AUGUST | | |
| The Gaegan Pagans | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Tony Henshaw | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| Live Music | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |

| 17th AUGUST | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Streetwise | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Michael Regan | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Two Below | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Last Man Standing | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Iron Age Family Activities | Castleblakeney | 2pm |
| Finger-Bar Mowers | Ballydangan | 6pm |
| Live Music | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| Kiltormer Open Classic | Golf Club | All Day |
| 18th AUGUST | | |
| Loose Rooster | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Mike Denver Country Dancing | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| Sunday Session | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Trad with John Wayne & Frank Kelly | Gibbons' Pillar House | 6pm |
| Pete Jones | Joe's Bar | 9pm |
| Pascal Brennan followed by DJ | Downey's | 9pm |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Iron Age Family Activities | Castleblakeney | 2pm |
| Canal Walk | Clontuskert | 3pm |
| 19th AUGUST | | |
| Geneology Talk | Aughrim Hall | 8pm |
| 20th AUGUST | | |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| 21st AUGUST | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| Village of Aughrim Walk | Aughrim Park entrance | 8pm |
| 22nd AUGUST | | |
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Open Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 9.30pm |
| Trad Session | Gibbons' Pillar House | 9pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| 23rd AUGUST | | |
| The 2 Q's | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Comhaltas Night | The Emerald Bar | 9pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| Ballinasloe Homecoming Open Night | Gullane's Hotel | 6pm |
| Late night dancing | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Brendan Shine | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Checkers | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| Nostalgia | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Ken Astill | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Ballinasloe Shine Concert | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Col. Charles O'Kelly | O'Kelly Castle, Aughrim | 8pm |
| Flags: The Battle of Aughrim | Aughrim Visitor Centre | 11am |
| 24th AUGUST | | |
| Keith & Johnny | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Mainstream | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| The Conquerors | Hayden's Hotel | 9pm |
| Al O'Connor | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Music Session | Egan's | 6pm |
| Kensey 3 | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| The Rugby Club Gathering | Rugby Club | 2pm |
| See Saw Swing | Gibbons' Pillar House | 9pm |
| Backstage | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Yer Man | Joe's Bar | 9pm |
| Children's Workshop | Aughrim Visitor Centre | 11am |
| Afternoon Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 4pm |
| Captains and Presidents Mixed | Golf Club | All Day |
| 25th AUGUST | | |
| The Hoppy Bar Stars | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Declan Nerney | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| Trips on the Shannon Queen | Moycarn | 11:30am |
| King of the Puck | Shannon Queen | 2pm |
| Monster C il  | Hayden's Hotel | 4pm |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Sunday Session & Disco | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Music Session | Egan's | 6pm |
| Monster Homecoming Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 9.30pm |
| John Wayne & Frank Kelly | Gibbons' Pillar House | 9pm |
| Eammon O'Neill | Joe's Bar | 9pm |
| Evening Session | Downey's | 4:30pm |
| DJ | Downey's | 7.30pm |
| Late night dancing | The Shearwater | 9pm |
| Gathering Dance with Philomena Begley | The Shearwater | 9pm |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbons' Pillar House | 6pm |
| Traditional Irish Music | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Exhibition from Children's Workshop | Aughrim Visitor Centre | 3pm |
| Captains and Presidents Mixed | Golf Club | All Day |
| 26th AUGUST | | |
| Music Session | Egan's | 6pm |
| 27th AUGUST | | |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER Events Guide

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------|
| 28th AUGUST | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| 29th AUGUST | | |
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Open Trad Session | Dunlo Tavern | 9.30pm |
| 30th AUGUST | | |
| The Rivulets | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Sweet Sensation | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| Kiwi Paddy | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| Open Classic | Golf Club | All Day |
| 31st AUGUST | | |
| The Sumbrellas | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Live Music | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Frankie McDonald | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Galway Summer Rally Festival | Carlton Hotel | All Day |
| Golf Classic | Golf Club | 9am |
| The Pillar House 55 Year Staff Gathering | Gibbons' Pillar House | 10pm |
| Lyrical | Gibbons' Pillar House | 10pm |
| For Folk Sake | Dunlo Tavern | 10.30pm |
| Open Classic | Golf Club | All Day |
| 1st SEPTEMBER | | |
| Loose Rooster | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Galway Summer Rally Festival | Carlton Hotel | All Day |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbon's Pillar House | 6pm |
| Buzz the Agent followed by DJ | Downeys | 9pm |
| Sunday Session | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Helping to Lift the Rockes fundraising walk | Barrett's car park | 10.30pm |
| 3rd SEPTEMBER | | |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| Active Retirement Group meeting | Aughrim Hall | 7pm |
| 4th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| 5th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Open Trad Session | Dunlo's Tavern | 9.30pm |
| 6th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Gaegan Pagans | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Michael Regan | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| Live Music | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 7th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Keith & Johnny | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Sharon Turley | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Emma Walsh | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| The Gaegan Pagans | Gibbon's Pillar House | 10pm |
| He's Not Me | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Ann Marie McLoughlin | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 8th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Hoppy Bar Stars | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbon's Pillar House | 6pm |
| One 2 One | Downeys | 9pm |
| Gerry Guthrie Country Dancing | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| 10th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| 11th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club | Gullane's Hotel | 8pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| 12th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Bridge Club AGM | Bridge Centre | 7pm |
| Singers Circle | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 13th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Washout | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Ken & Steve | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| The Hush | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 14th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Sumbrellas | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Two Below | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------|
| 14th SEPTEMBER (continued) | | |
| Backstage | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Queen the Fair | TBC | 9.30pm |
| Hickory Wind | Gibbon's Pillar House | 10pm |
| Bojangle | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Agricultural Show at the Ag. College | Mountbellew | 10am |
| Tepid Rewind | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 15th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Patron's Day | Conmacnoise | 3pm |
| The 2 Q's | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Jim Devine Country Dancing | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbon's Pillar House | 6pm |
| Clubs & Societies Showcase Day | Gullane's Hotel | 2pm |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Pattern Day | Clonmacnois | 3pm |
| 17th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| 18th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| 19th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Thursday Sessions | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Open Trad Session | Dunlo's Tavern | 9.30pm |
| 20th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Gaegan Pagans | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| Pascal Brennan | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Aer Lingus Festival of Hurling | Gullane's Hotel | All Day |
| For Folk Sake | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 21st SEPTEMBER | | |
| Imposter | Maud Millar's | 10pm |
| Shtick Her Down | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Chequers | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Pillar House Irish Heritage & Workshops | Gibbon's Pillar House | All Day |
| Open Trad Session | Gibbon's Pillar House | 7pm |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Kensey 3 | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 22nd SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Hoppy Bar Stars | Maud Millar's | 8pm |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbon's Pillar House | 6pm |
| Yer Man | Downeys | 9pm |
| Nathan Carter | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| 24th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Tea Dance | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA Bingo | Hayden's Hotel | 8.30pm |
| 25th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Irish Blood Transfusion Day 1 | Gullane's Hotel | 5pm |
| Trad Session | An Táin | 10pm |
| 26th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Irish Blood Transfusion Day 2 | Gullane's Hotel | 5pm |
| Bruno Groening: Circle of Friends | Gullane's Hotel | 7pm |
| Kevin Rohan | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Arthur's Day Trad Session | Dunlo's Tavern | 9.30pm |
| 27th SEPTEMBER | | |
| The Beahan Family & Friends | An Táin | 6pm |
| Legends | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| One 2 One | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 28th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Last Man Standing | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Live DJ | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Bug and Ben | An Táin | 9.30pm |
| Sweet Sensations | Carlton Hotel | 10pm |
| Ballinasloe Horse Fair & Festival | Throughout town | All Day |
| Maggie Dunne | Gibbon's Pillar House | 10pm |
| Music in Bar | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Too Tall Paul | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 29th SEPTEMBER | | |
| Music in Bar | Gullane's Hotel | 9pm |
| Ballinasloe Horse Fair & Festival | Throughout town | All Day |
| The Ginger Biscuits | Gibbon's Pillar House | 10pm |
| Trad with John Wynne & Frank Kelly | Gibbon's Pillar House | 6pm |
| Jimmy Buckley Country Dancing | Carlton Hotel | 10.30pm |
| Live Music | Dunlo's Tavern | 10.30pm |
| 30th SEPTEMBER | | |
| One 2 One | Hayden's Hotel | 10pm |
| Ballinasloe Horse Fair & Festival | Throughout town | All Day |

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Out and About in Ballinasloe



Cyclists pictured at the start (from Gullane's Hotel) of the 13km Charity Fun Cycle held in Ballinasloe on 7th July last in aid of Children's Liver Disease Ireland and Ronald McDonald Housing Crumlin. The Cycle was marshalled by the volunteer Motorcyclists from The Irish Blood Bank. Cyclists young and old came out to support a good cause.



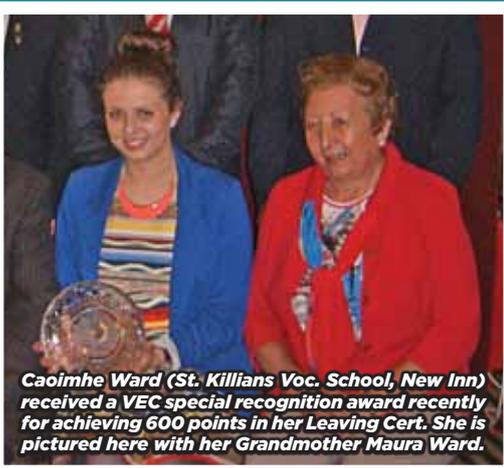
Tomas and Caroline Gullane with Ryan Tubridy.



Colaiste an Chreagain Graduation in Gullane's 2013



Pictured at the opening of Scoil Náisiúnta Iomair, Killimor were An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Principal Gerard Murray and Fr Kieran Kitching P.P. with the pupils. Photo: Stronge Photography.



Caoimhe Ward (St. Killians Voc. School, New Inn) received a VEC special recognition award recently for achieving 600 points in her Leaving Cert. She is pictured here with her Grandmother Maura Ward.



Cappataggle locals raised €7335 by doing a sponsored Weightloss event and Table Quiz. They are pictured here making their presentation to Galway Hospice, Back (L-R): G Donohue, E Stankard, D Gilchreest, M Loughnane, P Lohan, S Finn, P McHugh, L Lohan, M Reynolds. Front: M Broderick, M Maher, C Dodd (Galway Hospice), P Skehill, A Haverty, S Stankard.

Creagh's Community Awards



Creagh current native footballers and members of Creagh Community Council pictured in Creagh recently prior to the award ceremony in The Countryman. Back L-R: John Molloy, Tom Forde, PJ Lenehan, James Shaughnessy, Aaron Feehily, Jason Twohig, Dara McCormack, Marcus Kelly, Eoin Fenton, Padraic Cunningham, James Manton, Pat Cunningham, John Manton, Christy Waters. Front L-R: Brian Shaughnessy, Tomás Seale, Conor Kelly, Shane Kenny, Eoin McCormack, Ronan Daly.

Writes Owen Dunne

Creagh's Community Development Council recently honoured a number of its residents in the annual Community Awards. Receiving awards on the night were its young football heroes, Tom Forde and members of the Junior All-Ireland winning Management team. Many other sporting heroes from days gone by were also recognised. The function was held in The Countryman Lounge Bar with a large crowd present on the night including Galway Football legend Sean Meade who presented the awards.

Creagh native footballers who were part of the Junior Football All-Ireland Success were honoured for their achievements as well as a number of other GAA players. This was a very memorable occasion for the twenty-two young men whose heroics cannot be overlooked. Of the twenty-two, fifteen were involved in Ballinasloe's All-

Ireland Success with three playing key roles in Galway's U21 All-Ireland win. Four other local men also played key roles for Roscommon footballers while another two represented the Rossies in Hurling.

The management team of the Junior All-Ireland winners, Pat Cunningham, Cathal Croffy and Sean Riddell were also presented with awards on the night for their part in making history in Croke Park on that fateful day. "These unique achievements are a source of great pride to the whole parish of Creagh and it was only fitting that the community recognised the truly remarkable successes of its footballers" said Chairman of the Creagh Community Development Council John Molloy.

The Creagh Person of The Year Award went to Tom Forde, a man who has made an outstanding contribution to the community in his own quiet way. "Tom was a great cyclist and won many races

including 3 successive wins in the annual Rothwell Cup which was a 21 mile cycle race from Ballinasloe to Kilaan. He has contributed immensely to our community down through the years" said Mr. Molloy.

The night was enjoyed by all who attended with many reminiscing of events and people from the past that have made Creagh the great community it is today. In his closing speech Mr. Molloy thanked all who contributed to the presentation night. "To our patrons and sponsors a sincere word of thanks for their generosity. A special word of thanks to archaeologist and archivist Declan Kelly and Evelyn Donellan for the provision of notes on the historical Creagh buildings and sites. Thanks also to Kerril Creaven and Alna Sweeney of the Countryman Lounge Bar for their help in making the celebration possible. On behalf of the Council I wish everyone in the parish health, happiness and contentment in the future."



Ballinasloe's All-Ireland winning football manager, Seán Riddell receives an award from former Galway Footballing legend, Seán Meade.



Creagh Person of the Year, Tom Forde, receives his award from Seán Meade, former Galway football great at the Creagh Community Awards Ceremony. Also pictured are members of the Creagh Community Development Council from left: Mary Burnell, PJ Lenehan, Christy Waters and John Molloy.

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Ballinasloe U14 Footballers Impress

Ballinasloe U14 footballers continued their impressive run this season under Management of Joe Kelly, Niall Fahy and Greg Mannion. The young footballers had a magnificent win over Salthill in the North Galway Shield final earlier in the year. They subsequently lost to St Michael's in the first round of championship but qualified to the Shield Championship. They beat Salthill and Caltra on the road to the final where they then faced Dunmore. The challenge didn't faze the young team in the final however as they came out on top with an score line of 11-3 to 3-2. After the game captain Mike Fogarty accepted the cup from Larry Lohan.

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Ardscuil Mhuire's 'Gathering'

Writes Owen Dunne

Ardscuil Mhuire's Parents Association are organising the 'Ultimate' Gathering of the year in Gullanes Hotel, in late October which promises to bring all past pupils, friends, teachers and even the Garbally boys, who are now men, who might remember looking over the wall, to come along and have a good night.

This is the first major gathering of the old school and the new school past pupils so the organisers are expecting a large crowd on the night. They are currently collecting a collage of photographs to view on the night and we would welcome any contributions from former Ardscuil Mhuire girls. Any photographs can be given to any committee member or sent

into the school by post or email.

Everyone is welcome to *Reel Back the Years* on this special night. A night to revisit those carefree days and to catch up with old school friends and reminisce on the 26th of October 2013, the Bank Holiday week-end, kicking off at 9.45pm, complete with finger food, it should prove to be a great launch for the Weekend.

The school is growing all the time, with over 550 students and as you can imagine, they are running out of space rapidly. A new classroom has been built and the dining area has been increased which now provides the students with a choice of hot food and snacks. This Gathering night out is a fundraiser to help defray the cost of the build.

Martina Jennings of the Organising Committee stated "The school has been part of the fabric of the town and hinterland for many generations of young ladies and has provided an outstanding standard of education for all who attended. If you feel you can give back a small amount to your former school, come along on the night and support the fundraiser and even if you are unable to attend, a contribution would be gratefully accepted."

Tickets are €20 each and are available through the school or from any committee member. For more information, contact Marie 087 6706883, Martina 087 1262310, or Joan 086 3985406. School Email: ardscuilmhuire@eircom.net Find us on Facebook: 'Ardscuil Mhuire Reunion'

Garbally Summer Camp at Carlton

This Year Garbally College Special Needs Class held their Summer Camp in C Club at The Carlton Shearwater Hotel. There were nine students and six helpers involved. Every day brought new and exciting activities and outings such as: Viking Cruise in Athlone, the Aquarium in Galway and a visit to feed the animals in Turoe Pet Farm. On another day we were put through our paces with a circuit class but it was great to unwind and relax in the pool and jacuzzi afterwards. The good weather made it a lot easier to get out and about. We had a great adventure searching for clues in our treasure hunt which lead us to the playground. We would like to thank the staff of the C Club at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, especially Elaine, for use of the facilities and for being so kind to us. We are already looking forward to the Camp next summer!



Participants at the Summer Camp



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The Place Where I Was Born

Writes John Boland

Ballinasloe's Active Retirement Association Vice-Chairman John Boland won first place in their prestigious national short story competition with this entry.

As a child, it was my universe. Like the Connacht Tribune, "all human life was here." The humble whitewashed home nestled into the hilly landscape, its back set defiantly against the prevailing S.W. wind. Two small green windows broke the virginal white of the rear wall. Six green and white geranium shrouded apertures, with weight and pulley sashes lined the front east facing defenses, like Greek soldiers awaiting the arrival of Persian hoards. Ever ready, eyes wide open; they kept watch over all strangers who ventured along the weed-strewn gravel roadway and the loud cattle in the field beyond. Lace half-curtains provided strategic spy holes for would-be special agents within. Cats sunning themselves on cut-stone sills, never quite slept, but rather snoozed in the warm sun of memory.

The historic and original building, referred to in Griffith's Valuation of 1850 as "The Herd's House" had long shed its humble beginnings and consisted of a four roomed central thatched, double chimneyed edifice, with two slated and timber-floored rooms sat either end. To-day one of these would be grandly referred to as the "master bedroom", also served as a depository for Santa's Christmas gifts.

The other was referred to as "the room". Here was grand furniture, almost complete wedding gift delph sets, and yellowing bone handled cutlery. Unknown uncles and aunts peered severely at us from sepia photographs in heavy ornate frames. Crocheted tablecloths rested uncomfortable in musty drawers. Here also stood the piano and its far from interesting music stool, which one could raise or lower with a spin. Here we sat grandly but not comfortably on special occasions and never with feet on the upholstery on the settee. A square of woolen carpet, surrounded with shellacked floorboards, was the exact replica of the one in the flying carpet stories of the Arabian fame.

The kitchen was far more user friendly and at the heart of all the action really. A large open fireplace with two polished hobs filled one end of the room. One of these formed a repository for ashes, the other anchored an iron crane, bristling with adjustable hooks, and swinging like a single bar gate over the eternal flame of the turf fire. On its blackened hooks hung, inter alia, a singing kettle, humming the eternal music of tea making, while the lime coated marble banged against its metal sides. Always during the pitch-black wind whispering night, the tuneless crickets sang to their mates. Above, goblins and fairies flew past the smoke belching chimney top, unable to gain entry into our happy human world.

Ranged around the hearth was a collection of chairs and stools. Father sat, as he felt was his right, I suppose, in the armchair at the right of the fire. Mother sat on a straight backed kitchen chair on the left, nearest the turf-box. She was the keeper of the flame, a Celtic female tradition, no doubt invented by men. In between the parents, sat the motley crew of children, rejoicing in the physical and human warmth of family, savoring affection and security in the few hours before bedtime.

At the other end of the room stood the dresser – "filled with shining delph, speckled and white and blue and brown". Three large and very interesting oval platters, used only to display the steaming turkey at Christmas, filled the shelf. At the right of the dresser rested two enamel coated buckets of fresh water from the well in the yard. The lower part of the dresser



contained the dried orange peel, spice-smelling, sweet-tasting ingredients of our mother's baking. Here the Orient met the West, the strange powders transformed mundane meals into dishes that would leave Nigella floundering. Between them and the delph were two drawers, more important than the Holy Grail. Here creation was still ongoing. Everything needed to pump a bike, repair, adjust, revive, or regulate any matter, was always to be found "in the drawer of the dresser".

At the window, and beneath the large wall mounted oil-lamp, stood the well scrubbed wooden table covered in a floral oilcloth. This was the Reno of the 1940's Ireland! Here fortunes were bet on the turn of a card, and whole pennies wagered on whether your opponent really had the five of trumps after all. Draughts, Snakes and Ladders, Cludo and any number of board games were dragged out to while away the fast passing and rarely appreciated hours of youth.

A night-time knock on the door brought instant reaction indoors. Ashes were swept aside, turf added to the already ample fire, the kettle lowered on its hook to sing more readily towards boiling point. Visitors were always welcomed by young and old. Tea was made and bread, butter and jam handed around. All drank strong tea... "strong enough to trot a mouse on". Stories were told, prices of cattle discussed and later when the young ones were in bed, the meaty gossip of the day revealed. Some neighbours were better than others for news in those pre CNN, or Sky News days. Hitler and Churchill may have had their problems destroying or saving the world, but who was "going out" with whom, or better still who was no longer going out with whom, was of far greater importance in the place where I was born.

Beyond the house was the wider world of cattle, horses and sheep. Dogs constantly dashed around busily, inviting them to give them work. The cockerel crowed importantly, scratching hens ignored him; the ducks waddled in a line to the nearby stream as it noisily made its weedy way to the river.

In the intimacy of the home we learned more than any university ever taught. We learned the love of family and friends, and the importance of place, especially the place where I was born. We were infused with its colours; its ever changing geography, sounds, and varied population. But most of all we were marked for life by the values it gave us. 

St. Brigid's Dramatic Society

Writes Owen Dunne

St. Brigid's Dramatic Society was originally formed by the staff of the local psychiatric hospital to entertain both patients and the public. Although it now ceases to be there are many people with fond memories of the popular drama group. Many plays and performances were produced by the acting collective including: *Ernie's Incredible Hallucinations*, *Ghosts*, *The Highest House on the Mountain* and *Juno & The Paycock*.

Stage performance had been an interest for many who worked in St. Brigid's so it was no real surprise that a dramatic group was set up in the late 1970's. "It originated from a Christmas concert group comprising of staff members who had been staging an annual entertainment for the patients over several years. Liam Curley, a psychiatric nurse at the time, was the prime mover. He had been acting with the Relays Group in town and felt there was sufficient talent and commitment in the hospital for a viable theatre society. Apart from Liam, other founding members would have included: Pat Black, Pat Clarke, Mary Cuddy, Frank Dooley and Rosemary Harney" stated former Producer Barry Lally.

Soon enough the group of acting enthusiasts grew in numbers and interest. They then began to perform more often at different events in the locality including the famous GALA



Cast of the 1981 festival production of Teresa Deevey's *The King of Spain's Daughter*

week in St. Brigid's. The decision was then made for the group to enter the festival circuit. "We decided to go on and do other plays and to get involved with the Drama League and Festivals and go into competition. Because we were a small group we were entered into the confined section. In order to raise funds however we used to put on plays for the public in town to help finance ourselves" recalled Society member Mary O'Connell.

Many of the group's local plays were performed in the newly built hall in St. Brigid's which Ms. O'Connell regarded as a top class facility. "We had a fine hall in St. Brigid's that had the most amazing acoustic qualities. It had a full size stage, full lighting system and beautiful dressing rooms. It was a fabulous amenity."

Former first Secretary of the Group Frank Dooley recalls "As well as performing locally the group also ventured further

afield to places such as Loughrea, Tubbercurry, Galway City, Enniskillen and Claregalway."

There was a great social aspect to the society also as Mr. Lally pointed out. "It provided a social outlet for its members that was unique. The trips to all the different festivals were enjoyed most. Some very late nights (or early mornings!) were involved; however we were all young and didn't mind".

The group of budding actors became closer and closer and everyone always felt obliged to help each other out in any circumstance. "We were very fortunate that all members shared the responsibility of each production. It would not be unusual to find the leading lady constructing or striking the set" recalled former member Liam Curley.

As time went by however less and less people were able to make the necessary commitments to put on shows and run the Society. As a result of these problems it was discontinued. "Maybe the society had run its course; the gloss had worn off it. Also, the Western Health Board stopped recruiting trainee psychiatric nurses in the mid-1980's so as a result a pool of prospective new members dried up" said Barry Lally.

This did not mark the end of the members interests in acting however as many joined Relays to continue their love for stage craft in Drama, Musicals and even as Dames in Pantoland! 🐉

History Repeats itself in Creagh

Writes Owen Dunne

There is an old saying that claims History tends to repeat itself. This was most certainly backed up recently, when a wedding took place in Our Lady of Lourdes Church Creagh.

On the 8th November 1933 Thomas and Alice Hogan became the first couple to be married in the brand new Our Lady of Lourdes Church Creagh by Fr. Edward Hughes. 80 years later Thomas and Alice Hogan's grand-daughter Áine Hogan married Alan Loughnane and became the first couple to wed in the newly refurbished Church on Saturday 1st June 2013.

Áine is a primary school teacher in Newtown National School, Creagh and is the 7th child and only daughter of Seán and Ann Hogan from Creagh. Alan is a carpenter from Clonfad, Oldtown. His parents are Mary and Pdraig Loughnane. His grandmother is Tess Loughnane who is living in Mackney. 🐉



Show's Showjumping Success

Writes Owen Dunne

A three-day Show Jumping programme was held recently in the local showgrounds. Large crowds attended to watch some great exhibitions of Show Jumping. The large event brought entries from all over Ireland and concluded with a Grand Prix with 35 horses taking part.

The winner of the Grand Prix was Michael Duffy, on his horse Carthago 11Z, 2nd was Jessica Burke with her horse Woodfield Sameneo, 3rd was Shane Goggins on Timiduan Cruise. In 4th place was Gabriel Slattery on Magic Touch. 5th was Michael Duffy on Torino and in 6th was Daren Hopkins on Mister Cruise.

The Gullanes Hotel €1,000 high-wall competition took place on Saturday evening with 6 horses taking part. It started off at a height of 5'8" and by the fifth round it was down to two horses as they both went clear at 6'6". Joint winners were eventually announced with Gabriel Slattery on his horse *The Captains Tough* and Paddy MacDonagh on *Gerry Maguire*.

The Show Committee now move on to prepare for the 2013 Agricultural Show. "Our attention now turns to the annual show which is taking place next September with the planning for the 5 All-Ireland Finals taking place again this year. There will be classes for horses, ponies, donkeys, cattle and sheep with the poultry competitions also taking place" said Chairman of the Show Committee John Harney.

The show which takes place on Saturday the 28th of September, will be sure to attract large crowds with many events and activities planned. Judging on the day will commence at 10am sharp.

Entries for the event close on Friday 20th September and can be made through Secretary John Harney at 090 9642266. If you would like to receive more information you can visit their website at: www.ballinasloeshow.com or follow them on Facebook at Ballinasloe Horse and Agricultural Show. 🐾



The Concannon's team who won the team event with Fr. Michael McCormack and Helen Donoghue



Peter O'Connor presenting 1st place to Jim Dervan winner of the 5 year-old competition



Joint 1st in the Highwall Event Paddy McGuire and JP Slattery with Catherine Carr of Gullane's

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New Chairman of Fair & Festival

Writes Owen Dunne

The local Fair and Festival committee recently elected their new Chairman for the coming year. Adrian Ahern will replace Timmy Broderick who served as Chairman for the previous three years. Mr. Ahern has been involved in many voluntary organisations down through the years including the likes of Accord, Civil Defence, Order of Malta and School Boards of Management. He first came to Ballinasloe from Portlaoise in 1996. He retired in the last 12 months as the Area Manager of Mental Health Services for Roscommon and East Galway.

He now looks forward to facing many of the challenges that lay ahead for the festival committee's main project. "Myself and my fellow committee members look forward to tackling some of the challenges that face the October Fair. Our main aims are to organise one of Europe's longest running Fairs, while taking on the economic problems it has now come up against. We would also love to develop the quality of the horses at the fair while creating a real family feel to the event" stated Mr. Ahern.

Mr. Ahern expects a larger crowd than usual at this year's fair. "We expect a massive crowd to attend from all across the country. We will also host a number of French tourists as a result of our twinning with French town, Chalonnes Sur Loire, as well as many other nationalities because of the Gathering 2013".

The Festival committee also hopes to increase the heritage value associated with the fair. "We want to strengthen the marvellous heritage value that the October Fair has. We will be holding a memorabilia exhibition in the Emerald Ballroom during the Fair which will be showcasing a lot of the dead or dying trades associated with the equine trade".

Engagement with one of Ballinasloe's biggest events has never been questionable as Mr Ahern notes by saying: "We are lucky that we receive a lot of support from so many locals, the Town Council and the Gardai as well as other local authorities. Many



people in the town have a great love for horses and because of this we always get a large number of these groups willing to volunteer for the fair".

With expenses running higher and higher Mr. Ahern realises the importance of the voluntary help and donations to the fair. "It's getting more and more expensive to run the fair. As a result we are totally reliant on the very generous people who give of their time and money. We would be delighted to have people help out in any way they can" said Mr. Ahern. If you would like to volunteer at this years October Fair you can contact Mary Phelan at 090 9643916

For more information please visit their website at www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com or on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/ballinasloe.fair

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Gathering Art Quilt Project



Writes Owen Dunne

Following an initiative by two local artists, Jackie Eastwood and Heather Rafter, a collaborative art project to celebrate the 2013 Gathering has recently come to fruition.

The Home-Coming Patchwork Quilt art project invited artists of all ages from Ballinasloe and surrounds to design a 4" x 4" artwork based on the theme of "Homecoming". Over 250 squares were produced by over 170 artists of all ages to form a large patchwork quilt which will be hung in the windows of the former National Irish Bank in Main St, Ballinasloe. Imaginative designs from cups of tea to the well known "black stuff", an embrace to words of welcome, have culminated in a colourful array of the artists' own personal, and at times emotional, representations of the "Homecoming". Sponsors of this exciting

project were Ballinasloe Mental Health Association, BK Frames, KPW Print, Salmons Department Store, and the local Chamber of Commerce. Support and encouragement were also received from the Ballinasloe August Homecoming Group.

Co-Organiser Jackie Eastwood said "The 2013 Gathering was a fabulous opportunity for artists of all ages to work together to produce an exciting artwork to enhance the town and celebrate the "Homecoming". We are very grateful to everyone who took the time to take part in this project which has resulted in a magnificent and colourful work of art. We are also very grateful to all our sponsors who have made this project possible. There are a lot of talented people in Ballinasloe and we hope there will be more fun projects like this in the future to allow artists to unite for the benefit of our town." The Homecoming quilt will be on display in the town over the coming few weeks.

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Cardinal Wiseman from Seville

Writes Barry Lally

While travelling about in Spain some twenty or more years ago I found myself one day in the old Jewish quarter of Seville when my attention was drawn to a plaque on a nearby building.

The Spanish inscription read in translation: "On 2nd August 1802 Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster, was born in this house, a luminary of the Catholic Clergy and a worthy son of his fatherland. Their Excellencies on the city council ordered the erection of this plaque to preserve the memory of a most illustrious Sevillano 1865."

I was immediately reminded of a life-size portrait in oils of the prelate in question that once adorned the sacristy walls of St. Michael's Church. How the painting came to hang there is a tale that is perhaps worth telling.

Nicholas Patrick Wiseman, as his name suggests, was not of Spanish parentage. The younger son of an Irish merchant family who had settled in Seville, on his father's death in 1805 he was brought to his parent's home in Waterford. After a number of years he was sent to further his education in England, from whence he eventually proceeded to Rome to study for the priesthood. Following his ordination he was appointed rector of the English college in 1828, an office he held until 1840.

Wiseman soon acquired a reputation as an outstanding authority on oriental



The portrait of Cardinal Wiseman that once hung in the sacristy of St. Michael's Church.

studies and an exceptionally gifted linguist, speaking six languages fluently. His fame spread abroad, with many distinguished visitors to Rome eager to make his acquaintance, amongst them the Ballinasloe-born Power Trench, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Tuam.

The newly-built St. Michael's Church was scheduled for consecration on 25th August 1858, and the Bishop of Clonfert, John Derry, who incidentally, had been born in a Dunlo Street public house, decided to shed lustre on the event by inviting Wiseman to preach at the ceremony. Appointed Archbishop of Westminster in 1849, Wiseman had been raised to the Cardinalate the following year. Derry's choice of Preacher was entirely appropriate because Wiseman had received Augustus Welby Pugin into the Catholic Church in 1834, and it was

this Pugin, the foremost exponent of the Gothic revival in architecture, who had substantially revised the plans for St. Michael's.

A carnival atmosphere seems to have prevailed in Ballinasloe during Wiseman's visit. An estimated twenty-five thousand people gathered in the town where all available accommodation was booked to capacity. Special trains were run for the occasion, bringing clergy and laity from all over Ireland. Following the Cardinal's arrival at the local railway station, the horses were removed from his carriage half-way to the town and he was drawn in triumph by prominent citizens through the streets festooned with banners, ribbons and Chinese Lanterns.

Nicholas Patrick Wiseman, who was the first Cardinal to visit Ireland since Rinuccini in the 1640s, died on 16th February 1865 and was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery. Forty-two years later his body was exhumed and re-interred in the Crypt of Westminster cathedral, where it lies beneath a Gothic altar tomb, with a recumbent effigy of the Cardinal in full pontificals.



The plaque in Seville marking the birthplace of Cardinal Wiseman.

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Siobhan Dervan Resumes Her Winning Ways

A Ballinasloe born international cyclist won the National Duathlon Championships just 10 months after retiring from cycling. Racing for Cork TC, Siobhan Dervan-Horgan was the first woman to cross the line, with the next falling over two minutes behind her. She placed 33rd out of 163, finishing in just over two hours. Three Rock Triathlon Club in Ashford, Co. Wicklow, played host to the 55km circuit in April, the majority of which was made up of Dervan-Horgan's speciality, cycling. Siobhan Dervan-Horgan, daughter of Joan and John Joe Dervan, left behind her career as an international bike rider after the cycling World Championships in the Netherlands, but her competitive blood never ran dry. She continued to cycle after retirement and took up running to stay in top condition. Her post-retirement fitness regime has paid off and this win is now added to her five national road racing titles.



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Hymany Way on our Doorstep



Writes Owen Dunne

The Beara-Breifne Way, famous for the epic march of O'Sullivan Beare from the Beara peninsula in January 1603 contains 12 walking trails, one of which is The Hymany Way, which passes right through Ballinasloe, on its way up through East Galway.

This 90 km trail, beginning in Portumna and ending in Ballygar is a potentially massive tourist attraction with incredible scenery, flora and fauna to be witnessed. The East Galway section of the famous march is clearly signposted and traverses the most beautiful and least explored of local areas; with its watercourses, including the biodiversity of the River Shannon

and the species-rich mosaic of habitats along its banks, cutover and drained and raised bog, forest paths and quiet country roads. The route takes in rich collections of features which will ensure that many walkers will want to linger along the way.

Secretary of the Aughrim Development Assoc. Mary McLoughlin believes that it is something Ballinasloe people should be making more use of.

"People have a hidden treasure right on their doorstep that they are totally unaware of. There are plenty of sites to see on the Ballinasloe section of the walk which begins once it crosses the Shannon at Coololla passing along through Carrowmore, Knockglass, Cappagh, Kilmalaw and Killure More'. A good deal of the pathway crosses large swathes of Poolboy Bog and through the southern aspects of the Battlefield of Aughrim. Along the Ballinasloe route walkers will come across an old Standing Stone from the Bronze Age, the Esker Riada and Cloonigny Castle," said Mary McLoughlin.

If you are not a 'big walker' you can also hop on your bike and take the cycle route that runs along the walking trail.

Walkers and cyclists will also be delighted to hear that a new FREE app has been designed and produced by the Galway Rural Development Board and the Tourism Agencies specifically for the Hymany Way walk. "The Hymany Way smartphone app has been developed for smartphones, tablets, Apple and Android platforms, and is now available to download free of charge.

It enables users to plan their cycling and walking routes along the designated routes of the Hymany Way" said Marketing Director Brigette Brew. Features of the app include: GPS Route Mapping, Points of interest (including text and audio information), image galleries, information on the area and surrounding attractions.

For more information on the walk you can visit the website www.hymanyway.org or their Facebook page: Hymany Way. Mini booklets will also be available in various stores & hotels around the town.

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Moore Scouts

Writes Owen Dunne

Last year a small gathering of people began the Moore Scouts group. After just one year the local Scouting association now has over 40 members including Leaders, Teen Leaders, Cubs and Beavers, who are all looking forward to starting back in Autumn for the new season.

In February of this year they marked the formal beginning of the club with an inaugural investiture. Both children and Scout leaders received their neckerchiefs and woggles (the official uniform, neck fastener) after being sworn in to Scouting Ireland. The group was then presented with a Scouting Ireland flag by the Assistant County Commissioner, James O'Toole. As well as parents and friends, Denis Naughton, TD was a very welcome guest on the night.

As it is the only scouting group between Loughrea and Athlone they take in children from all over the locality. "We have children from Moore, Ballydangan and Ballinasloe between the ages of 6 and 11. They arrive every Tuesday at Moore Hall to learn new skills, play games and forge friendships" said Club PRO Sinead Colleran. The group keep very active all throughout the year with plenty of activities. Just one glance at their Website, Facebook page or blog will show how busy they have been. "We have had many outings this year including: Overnight Camping Trips, Obstacle Courses, a visit to Beechlawn Organic Farm, an evening with Thomas Connaughton and members of the Civil Defence, a day at the Pantomime in Ballinasloe Town Hall, a march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, a cleanup of Moore Hall's surrounding area and lots of games and adventures in between" noted Ms. Colleran.

Various activities are organised every evening for members as group leader David Daly explained: "Typically the Beavers arrive at 6.15pm and might get up to anything that evening, from making posters, playing games to cooking! They are a very eager bunch of children and are always very busy. The Cub scouts are a little bit older and arrive at about 7.15pm.



After roll call they split up into their "Sixes" (Wolves, Tigers and Bears). They might learn a new knot, some first aid skills or do some brainstorming for an activity".

There is a great sense of enthusiasm from everyone involved in the group, especially the kids. "They are the driving force behind our activities, they're very enthusiastic and no one is ever bored. We are also very fortunate to have 3 excellent Teenage Leaders who are great with the children and are a valuable addition" said Mr. Daly.

The Moore Scouts finished the 2012-2013 season on a high note with an end of year party recently. An Awards Ceremony also took place where members were rewarded for their efforts throughout the year. Their plans for 2013-2014 are even more ambitious than the year gone by with Camping Excursions and visits to different parts of Ireland on their agenda, including a trip to climb Croagh Patrick in Summer 2014 to raise funds for a charity of their choosing.

Numbers in the group are steadily increasing and as a result more adult helpers are needed as Deputy Group Leader Nicola Johnston points out: "Due to the success of our group, demand for places is very high and Moore Scouts need new adult scouters for when they start back in the Autumn".

Find out how you can help out or catch up on all their news visit moorescouts.com or [facebook.com/moorescouts](https://www.facebook.com/moorescouts)

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.



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From Aughrim to Arsenal F.C.

Writes Ken Kelly

An Aughrim Sports Fitness Advisor has been appointed to head a team of fitness experts at one of the top English Football Clubs, Arsenal FC in North London. For 38-year-old Des Ryan, it is a dream come true for the former Fitness Education Manager with Connacht Rugby and the Irish Rugby Football Union.

Des, who is son of Kevin and Ann Ryan, went to school in St. Catherine's N.S. before receiving his secondary education at St. Joseph's College, Garbally Park. There he excelled in athletics, winning a Connacht schools' medal in the 400 metres hurdles and receiving the prestigious Sports Award in his Leaving Cert year. He became a committed member of the Ballinasloe Athletic Club, where, under the guidance of Padraic Hennelly, he was successful at many sports meetings around the country.

Later, Des moved to St. Mary's College, London from where he graduated in 1997 with an Honours Degree in Sport, Science and Geography. He took up the post of PE teacher in Garbally College, where he trained the College's rugby squads before his talents were spotted by Gerry Kelly, the CEO of Connacht Rugby, who had him appointed as Rugby Development Officer for schools and colleges around the county.

Following a two-year stint, Des joined Connacht Rugby where he was senior head fitness advisor for eight seasons



before being promoted to the IRFU as Fitness Development Manager in 2008. He worked with a number of Irish sides, including the victorious Triple Crown side of 2002, the Ireland A squad for the Six Nations and Churchill Cup and played a key role in the developing players such as Eoin Reddan, Johnny O'Connor, Gavin Duffy, Jerry Flannery, Damien Browne, John Muldoon, Mark McHugh, Bernard Jackman and Paul Warwick.

The Aughrim man was also involved with teams in other sports and was in charge of fitness with the Roscommon team when they won the 2001 Connacht Senior Football Championship. He was also part of Peter Ford's Galway management team for three years, which won the 2005 Connacht Senior Championship and Under-21 All-Ireland title.

Des has spoken at many seminars and addressed sporting bodies on fitness and conditioning in many countries and following one of these at Arsenal FC in London he was approached by former Irish international, Liam Brady and invited for an interview. He was successful and

was appointed on a three-year contract as Head of Sports Medicine and Athletic Development at Arsenal's Academy for 10-19 year-olds. Ryan has enlisted the help of former rugby internationals, Johnny O'Connor (Connacht) and Jerry Flannery (Munster) as interns for the coming season, both of whom he had worked with in their playing days. The pair are part of the strength and conditioning team at the Academy. The trio are part of a large Irish contingent working behind the scenes at the Emirates.

Ryan's talents were recognised some years ago by Dr. Liam Hennessy, Academic Director Setanta College, Thurles, a former Fitness Manager with the IRFU and with whom Des is now involved in coaching and talks to many bodies. Des' wife Lara Coyne, is a chartered Physiotherapist working in Galway, having set up her own practice in 2005. The Castlebar native was physiotherapist for the Connacht Rugby team from 2001 to 2005, with the Galway Ladies' football teams from 2002 to 2007, with Mayo senior footballers in 2005 and 2006 as well as Mayo minor footballers in 2005.

Modest Des said he is honoured to have been appointed to work at a world-famous club like Arsenal. "Along the way I've met many supportive people but two Ballinasloe men, Padraic Hennelly and Gerry Kelly, had a huge influence on my career. They encouraged me in the early days and gave me the confidence to pursue my dreams" he added.

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Killimor's History Book Launch



Writes Owen Dunne

A book on the history and people of Killimor Parish, *Killimor: Our Parish and Our People*, was launched recently by Mr. Conor Newman, Chairman of the Heritage Council, and Councillor Tom Welby, Mayor of County Galway, in Killimor Community Centre.

This very informative read was the culmination of over eight years of research by Editor Angela Geoghegan and Associate Editor Nuala McGann. The launch was attended by over five hundred people from the local area and further afield. The publication, containing twenty-one chapters and over three hundred and eighty images, was greatly appreciated by all present.

The book is the story of the Parish, researched and documented for the community and those with links to the locality. "It is their story, made by them

and by their families down through the centuries. This publication endeavours to highlight the things that influenced and affected the people's lives: the land which many of them occupied, their struggle to survive despite adverse circumstances, their education and religion, the effects of famine and emigration, their sporting prowess and ability to live successful lives" said Editor of the publication Mrs Geoghegan.

During research, considerable use was made of documents, maps, photographs, historical books, interviews and explanatory notes. "Some of our sources included John O'Donovan, Lewis, The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland, and The Enhanced Parliamentary Papers of Ireland. Information was drawn from the Books of Survey and Distribution, the Tithing Applotment Books, Griffith's Valuation, Ordnance Survey Name Books, Census Records, the Placenames

Commission and documents from the National Archives. Nearer to home we used the diocesan archives, local church records, school records, as well as ledgers, day-books and bill-heads from local business people, some people even granted access to private letters and documents" stated Nuala McGann.

Angela and Nuala had ample help from local historians and researchers including Marie Mannion who was huge help. "The Heritage Officer for Co. Galway, Marie Mannion was with us from the beginning. Marie led the way forward all the time with direction, advice, encouragement and a very positive attitude. We were also very lucky with the helpful nature of all our other contributors, whose houses we visited. We were received with such welcome and hospitality while being given a wealth of information" said Angela and Nuala.

"We hope parishioners, ex-parishioners and everyone with an interest in local history, will enjoy reading *Killimor: Our Parish and Our People*. We dedicate it to the people of Killimor, past, present and future" stated Mrs Geoghegan.

The 770 page book, printed by KPW Ballinasloe can be bought in Duffy's or Concannon's Supermarkets and Killimor Heritage Centre for €35 (Hardback) or €25 (Paperback). More information can be obtained by calling 090 9676565 or emailing killimorheritage@eircom.net

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Caltra's Community at Work!



The new Community Centre

Writes Gabriel Naughton

In Caltra the skyline has changed forever, with the construction of a new Community Centre, at the outskirts of the village. It is a well designed, modern building with many attractive architectural features.

It is now almost three years since the initial idea for the construction of a new community centre was suggested and many locals thought it would never happen! But, following the establishment of the Caltra Community Centre Development Association (CCCDa) and the massive support of the community the project is about to become a reality. The fantastic new centre is due to open before the end of this year and will boast a large multi-purpose hall, kitchen, office, meeting rooms, gym, showers and toilets.

The parish of Ahascragh/Caltra has a close-knit local population with a strong community development focus, evident from the level of involvement in various clubs, associations and initiatives in the area. Following a detailed survey of the community, it was obvious that there was a huge desire to address the existing lack of community facilities. The CCCDA decided to address this infrastructure deficit through the development of a new community centre, and in time, an adjoining playground. These new facilities will attend to the needs of the local population and become an important asset in sustaining a strong community spirit in the region.

Projects of this scale obviously require significant finance and the CCCDA were successful in securing 75% of the total project costs from Galway Rural Development (GRD). For this, the members of the community will be forever grateful to GRD. Nevertheless, the balance (25%) has to be made up through local voluntary labour and cash. Many members and organisations in the community have been very generous in providing money through donations, loans and assisting with various fund raising initiatives. The most significant of these included a huge collection and sale of scrap metal, which brought in €45,000. Thanks to the local IFA for leading this initiative.

The construction of the building began in earnest in January, this year, and in the space of four weeks over 15,000 blocks were laid, all through local voluntary labour. At the week-ends we had close on thirty locals working on the construction -

this is the single most impressive feature of the project and demonstrates the power of the local community.

The completed centre will be used for all sorts of events, activities and meetings as there are a large number of very active clubs and organisations in the parish, that includes for example; Ahascragh/Fohenagh Hurling Club; Caltra GAA Club; Local Community Development Groups; Tidy Towns Committees; Irish Farmers Association (IFA); Irish Country Women's Association (ICA); Ahascragh/Caltra Community Games; Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann; Caltra Cuans Ladies Football Club; Local Bridge Clubs; Ahascragh/Caltra/Fohenagh Camogie Club; Ahascragh/Caltra Macra na Feirme, Pastoral Councils, local Soccer Clubs, Ahascragh/Caltra Scór na nÓg and many more.

In the last couple of weeks the CCCDA (along with the local GAA club) launched a massive Development Draw. The proceeds from the draw will go towards the completion of the Community Centre and the progression of an equally significant GAA pitch and Clubhouse development (also, on the same site). The tickets are selling for €20 each with three available for €50. The CCCDA and the GAA have set a minimum target of €100,000 to deliver from the fund-raiser, with the funds to be split equally between both developments. Twenty three prizes in total are on offer, with the top prize a new Renault Dacia Sandero car, worth €11,000. The total prize money is over €17,000.

Teams of ticket sellers are presently calling door to door throughout the county. Tickets are now available to purchase from the officers of the CCCDA and Caltra GAA. Tickets will also be available on-line through the Caltra GAA Website www.caltra.gaa.ie and both organisations Facebook accounts.



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All-Ireland Track & Field Report



Writes Owen Dunne

The local Athletics Club were well represented recently by many local boys and girls who competed in the All-Ireland Underage Track and Field Championships in Finn Valley Athletic Club Donegal. These young athletes who had qualified from Connaught represented the town superbly.

Plenty of medals were won by the young athletes. The medal winners included: Shane Fitzpatrick and Charlie Naughton (U10 60m sprint), Shane Fitzpatrick and Conor Harley (U10, 500m), Conor Harley, Shane Fitzpatrick, Mark Kilkenny and Charlie Naughton (Boys U10, 4x100m Relay). Shane Fitzpatrick and Charlie Naughton also teamed up with Evan Hayes and Liam Collins in a hotly contested U11 4x100m relay.

The young girls from the club also ran brilliantly. The following girls who took part in the Championships were: Ava McKeon and Caoimhe Ni Thuairisg (U9 Girls 60m & 300m sprint), Shauna and Emma Mitchell (U10 Girls 60M sprint), These girls also combined in the U10 4x100m relay making it all the way to the final. Shane Jennings also flew the Ballinasloe flag at the recent AAI Connaught Championships recording a personal best of 1 minute 41 seconds, winning the U13 600m in the brand new AIT track. Shane also brought home silver in the 80m sprint.

He only recently took part in the All-Ireland Championships in Tullamore and represented the club very well. Club coach and Secretary Ann Burke was full of praise for the athletes and their parents. "We are lucky to have such fantastic young boys and girls in our club. I'm very proud of them. The support from all the parents has been fantastic also."

Athletic attention now turns to Athlone where many of the town's young runners will take part in the annual August Community Games. These locals have been put through their paces at various events around the country and have successfully qualified for the games through the Galway and Connaught games.

Chairperson of the local Community Games committee Carmel Greally is happy with how preparations are going. "Preparations are going extremely well thanks to the work put in by the parents and most importantly the young athletes. Everyone is looking forward to the games on Aug 16th-18th" It is a great achievement for the town to have so many competing in the national finals. This is something that Mrs. Greally is very pleased about. "We are all very proud of our young athletes and we wish them every success in Athlone. Everyone in the town is behind them."

For more information on the Community Games you can visit www.communitygamesfestival.com

BELOW IS THE LIST OF THOSE WHO WILL TAKE PART IN THIS YEAR'S COMMUNITY GAMES.

| Name | Event |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Charlie Naughton | U10 100M & U10 Mixed Relay |
| Emma Mitchell | U10 200M & U10 Mixed Relay |
| Conor Harley | U10 60M Hurdles & U10 Mixed Relay |
| Emma Loughnane | U14 Long Puck |
| Brian Burke | U16 Marathon |
| Ava McKeon | U10 Mixed Relay |
| Shane Fitzpatrick | U10 Mixed Relay |
| Sauna Mitchell | U10 Mixed Relay |

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Soccer Club Summer Camp

Writes Owen Dunne

The Ballinasloe Town Annual Soccer Summer Camp was held recently in a sun drenched Curragh grounds. Club member Barry O'Connor organised the week's activities. Over 70 kids of primary school age participated in what was a very enjoyable week for both Coaches and Children. Each child received a participation medal along with a Ballinasloe Town Gym goodie bag containing a football and shin guards which was presented by Town Mayor Mike Kelly and Councillor Johnny Walsh.

Summer Camp organiser and Club Treasurer Barry O'Connor was very pleased with the week's activities. "We just want to say a huge thanks to all who came to the camp. It was a fantastic week and thoroughly beneficial for all who took part.

I'd like to give a special mention to our coaches Gary Egan, Sean Dean, David Cullen, Ciaran Keighery & Francis Egan along with everyone who showed up for all their help including the parents, in making the week a magnificent success."

In other soccer news: The Ballinasloe Town AFC Masters team were recently defeated in the Roscommon Masters Cup Semi-Final by neighbours St. Peters of Athlone. The Masters is a hotly contested tournament and it was a great achievement to get so far.



Coaches and Children pictured with Mayor Mike Kelly on Friday after their presentation of the goodie bags



Cousins Iesha Egan, Noah Fallon, Cayson Walsh, Aaron Fallon with Coach Gary Egan on Friday



Evan & Adam Styne who took part in the Summer Camp.



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International Hurling Festival

Writes Darren Kelly

The age old argument as to where the home of hurling is, will be settled for at least a week this coming September as County Galway prepares to host the Aer Lingus International Hurling Festival, with Ballinasloe as one of the hosting towns.

Hurling enthusiasts from all corners of the globe will descend on the town for a week of hurling which will run from the 18th-21st of September. Towns such as Gort, Loughrea and the West Galway area as well as Ballinasloe will see plenty of hurling action from visiting teams with the final taking place in Pearse Stadium. The town will welcome St. Gabriel's and Robert Emmet's Hurling Clubs from London along with a Chicago and an Australian All-Stars outfit. The Welcoming Ceremony will take place in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel on Wednesday 18th at 9pm to welcome these four teams to town.

Local Festival Committee member Darren Kelly noted the importance of the event for the town. "This competition will be Ballinasloe's chance to make its mark through a major sporting event. We will host one of the group stages of the tournament before the top two sides progress to the final in Galway City on Saturday."

Aer Lingus will be sponsoring the tournament and will provide buses for the visiting teams while representatives from the company will be in town. The Australian team will be entertained in town while the other three groups will descend on Shannon and Dublin airports on Wednesday.

In regards the tournament proper, the four teams will compete in a round-robin format on Thursday and Friday with the top team proceeding to the Tournament final on Saturday and the runners-up playing for the Shield.

"Sixteen teams in total will take part in the tournament across the county with the four teams being hosted Suck-side playing their group games in Duggan Park and the Ballinasloe GAA Grounds. The round robin games will take place on Thursday and Friday 19th-20th September," said Mr. Kelly.



Back (L-R): Pat O'Sullivan (Chairman, Ballinasloe GAA), Jim Lally (Hurling Committee), Darren Kelly (PRO), Michael Crowe (Shearwater), John Creaven (Hayden's Hotel), Willie Ward (Committee Chairman). Front: Catherine Johnston (Gullane's), Mary Hanniffy-Walsh (Event Co-Ordinator), Cllr Carmel Greally BTC

The teams will be staying in Haydens Hotel and the Shearwater Hotel while many of the travelling parties will also be in Gullane's Hotel. All three are supporting the festival and will be providing entertainment in the town along with other businesses in the town.

Town Councillor, Carmel Greally, sees this festival as a huge opportunity for the town to showcase all it has to offer. "It is a great chance for the people of the locality to put Ballinasloe firmly down on the map. We have great tradition of hospitality in the town and we hope to see many of our B&B's and our 3 hotels full for the week. The welcome mat is firmly down for the travelling teams and support," said Mrs. Greally.

Further details on this great event will be available on the *Ballinasloe Hurling Gathering* Facebook page or on the website www.hurlingfestival.com

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