

BALLINASLOELIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 3 Issue 4: Oct-Nov 2013

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LIAM KELLER: OVER 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS



OCTOBER FAIR & FESTIVAL PREVIEW



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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 3 Issue 4: Oct-Nov 2013

REAMHRÁ



So as they say in New England the Fall is upon us, in this district it is more marked with the hosting of a truly vibrant heritage and equestrian event – the Great October Fair, than with the changing of the leaves to autumnal gold. As we go to print we wish the various committees, groups and organisations the very best in staging a complex event and hope that the visitors enjoy themselves and their friends in a safe setting. To those emigre's who use the

October Fair to plan their seasonal trips homeward, you are very welcome back and be advised that copies of Life can be posted anywhere for a modest fee or indeed you can access it anywhere in the world on the net for Free!

I want to record my own personal thanks to a young UL undergraduate from Kilcormac, Owen Dunne who slaved on the reporters block for LIFE from January to August. He is enjoying the fruits of his labours in UMEA in Sweden on Erasmus (similar to a lot of our trainee reporters) and we wish him well in his future endeavours. I also want to welcome our latest UL Journalism undergraduate Pamela Ryan to the Reporters Role and thank her for delivering a baptism of fire, Volume 3: Edition 4.

The front cover and reportage on the demise and proposed closing of what is left of St. Brigids hospital after nearly 170 years of Psychiatric Care in this district is a saga still being played out. The coalition of interests that has been woven to reverse the decision is to be welcomed. As a community we seem to let these services ebb away with sometimes only a shrug, hopefully this campaign will be a line in the sand.

The State stood by and wrung it's hands with the loss of over 1000 manufacturing jobs in the last 15 years; either the HSE is responsible to the State and serves the broader best interests of patients and citizens or it's playing a different game. As a town with over 900 healthcare jobs we can not afford to loose this particular battle, in what will be a long war to hold on and develop what medical infrastructure we have left.

Le gach Dea Ghuí, Colm Croffy, Editor



It was great to see the huge turnout of clubs and organisations to exhibit what they have on offer in Gullane's Hotel at the Open day recently. It proves the point that Ballinasloe has a lot to offer East Galway and South Roscommon. Many individuals give up their free time and energy to provide a service to the community and it was very clear from that day that there is plenty available for all ages.

It was also evident from the various groups that they would welcome new members and volunteers. Not one of these groups survive on fresh air; fundraising is a vital part of any group's annual plans and it needs to be acknowledged that local business plays a huge role in their support throughout the year. Following on from this it is very reasonable to suggest that you give local retailers/service providers the first opportunity to meet needs that you will have, as by doing that you are keeping money circulating in the local economy. Local business will be doing a big drive to promote their wares over the coming months and we at Ballinasloe Life ask you to give them your support. Finally I would like to thank Eamon Donoghue who has acted a Company Manager for the past six months and welcome back Lyn Donnelly from her maternity leave.

*Seamus Duffy, Chairman,
Ballinasloe Area Community Development*

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Denis Naughten: T.D. in Profile

Over the coming months *Ballinasloe Life* will Profile all current Oireachtas members from the Roscommon-Galway Constituency.



By Colm Croffy

Independent TD Denis Naughten's family links with this area stretch down through the years and the Drum native is looking forward to working on behalf of the town of Ballinasloe and its hinterland in the newly created constituency of Roscommon-Galway now and, hopefully, after the next General Election.

The former Fine Gael Deputy was expelled from the party following the Government decision to go back on a firm pre-Election commitment regarding A&E services at Roscommon County Hospital. Denis, who has strong ties with East Galway, recounted how his mum, Mary, a Murray from Ahascragh, first met his late dad, who was a Fruit and Veg Distributer, over a box of spilled oranges on Society Street.

Probing for his earliest memory of the town it potently brings the past firmly into the present when he recalls his brother John and himself in the back of the car, with their Mother driving over and back each day to collect two patients from the Pines to help on his Dad's farm. "We hadn't started going to school at that stage and we were on that spin early in the morning to collect and in the evening to drop back, the two men Jimmy and Michael both from Connemara who taught me my first few words 'As Gaeilge'," he recalled.

His abiding memory however is getting the Show Monday off from school for the Fair, in common with all the schools of South Roscommon and East Galway. "I remember the Principal questioning us afterwards who had gone and sure in our house, with six brothers, we were mad into the whole event, indeed we still are," he laughs.

Whilst all the lads received their secondary education in Athlone, which is technically two miles nearer the homestead, the brothers mainly chose The Palm Club and the East County in town when they were of an age to enjoy the nightlife. "Usually with the great fun we had at weekends there was always one of us nearly every fortnight in Portiuncula with a sprain, break or stitch from all the different sports we were involved in," he adds

After graduating with a Science degree from Uuniversity Colleg Dublin and studying for a postgrad in University College Cork, Denis was first elected to the Seanad in the bye-Election in 1997, caused by his father's tragic death in a road traffic accident the previous November. He was elected as a TD in the General Election later that year and has been returned in every subsequent Election. He is married to Mary Tiernan, who trained in Portiuncula and they are raising a young family of four.

Turning to what he is confronting on a daily basis in the constituency, whether its educational services, medical cards or indeed social welfare support he is acutely aware of the hardship that people are experiencing, some of which is as a result of a lack of information. "I know that a lot of people's backs are to the wall, it is terrible to see people who have made a contribution to the State since they left school, who were never on the dole and now after the collapse of the economy don't know how to access the support systems that they have paid into for years" he outlines.

Looking at the pressing local issues Denis has aligned himself fully with the campaign to keep the 22-bed Acute Psychiatric Unit in St. Brigid's open. "From a Patient's perspective this planned closure makes no sense" he explains. "The Roscommon and Galway facilities are full and after €2.8 million of taxpayers' money has gone into upgrading the Ballinasloe facility it would be a scandalous shame to see the building closed."

He is nervous too about the long-term prospects for Portiuncula and its future in the University Hospital Galway-Roscommon Group. "The loss of our acute stroke service is a retrograde step, especially for stroke victims where the first few hours of intervention is critical" he explains. "Patients now have to

rely on getting to University Hospital Galway, but for every minute treatment is delayed a stroke victim loses two million brain cells. The service can and must, be provided in Ballinasloe.”

He is also of the view that investment in services and facilities, not reduction, is the way to secure the future of both St. Brigid’s and Portiuncula, “The range of consultants and the cover they are allowed to provide needs to be monitored as it has direct consequences for the A&E unit and indeed in time for our maternity services, which have an outstanding reputation” he states.

He is also adamant that encouraging native entrepreneurship and attracting new businesses to the Monksland-Ballinasloe Axis of the County should be fully exploited: “We need to upgrade the broadband in the town of Ballinasloe immediately; the water and sewage capacity needs to be enhanced. In the short-term the Suckfield wastewater plant in Beagh can accommodate additional demands because of its unique modular system. Both Roscommon and Galway County Councils must work closer together and in closer co-operation with the State agencies like the IDA and Enterprise Ireland to ensure that a common approach is taken to securing new jobs.”

He believes sincerely that too often we look to the disadvantages of the new motorway but as one of the very few towns with two access points (an east and west access link road) we should exploit the advantages: “Athlone is practically full in terms of affordable office space.

This town is only 20 minutes away on the motorway, it has brilliant schools, great public amenities including health services, wonderful sports facilities and good quality shopping; we need to rebrand the location as an excellent location for living and doing business.”

Denis also feels that with Portiuncula being earmarked for huge increase in day case procedures the town should exploit that opportunity: “A regular Shuttle Service running on a loop from the town centre to the hospital gates would be a great way to integrate the users of the hospital and their families a bit more with the businesses in the town centre.”

He cites Ardee (Co Louth) as another provincial town that services a wide rural hinterland as a model to study for the town. “They have redesigned services in the town to suit older people, many of which also have a knock-on benefit to young families; both are groups who avail of services in Portiuncula, so I think we can learn from their example because the footfall and connections of this town to its hinterland is significant, but maybe more could be done to engage and encourage them to shop and spend more time in the town centre,” he notes.

He agrees that paid parking and rates are key issues for urgent reform as they are acting as huge disincentives to business: “There is no doubt about it but we need a workable solution from the Dept. of Environment that will allow flexibility for the rating authorities and some break for the payer, if not all the town centres across provincial Ireland will decay.”

He is strongly of the view that the farmers of this area are very progressive but are watching carefully the shifting sands of the reform of the CAP: “Locally many farmers have been successful in securing single farm payments in the past, when compared to other parts of the West of Ireland. We need to make sure that we support suckler and sheep production through any changes to CAP funding. I also believe that there is potential locally as a result of the forthcoming expansion of the Dairy Sector, where local farms could provide replacement stock on a contract basis.” He also thinks that the next *Leader Rural Development Scheme* should be less paperwork orientated.

Musing about the future of the town he gets animated: “Between living, leisure and tourism this whole area has been a sleeping giant. The heritage resources of the town and its hinterland alone have never been fully exploited or marketed: The Suck Valley Way, The Hymany way, the new Cycleway from Athlone to the town on the old N6. We need to develop interesting tours and stops for the new leisure/activity visitor.

“There is a brilliant, sustainable future for this town with its abundance of agri-business and rich opportunities for the future but it can’t rely on the past models of large manufacturing factories” he concludes.

While Denis is not officially a T.D. for the Constituency he is available to assist people locally and has started a Clinic in Gullane’s Hotel every Tuesday by appointment. To book an appointment with him please call 090 6627557

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Town Council Invites Applications Grant Scheme

The Town Council is inviting applications from community, voluntary and sporting organisations and groups for a once-off grant for a once-off grant. This grant is eligible to those groups planning some form of capital project. This project may be an investment in new equipment, improvements to existing equipment or facilities, outdoor or community spaces, or the extension, improvement or establishment

of community buildings or facilities. Applications for this once-off prospect can be picked up from the Town Council Civic Offices, accessed on www.ballinasloe.ie or by emailing tclerk@ballinasloetc.ie. The closing date for receipt of applications is Thursday October 31 at 4pm. This offer is not to be missed and is a fantastic opportunity for all interested groups to bring to fruition their plans and ambitions!

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Tidiest Large Town in Galway



Back (L-R): Tomás Gullane, Maeve Carty; Eddie Kelly; Anne Power (BTC); Patricia Tierney (FÁS); Martin Healy (Tidy Towns); Billy Ward (FÁS); Marie Rose Cullinane (Tidy Towns). Front: Cllr. Lucy Llyod-Keighery, Nancy Cregg, Mayor Michael Kelly, Tom Madden, Cllr. Carmel Grealy (Tidy Towns), Cáitríona Morgan (Town Clerk)

By Pamela Ryan

This year Ballinasloe Tidy Towns Committee is celebrating an excellent achievement, in being commended as Galway's Largest Tidy Town. The award was given after totting up 280 points for Ballinasloe.

The adjudicator commended Ballinasloe greatly on many areas and gave high scores in overall development approach, landscaping, residential areas and their overall general impression. The committee were praised for their cooperation with the community such as local businesses, government agencies and schools. The adjudicator suggested that the committee might think of taking on extra help due to the growing size of the town. Noting the involvement with schools,

it was recommended it be nourished: "Working with the schools is an effective way of raising awareness and recruiting lots of enthusiastic young helpers!"

"Ballinasloe has an embarrassment of riches when it comes to historical buildings. We were quite amazed to find that around every corner appeared to be yet another excellent example of 18th or 19th Century architecture," it was said, while appreciating the beautiful contrast of older and much more modern architectural mix to be found in the town. St. Michael's Square was very much admired for its picturesque equestrian statue and the colourful and blooming flower plant that drew attention to it. The adjudicator regretted the number of derelict and unused buildings in the area but admired the committee for their efforts with the Town Council and their ongoing plans to improve this.

Among many other topics were: "the improvement of signage, power washing and painting buildings, providing a new footpath in Duggan Park, improving public open spaces and features, the renovation of the enterprise centre and the improvements to the Railway Station." Cllr. Carmel Grealy stated: "What we will be doing next year, to keep our gradual improvement up, is to take their comments on board and work on the few areas they suggested." before pointing out that the adjudication was very positive and complimentary.

Ballinasloe Life's Fifth Reporter is Sweden Bound

LIFE's fifth trainee reporter Owen Dunne finished up his stint after four editions and is now an ERASMUS student with UMEA University in Sweden, till Xmas. Acting as the Communications Assistant with AOIFE in the Town Hall, the 21 one year old Kilcormac native and UL New Media and English undergraduate clocked up over 12,000 kms in 8 months at post. As well as covering two European Festival Conferences he also had the tough challenge of being Production Assistant and Social Media Assistant for the Rose of Tralee International Festival. Hopefully neither his journalistic skills or hurling agility (Panelist for the All-Ireland Club Finalist side, Kilcormac-Killoughey) will become too rusty in the land of Abba!



Pictured at the Tralee Festival were Nicola Mc Evoy, Rose of Tralee 2012, Daithi O'Shea Presenter and Owen.

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Shops Ready for Christmas

Once the October Fair is over, Ballinasloe is on the countdown to Christmas and many shops locally are making Savings Clubs available so that people can secure that illusive present for the festive season.

Local retailers are delighted with the response to the 'Think Local, Shop Local' campaign, which has been running throughout the year. They feel people in East Galway and South Roscommon are now more cost-conscious than ever before and are not prepared to pay toll, fuel and excessive parking costs associated with shops in the larger urban areas.

As was the case last year, the Town Council are coming on board with free parking in the run in to Christmas. The Tidy Towns Committee has the town looking very well and the various entertainment venues have plenty of acts lined up to make the festive season enjoyable.

Craft fairs are also lined up and full details of them will appear in the next issue. The Christmas lights will be switched on, on Saturday November 30 and we have some local entertainment on stage before a special TV personality will light up the town. The key message is to support local businesses and get Ballinasloe's economic recovery back on track: 'Think Local, Shop Local'.

Liam Keller: Over 50 Years in Business

By Pamela Ryan

Business owner since 1959, Liam Keller has one of the longest running firms on Main Street. A native of Enniscrone, Co. Sligo, Liam and his family moved to Ballinasloe in 1950 and have never looked back.

Spending his primary school days in Enniscrone, Liam moved on to Garbally College before working as a shop boy in a local grocery store for two or three years and as a laboratory technician after that. From here on, Liam's business portfolio expanded quickly. "I became a part-time fuel merchant, which was so successful I gave up my full time job, to my mother's disgust, My late brother [Michael] and I bought this premises in 1959 and it was a double shop," he said speaking of the travel agents to the right and the hardware store to the left.

"Emulsion paint wasn't even available at that time, but it went from there. After [Michael's] passing, my family and I'm now talking the late seventies - bought a caravan in Dublin for £500. We used it around Ireland and then we made that great adventure in 1978; we went to France for the first time." On his and his family's trip around France in the caravan and compared the camping standards in Ireland to France. The next season in Royan, the travel department had expanded to include 10 tents and two caravans on site across the sea.

Liam's business now consists of Keller Travel Worldchoice, Keller Hardware and KelAir Campotel, the French sister company. The travel business now operates in 21 locations and has expanded into Spain and Italy. "At full capacity we could be sleeping 2,000 people a night," he beamed. "When the summer season's on in France, it's extremely intensive."



Liam and Bill Keller

Having expanded the travel department here and abroad, the hardware store, and established an expansive furniture store, Liam's portfolio has grown immensely since he began and their travel business is very much operated online also. "We have a pretty sophisticated booking system. We're up-to-date."

"Now that time has moved on for me, our two sons; Bill looks after the hardware and furniture, and Pierce looks after the travel department. Our daughter Sheena, who's married and lives in France, she looks after the French operation," he said, adding: "It's certainly still a family business."

Given that Liam expanded the business to France in the eighties, questions regarding the Irish recession sprang to mind. "France was always promoted as a family holiday and still in all there was a certain few groups of families who had enough of money to go."

"Before video," a voiced over slide show was used in the cities to promote their products. "That was an extremely good tool for getting people aware of the product, as well as Brittany Ferries opened up a new route between Cork and Roscoff."

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This opened up a new area for travel and became popular quite quickly. "We've one family from Kerry who have come every year since 1980, unbroken."

The retail business however, suffers some impediments in the town centre. "There's no question about it, paid parking is a big impediment, for people to come into town. It not the actual Euro, it's the inconvenience of having to find a parking machine to put the Euro in." Having just the day before taken a three minute trip to the chemist, he wonders should we have to pay for that.

"Why would you come down a town and pay for parking when you can go up to the shopping centre, with practically all the facilities and it all up there for nothing?"

Speaking of last year: "When they removed the parking there for Christmas, it did bring more footfall coming in. If you look at our town now, I mean look at it this morning," he said pointing through the window looking out on Main Street. "It's dead."

Regretfully Liam points out people must now shop around for the best price, usually in larger nationwide stores: "Whereas in the old days you went to where you always went. They looked after you and we supported them back."

The retail pattern has changed in other ways from Liam's expansive experience. "First of all there's a reduction in the number of shops. I would have to say without offending anybody, that our selection in town is not as good as other towns. That is an impediment to us because if you don't have the variety, the choice, I presume you go elsewhere."

This ever decreasing trend in retail sales here in Ballinasloe seems such a shame, as Liam has so many memories of the town and the bustling of activity.

"I remember one time when there were elections you'd have public meetings, and I remember - I don't know what election it was - but it was some time in the fifties. De Valera was coming to address the public and there was a very strong Fianna Fáil supporter, lived where now the chemist shop is. It was a bakery owned by a man by the name Martin Lynch. There by Liam Jordon's there was this lorry and the amplifiers and all were up on it. People came up the town with sods of

turf soaked in paraffin oil and they marched De Valera into Ballinasloe. He went up into Rourke's Bakery, up into the living quarters and he opened the window," and looking up at him: "It was like the Pope!" he laughed.

Liam also remembers Ballinasloe back when the Fair & Festival did not begin until the Monday of the fair week. Thinking back he recalls the pubs being closed and being unable to get a drink unless you had travelled three miles. "My mother, when we moved to Ballinasloe, she bought Curraghmore House, which she bought for a guesthouse. She would have maybe 25 people staying for the Fair and these boys used to collect the money between them and there'd be four or five crates of port or Guinness, would be delivered to our kitchen!"

But probably his most prominent early memory of the town is being involved in the Fair & Festival and bringing the Artane Boys Band to town. "The Artane Boys Band that time was like U2. Thousands and thousands came into town," and from there the idea of a King of the Fair was also developed. The first king arrived on a barge into the harbour back when the canal was in use. "You can just imagine the excitement."

Since 1949 when Liam Keller moved to Garbally College, he has made his mark in business, family and local tourism here in town. However, he's not finished yet. "Some of the staff and some of the family say I'm 'Hawkeye'. I still come to the office, come into the shop, everyday; maybe once or twice a day. And I give my comments without offending anybody and I hope the comments I give are constructive!"

Keller's is located on Main Street, Ballinasloe, and this family business hopes to continue there for many decades to come.



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Credit Union *CU Factor* Talent Competition

The National Final of the CU Factor talent competition will take place in the Town Hall Theatre this October on Saturday, October 19. Contestants and their fans will travel from all over Ireland to take part in the inaugural event. A great night's entertainment is guaranteed. Local trad group *Buttons and Bows* and Alan King from Tuam will present *Chapter 16* at the event. The event is being organised

by *Chapter 16* (Galway City and County Credit Unions), the Irish league of Credit Unions and Ballinasloe Credit Union. This is a ticket-only event and a limited number of tickets will be available to the public. If you would like to attend please call to Ballinasloe Credit Union or check out our website www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie or visit the Ballinasloe Credit Union Facebook page.

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The Right to Mental Health Care is Ours



People of the community brave the rain and cold to protest the impending closure of the 22-bed unit.

By Pamela Ryan

With the announcement that a state of the art 22-bed Admissions Unit in St. Brigid's is set to close, people of the community banded together to save their services.

With public meetings, local protest marches and talks of a march outside the Dáil it is clear people want "no more cuts" and believe that the continuance of over 170 years of Psychiatric care in this community should not be disregarded for short term objectives. Below are just some of the reasons why.

1. Ballinasloe lost to Roscommon due to poor scoring system: Only 12 of 13 questions were answered to determine which hospital would lose out. Many of the questions were based on location and judging by the scores awarded to Ballinasloe it is clear that the M6; that Roscommon has no A&E; €2.8m has already been invested into local health services and Roscommon lacks the environment required by risk-management, were all forgotten.

2. Capital funding already invested in Ballinasloe: With €2.8m invested in two wards and a high-dependency unit including unbreakable glass, why close it in favour of a hospital without even an A&E? Money will have to be "ploughed into Roscommon" to bring it up to standard. "Roscommon as it stands, commonly refers many of its patients to Ballinasloe."

3. Roscommon is speculated to close: Public representatives and unions were told that beds would be reduced from 79 to 57 and "in 2015 we will have our

new 50-bedded unit in Galway City." Many have speculated the implication that Roscommon will close also.

4. Not enough beds will be provided: It is required to have 50 admission beds per 300,000 population. With the combination of Galway and Roscommon alone the new unit in Galway would require 53 beds. St Brigid's was used by "450 people last year and 250 people so far this year."

5. No compensatory services: "When you take away beds you have to put in a lot more," it was explained. "There has been no mention of a crisis house," which is a Vision for Change requirement.

6. Representation: "If people need help they are referred to a liaison nurse" but only one of four have been appointed so far. "The people who suffer won't look for help; they need to be represented."

7. Lack of mental-health care for older people: There need to be travelling day-hospitals for the mental-health of older people and there is no older persons' mental-health team in Roscommon.

8. Lack of intellectual disability nursing teams: No mental-health team for children or adults being put in place.

9. Requirement for two substance misuse nurses: "Women are black and blue from the results of alcohol abuse" and these posts have not been filled.

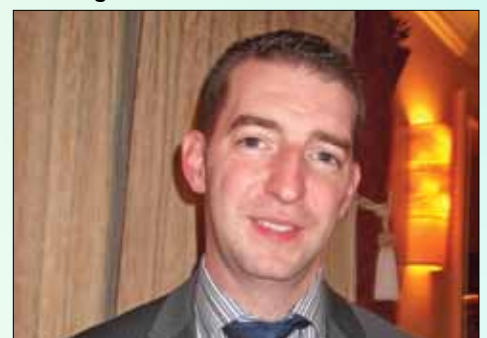
10. No 50-bed unit in Galway City: This multi-million capital investment does not yet exist. Ballinasloe has created a legacy of patients that the state has a duty to provide care for; how they will be taken care of during the gap period?



Ballinasloe Substance Misuse Response Group Chairperson **FRANK HUNT** "This decision would be a disaster."



Local Psychiatric Nurses Association Member **BREEGE CALLAGHAN** completed her training in Ballinasloe and is very impressed with the changes that have been made since then.



Psychiatric Nurses Association National Secretary **NOEL GIBLIN** "This is simply about cutting corners and saving money!"

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Anthony Grehan (An Post), Elizabeth Sheppard and
Eamon Donoghue (BEC)*

An Post Voucher Winner

Elizabeth Sheppard of Glanloughawn, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe, is the winner of An Post's much coveted €100 One-4-All voucher. In July of this year An Post opened the doors to their new Mail Centre and to celebrate the occasion offered one reader of *Ballinasloe Life* magazine the chance to win this prize if they could name the location of the new Mail Centre, which can of course be found Poolboy.

Ballinasloe Town Council

Comhairle Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe



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EmployAbility Galway Service

By Pamela Ryan

EmployAbility Galway is an employment service for people with disabilities or people recovering from an accident or illness. The aim of the organisation is to assist people to find and sustain employment. The service also promotes equality and inclusion by assisting and employers in integrating people with disability into the workplace.

The organisation in Galway was set up in 2001 and was administered through FÁS employment services at that time. In 2009 the organisation changed its name to that of the national service of *EmployAbility*.

EmployAbility Galway has worked closely with companies throughout Galway City and County in the past, including many businesses in the Ballinasloe area. This positive engagement by local employers has led to a large number of successful and sustained employment opportunities for jobseekers in town and its surrounding areas.

Our Staff members come from a variety of different career backgrounds and education, with qualifications in their relevant fields. Through these highly experienced staff they endeavour to understand employers' business requirements in order to meet their recruitment needs and support people with disabilities in the workplace. Harry Hussey is currently the *EmployAbility*



Recruitment Fair at the Volvo Ocean Race, Mary Hibbitt (EmployAbility), Derek Nolan TD, Minister Joan Burton, Harry Hussey (EmployAbility), Pauline O'Dwyer (EmployAbility)

representative working in the Ballinasloe area and has been since 2008. His background is in Business and Human Resource Management.

EmployAbility know that recruitment is difficult for businesses, they attempt to alleviate some of the difficulty by extensively profiling each job seeker and providing support and guidance to both the employer and the job seeker throughout the recruitment, induction and training phases. The programme involves meeting with the employer to identify the job specifications and from their database of jobseekers they then identify suitable candidates.

Concern regarding cost is often raised by employers in the recruitment of people with disabilities; the specialised service is free and can deliver a cost effective recruitment service. They can also access a range of grants and subsidies to assist

employers in providing accommodations and adaptations to the workplace to make it more accessible for staff.

In 2009, with the introduction of a fluent Irish speaker to the team, *EmployAbility* began providing a full bilingual service. Language had been identified as a barrier by a number of clients and the Irish service is now used by jobseekers and employers not only in the Connemara area but also in other areas of the county. In 2012 *EmployAbility Galway* won the Gradam Seosamh Uí Ógartaigh, which is an award for bilingual businesses in Galway city.

EmployAbility Galway believes that people are the heart of organisations and in 2011 it was delighted to achieve the *Excellence Through People Award*, through the National Standards Authority of Ireland. They are very grateful to the employers in the Ballinasloe area who have engaged with *EmployAbility Galway* over the years and They look forward to continued support. They also look forward to supporting and working with some new businesses in the future and continuing to assist employers and jobseekers in achieving their goals through employment and in the workplace.

If you have an interest in integrating an employee with a disability into your workplace or if you want more info, visit www.employabilitygalway.ie or call 091 755235 or 086 793 0658. 

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East Galway Cancer Support Beginner's Computer Course

The East Galway Cancer Support Centre in Brackernagh, has received funding from Irish Rural Link to run beginners computer courses. The cost is €15 per person, to be paid as a deposit but if the participant is over 65, the €15 is refunded on the first day of the course. The duration of the course is eight hours: one two-hour session and the remainder of one-hour sessions, depending on progress.

The minimum number is eight participants - the maximum is 10 - so there will be plenty of one-on-one training. The training will take place from September until November and depending on interest we will run as many courses as necessary to accommodate. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the office on the number below or contact Paula directly on 090 964 2088 or 087 625 9726.

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Making Business Age Friendly

By Pamela Ryan

Ballinasloe was recently chosen to become an 'age friendly' town by the Age Friendly Business Recognition scheme. The scheme aims to help businesses, retailers and service providers become more user-friendly to all age groups and expand their clientele through simple low- or no-cost changes.

"The Ageing Well Network identified that businesses were not noticing the huge market in older people. Our Age Friendly Towns project consulted with older people and showed how important local shops and businesses are to the community. The Age Friendly Business Recognition scheme offers a way for businesses to meet the needs of older people - and enhance the offering for all customers - while getting a commercial advantage," said Shane Winters of Age Friendly Businesses.

According to their research there are over one million people aged over 60-years-old in Ireland, so simple changes like using large, clear fonts for signage, posters and websites; placing products at reachable heights or readily offering assistance to reach items and offering assistance with drop-off or delivery are small ways of making a huge difference.

Offering some products or services appropriate to an older audience, such as single portion sizes, is also much more appealing to older customers, who greatly outspend younger customers, according to Age Friendly Businesses. Even moderating excessively loud music levels and noise can create a much more consumer friendly environment, as well as speaking clearly in low tones, and not being afraid to repeat yourself if necessary.

However, "this is not a scheme aimed at creating businesses focused on older people. The very term 'age friendly' indicates that the business is accessible and appealing to all age groups. What we find is that in implementing changes that impact on older people, we create changes that impact all," said Shane.

Businesses interested in joining the scheme and becoming Age Friendly will receive a logo to display in their window indicating that they are age friendly. They will also be included in the online directory and receive training sessions and a tool kit.

"Each information session introduces businesses to what an age friendly market is; how their businesses can benefit in economic terms from creating a better environment and service for older people and also begins to

introduce some tips for businesses to do this," said Shane.

He added: "The toolkit is really a comprehensive guide of tips and ideas about how to create age friendly spaces. It covers a whole range of topics, from the colours to use in advertising, to where products are placed, to how to improve customer care. It takes businesses step-by-step through how to make their businesses more appealing to all customers."

"The local participants agreed with the age friendly examples put forward but acknowledged that some of these were already being done in town. The idea of linked partnership between businesses was a good idea to increase footfall in the town, particularly at the weekends," said Shane about Ballinasloe in particular before adding: "Better engagement with older customers on their needs was also highlighted as a key requirement and will help in making any changes necessary to become more age friendly in the future."

If you and your business is interested in joining this initiative, please get in contact with Aisling at 01 612 7040 or email business@ageingwellnetwork.ie and for more information please email Shane: shane@ageingwellnetwork.ie.

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'11	HYUNDA SANTA FE DSL	€24,500	€23,650	'09	PEUGEOT 308 1.6 DSL	€11,500	€10,500
'11	KIA CEED SPORTSWAGON DSL AUTOMATIC	€18,350	€16,500	'09	CITROEN PICASSO 1.6 DSL 7 SEATER	€13,950	€13,000
'11	KIA SOUL 1.6 DSL	€14,950	€14,300	'09	FORD GALAXY PLATINUM 1.8 DSL 7 SEATER	€20,850	€19,850
'11	NISSAN TIDA 1.5 DSL	€14,900	€14,000	'08	OPEL ZAFIRA 1.6 PTRL 7 SEATER	€9,250	€8,250
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Weekly Retailer's Draw

Ballinasloe is introducing a weekly Retailers' Draw for the upcoming Christmas Season. This initiative was created by BACD Ltd and is being run on a trial basis for six months. Its success will be determined by retailers and shoppers alike. The initiative was generously supported by the local GAA, Camogie and Soccer Clubs who have agreed to accept a free entry from participating retailers in each weekly Lotto

Draw. Each Retailer will decide who can enter their draw; for instance a customer may have to spend €10 or more in store. This is at the complete discretion of the Retailer. Each shop will choose one name each week to be entered in participating Lotto Draws. The winners' name is entered by the retailer in the Lotto Draws of all three of the local GAA Club, Soccer Club and Camogie Club. The retailer will choose the numbers for each draw. Weekly winners will be displayed in store by each retailer. Family members and staff will not be eligible for entrance to the draw.

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Local Composer on Big Stage

By Pamela Ryan

One of the area's precious gems, Eimear Noone, is a fantastic representation of Irish musical talent abroad and is arguably the world's premier conductor and composer of video game scores.

While having never met her maternal grandfather, John O'Shea, a more than accomplished traditional musician, it seems music still runs in the blood. Eimear Noone grew up in Kilconnell but has now become a renowned composer and conductor currently living in Malibu, California.

Speaking of her inspirations to take up music, Eimear said: "I don't think there was any individual or thing beyond music itself. As long as I can remember it's been what I knew I needed to do."

St Gabriel's National School became the first milestone in Eimear's musical education. Teachers such as Paddy Burke, Margaret Blehene and Joan Nolan made sure that "music was an intrinsic and vital part of our general education," according to Eimear.

"At age five Mrs Blehene discovered I could play by ear on the tin whistle and was very insistent to my parents that I study music," said Eimear, adding: "My mother still remembers the day she came to our house and was so terribly adamant about it!"

Eimear's education continued at Scoil Mhuire in Ballinasloe. Beginning to compose her own music in her very early adolescence, Eimear said her "first fully realised piece was written for the National Chamber Choir workshop with Colin Mawby when I was about 15. Much to my amazement they subsequently performed it on RTÉ Radio 1."

At the age of 16 she attended the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and Drama. She then completed a music degree at Trinity College, Dublin.



Choosing a career can be difficult for some, especially in recent months as Leaving Cert students were filling out CAO forms. It was no different for Eimear. "As is the case with many music students, there were many academic possibilities when it came to choosing a career. I realised that any of these other - albeit interesting - possibilities were things I could ultimately live without. I couldn't imagine myself living without music."

Eimear Noone's established career holds many accomplishments and achievements. "Sustaining a career in music is something I think is a great achievement for any musician. One of my favourite experiences was conducting the National Symphony Orchestra [USA] at The Kennedy Center as an Irish emigrant," said Eimear.

While having a background in classical music, Eimear's career explored an unconventional path early in her career. "It was one of those things that was both purely accidental and completely meant to be," said Eimear about composing for video games.

"My first opportunity on a game called *Metal Gear Solid* happened very casually when in first year at Trinity. My friend David Downes, now the creator of Celtic Woman, herded a few of us together one day at college and we cobbled some choral arrangements together for the Japanese composer working on the game. A few years later I worked as an orchestrator on Blizzard's *World of Warcraft* and it went from there."

"In every generation composers will find a medium through which they can express their creativity. At the moment, video games and films are providing an interesting medium for expression; especially video games, since the composer has less fighting to do with dialogue and the artwork in the games has risen to a level so sophisticated and inspiring," she added.

Since delving into video game composition Eimear has also been part of the first ever video game music video shot in 3D. "That was very interesting. If

you're someone, such as myself, who isn't fond of seeing themselves on camera in the first place, then seeing yourself in 3D is cringe-worthy!" she said.

Eimear loves working with the music team at Blizzard Entertainment as well as alongside "the good people at Nintendo", but the list of people she is proud to have worked with is quite extensive. "The performers I'm proud to have worked with are hard to choose from but Arúna, Gladys Knight, Pierce Brosnan, Roma Downey, The Royal Philharmonic, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The National Symphony [USA], The Pittsburgh Symphony, The Sydney Symphony are but a few of them," she added.

"My husband is Emmy nominated composer Craig Stuart Garfinkle and of course I'm proud to work with him. He made me say that!" she laughed.

"I've studied with several conductors and attended many masterclasses including those at Manhattan School of Music, but my most significant teacher was Gerhard Markson, former principal conductor of RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. I studied with him for two years."

Apart from succeeding in her own career, Eimear has found ways of passing on her knowledge and skills through the teaching of conducting. "When I came to LA I was asked to give some conducting demonstrations to a class of composers at UCLA Extension and strangely enough, a few weeks later the students recommended me for a teaching position there!"

Like many Irish emigrants, Eimear found the move from Ireland difficult. "Leaving home is always difficult and LA is a tough city to get used to for the first couple of years. By far the most difficult aspect was leaving my family and life-long friends behind," she said.

Eimear misses the Irish people and she's most proud of her "closest relationships, both those I was born to and those I've created for myself. Ireland is always in a person's blood no matter where you go, how great an experience you're having abroad or how long you've been away."

Eimear's music is always continuing and growing. "I just released an EP called *Hibernian* and Craig and I are producing a live orchestral show with his brother David Garfinkle - the original producer of *Spider-Man* and *Ghost* on Broadway - for an eminent concert venue in the US."

Eimear's EP is available for download on iTunes and you can keep up with her on her blog: [A View from the Podium](#).

Local Gardening Competition

By Pamela Ryan

The Ballinasloe Local Tidy Towns Awards have finally come to fruition. The large audience in attendance witnessed the great success of all the winners, which included Alan and Maureen Russell of Hurtsville, Creagh Road who won the overall title and prize.

Organised by Ballinasloe Town Council, these awards acknowledge the outstanding efforts put in by people and organisations within the town, which play a significant role in contributing towards the overall Tidy Town's effort. The best Shopfront / Business Workplace competition was sponsored by local Dunne's Supervalu in Brackernagh, and won by Gullane's hotel. Over 55 nominations were received for the local awards this year.

Prizes were presented to all winners and to all 2nd and 3rd placed runners up by the Mayor of Ballinasloe, Councillor Mike Kelly. Ballinasloe Town Clerk, Caitriona Morgan, congratulated all the participants in each of the categories of the Annual Local Gardens Competition and stated that it is a great initiative which is supported by the Town Council. She said that the success of the Tidy Towns is testament to the spirit of volunteerism and pride of place that exists in Ballinasloe.



Pictured at the Ballinasloe Local Tidy Towns Awards were (L-R): Anne Power, Ballinasloe Town Council; Cllr. Carmel Grealy, Ballinasloe Town Council; Alan Russell (Hurtsville, Creagh - Overall Winner); Mayor Mike Kelly; Caitriona Morgan, Town Clerk.

Julie Pickering's Alternative Therapy Classes

Alternative therapist, Julie Pickering has begun some new projects here in Ballinasloe. For new parents, Julie will be running Infant and Child Massage for Mums and Dads. Not only will you learn how to massage your child safely, but the massages are "good for colic, constipation" and many other ailments. The classes begin on September 12 from 10-11am in Gullane's Hotel and will continue every Thursday. As well as the infants, Julie provides half-hour massages on "hands, feet, head or shoulders, just to chill them out!" Humour therapy is growing in popularity and Julie also offers small sessions of Laughter Yoga classes, ideal for schools, nursing homes and hospitals. These classes take place in Hayden's Hotel each Wednesday at 7pm. To book Call Julie on 087 248 8137.



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August Homecoming Weekend



By Gerry Devlin & Tommy 'Tosh' Ryan

After months of preparation, the town's August Homecoming Weekend finally came together. The weekend was a tribute to Minnie Sullivan and Lee Lynch, the official launch took place in Declan Egan's Pub, Main Street, Ballinasloe.

The festivities were attended by Minnie's family and friends, members of Ballinasloe Town Council, Sen. Michael Mullins and Deirdre Tully from Galway Co. Council. After a few words from committee member Gerry Devlin, the festival was officially launched by Mayor Councillor Mike Kelly. After the formalities, a group of musicians moved outside and began a session at Minnie's old pub. Enjoyed by both those attending and passing by, it set a great atmosphere for the entire weekend.

Sean Nós dancer Kevin Cunniffe gave a guest appearance and a dancing display enjoyed by all. Afterwards, proceedings moved back inside where the session continued with more song and dance throughout the evening. Other 'Minnie's' pubs on the night were An Táin and the Emerald Bar. The night finished off with late night dancing in Gullane's Hotel to the sound of Brendan Shine who, years beforehand, played in a concert with Lee Lynch at the Royal Albert Hall.

Saturday kicked off with a historical walk of the town, lead by local historian Barry Lally. All of those present thoroughly

enjoyed the two hour learning curve. The afternoon saw the unveiling of a plaque to Lee Lynch in the new Bethany Park. The plaque was unveiled by Lee's sister-in-law Helen Lynch while the residents of St. Brendan's Terrace organised a delicious picnic for all in attendance. Afternoon entertainment included a Tea Dance with Midnight Melodies in Gullane's Hotel.

The boat trip from Shannonbridge to town was the highlight of the day's events with all of those aboard enjoying the commentary of Cllr. Micheál Breathnach. Minnie's sessions took place in Gibbons', Maud Millar's and The Black Pig. Rounding off the night were The Conquerors, in Hayden's Hotel.

Sunday was family-day in Gullane's car park. This included a car-boot sale, exhibitions in the ballroom of the hotel, face-painting, a welly-throwing competition and boat trips from the marina to the Moycarn. In the afternoon a large crowd turned out for the Céilí with the Annaly group, which was held in Hayden's and included guest appearances from Buttons and Bows and the under 12 Connacht Champions Céilí band. The boat trip to Shannonbridge was once again a major hit with crowds. The 'Minnie's' session pubs were the Dunlo, Gullane's and Downey's. The weekend was rounded off by Philomena Begley in the Shearwater.

The festival was a great success and it is hoped the weekend can be used as a template for a homecoming event every year.



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Clogher School of Irish Dancing



*Connacht C'ships
Back (L-R): Lauren
Moclair, Shannon
Nolan, Anna Coen,
Abbie Buchan and
Lauren Byrne.
Front: Nicole Moclair
and Lanna Buchan*

By Pamela Ryan

In 2010 the Sarah Clogher School of Irish Dancing opened on Society Street here in Ballinasloe and its students have had success after success ever since.

Twenty-seven-year-old Sarah Clogher is a native of Carrowreagh, Co. Roscommon and her grá for Irish dancing first began at a young age and “was always a favourite at home,” according to Sarah.

Sarah began classes at Taughmaconnell Community Centre. Young Sarah’s natural talent became more and more obvious so she began classes in Ballinasloe where she then also took on classes at the O’Brien School of Dancing in Galway.

Dancing competitively for 12 years Sarah entered many competitions including Connacht, All-Ireland, All-Scotland, North-American and World Championships in which she became champion and medal holder in all cases. Sarah also continued to tour the world with an Irish dance show for two years which she “enjoyed immensely and will never forget.”

On her return she knew she wanted to become an Irish dancing teacher and with a degree in commerce and her Irish Dancing Teachers Exam completed, she opened The Sarah Clogher

School of Irish Dancing. “Irish dance is a great activity to help children develop their musicality, athleticism, dance technique, social skills and to enhance their self esteem,” according to Sarah.

The school now runs hobby classes for boys and girls of four-years-old and up as well as classes for competitive dancers. Since opening, there have been many successes at open-level feises and Championships. “In the last year, the school proudly achieved our first qualifier for the World Championships, held in Boston this year,” said Sarah.

Céilí dancing is also a large part of the school’s curriculum and a great way for dancers to learn about teamwork and how to be a team player.

“This year our four-hand team from Creagh won the qualifying stage, which got them through to the All-Ireland Scór na bPáistí final this year,” she said before adding: “We also had many four-hand and eight-hand teams from our school represent Ballinasloe Comhaltas in this year’s Galway County Fleadh, Connacht Fleadh and the All-Ireland Fleadh.”

This year was also the launch of the school’s summer camps which catered to boys and girls with no dancing experience in the surrounding areas of Ballinasloe.

“The fun, and active summer camps involved learning Irish dancing in a fun, energising environment, creating a show piece for all the parents for the end of week performances, arts and crafts, baking, fun exercises and activity games,” exclaimed Sarah.

For more information about the Sarah Clogher School of Dancing Classes, call Sarah Clogher at 085 708 1344.



*At Galway Fleadh, Back: Sarah
and Jennifer Clogher. Front:
Lauren Moclair, Lanna and Abbie
Buchan, Nicole Moclair.*

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Local Entrepreneurs Wanted

By Pamela Ryan

Galway County and City Enterprise Board will once again be running their Road Show around Co. Galway to mark Small and Medium Enterprise Week. Having last year hosted one of the daily events in Ballinasloe, the Road Show will continue in the nearby areas of Tuam, Loughrea and Clifden.

The Road Show will consist of a series of events, providing information to entrepreneurs, new business owners and business owners wishing to expand.

Business owner Pádraic Ó Máille and mentor, trainer and motivator, and Breda Fox, CEO of Galway County and City Enterprise board, are among the entrepreneurs who will offer insight into the challenges and more importantly the opportunities, of the current economic climate.

"We look forward to meeting people who either have an idea to start a business, who may be at the early stage start-up or existing businesses thinking of new products or markets," said Breda Fox.

Visiting the Ard Rí Hotel in Tuam on October 21 will be Ronan Byrne, aka The Friendly Farmer. Ronan produces free-range meat poultry from his 35 acre family farm just outside of Athenry. The farm is an 'open pasture' method of farming, in an attempt to redress the balance of intensive poultry production and the growing demand for better



Ceo Breda Fox

quality. Ballinasloe is an agriculture laden area and many business owners or farmers could really benefit from Ronan's fresh ideas and insights.

Loughrea Hotel will host Mike O'Neill, founder and managing director of ONM Systems Ltd on October 23. The company began in a converted garage and the staff consisted of just Mike. After only three years his business was established enough to move into offices

and have a staff of seven people. Those wishing to expand their business or get it off the ground are all more than welcome to attend.

"Since January, we have approved €400,000 in projects to create 39 jobs and additional 48. This supports 14 businesses in Galway, split evenly between start-ups and existing businesses and will create employment across the county and city. Our policy is to try and help anyone with a business or business idea. Sometimes it is training, mentoring or often a refocusing of the business goals that is required but we see each idea or business as unique and deserving of support," said Breda Fox.

For those motivated entrepreneurs of Ballinasloe, the Galway Enterprise offices in Woodquay will also host a series of free events during SME Week. These include Marketing Monday and Fix It Friday; one-on-one mentoring sessions. Mary Rogers will also run a workshop on exporting to the US and things to consider first. Oonagh Monaghan will give attendees a run through of networking, the benefits and how to use it. Due to technological advancements it seems only fitting for entrepreneurs and existing business owners to attend the 'iPad for Business' workshop also offered.

For more details and to register for events please call (091) 565 269 to log on to www.galwayenterprise.ie.

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Baby Moya Flynn

By Pamela Ryan

Local mother-of-three, Valerie Lyons, regales us with the heart-breaking, yet heart-warming, tale of her young daughter's health struggle.

Baby Moya was born this year, in January. Within three and a half weeks she became noticeably ill and was seen by a doctor. "A week later we were in Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children where she had a liver biopsy," said Valerie. It was confirmed that baby Moya had a liver condition called Billiary Atresia.

Her mother explained: "This meant that she could not break down fat and the bile could not leave her in the normal way." Attending King's College Hospital in London back in February, Moya endured a medical procedure, which, it was hoped, would improve her condition. Unfortunately this procedure was unsuccessful and Moya continued to be admitted in and out of hospital because of her worsening condition. "We spent the next few months in and out of Portiuncula and Crumlin with different infections," she said. As the frequency of fluid build-up in the child began to increase, another trip to London was decided upon "to begin the process of getting on the transplant list."

In London Moya was found to have progressed to liver failure. She was placed on the transplant list and luckily enough the child's father (Mark)

was confirmed as a match for liver donation. "We wouldn't be going home until Moya got a new liver as it was not safe for her to travel. This was a worrying time as we had left Ciara, my daughter and Cónal, our two-year-old son at home as we sat waiting for a liver to come in," expressed Valerie.

Moya's transplant operation was finally booked for the end of June, but just one week after the operation was finalised she became extremely ill, even having to be stabilised at her bedside by paediatric nurses before being rushed to the paediatric intensive care unit.

"Mark and myself were then asked to go to the parents' room for what seemed like an eternity. We found out weeks later that they had to resuscitate her at this point," Valerie said before adding: "Professor Nigel Heaton then came to speak to us and he said that she was critical and that the transplant needed to take place the very next day."

Moya's father Mark then went through a four hour procedure to save his daughter's life. The baby was then taken for her eight hour operation. Mark recovered remarkably well and Moya was expected to spend just two to three days in intensive care, but was there three weeks. She then moved to a High Dependency Unit for one week before she was allowed back to the liver ward. "She is now home after a few days in Crumlin and already has been back to



see all her friends in Portiuncula. They have been an amazing support and help to us through all of this and continue to care for Moya so well. We cannot thank them all enough! We are blessed to have the hospital here," she said.

Valerie concluded by expressing her most heartfelt gratitude to all those who supported Moya and the family: "The whole time we were away we got immeasurable support, good wishes, prayers, masses, donations from family, friends, neighbours, local businesses, the people of Ballinasloe and beyond! We were in tears when we heard of things that were happening on Moya's behalf. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody that supported us in some way. It is what kept us going when it got tough. Ballinasloe, like other Irish towns, is going through tough times but having seen firsthand the generosity of the people of the town, there is nowhere else we would rather live."



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 Darne 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
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AIB Club & Societies Showcase

By Pamela Ryan

AIB Asst. Manager Maeve Carty organised Ballinasloe's first all-inclusive Showcase event in Gullane's Hotel. The event brought together the organisations, sports clubs, societies and special interest groups of the town and surrounding areas.

All of these organisations had the opportunity to recruit new members and let the community know of their activities and what it is they do. To add to the promotional aspect of the day, *Ballinasloe Life* magazine was there to shoot promotional videos for all of those clubs interested in partaking of such an opportunity. These videos, once the occasional stutter and stumble has been edited, will be uploaded online to the magazine's Facebook page. Each organisation will be notified individually once their video is about to go up. This will give each the opportunity to share the video and spread their message even further.

Apart from the promotional aspect of the day there was quite a lot of learning to be done. Upstairs in the Gullane's Conference Suite there were three key speakers for the day. These talks ran a little behind schedule due to the protest march for East Galway Mental-Health Services taking place on the street outside.



Eamon Donoghue of the Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd. spoke to those interested clubs and organisations about the benefits of using social media tools. Using these tools any organisation can learn to enhance their communication with the public. Keeping up with the latest social media, from Twitter to Instagram, they can learn to bring in members and recruits of all ages.

Fair & Murtagh Solicitors' Mike O'Reilly informed participants about the legalities involved in clubs and organisations. Legal requirements in any situation are complex but were broken down comprehensively in this informative talk and made relevant to all.

Finishing up was AIB Manager, Seamus Duffy, representing *Ballinasloe Life* on the day. Seamus presented the benefits of utilising *Ballinasloe Life* and other forms of public media to the organisations' and clubs' best interests, both for advertising and for articles about their activities and accomplishments.

AIB Assistant Manager Maeve said she hopes for the showcase to continue its success as an annual event.

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OCTOBER Events Guide

1st OCTOBER		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Basic Computer Class	Jobs Club	9am
2nd OCTOBER		
Active Retirement Monthly Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Basic Computer Class	Jobs Club	2pm
Singing Pubs & Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm
3rd OCTOBER		
Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Kevin Rohan & friends	Haden's Bar	10pm
Baby massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Tug of War	Gullane's Car Park	All day
Live Entertainment	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Fair Trad Night and Singing Pub Night	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
4th OCTOBER		
Tug of War Final & Prize presentation	Gullane's Car Park	All day
Strange Brew	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emerald Bar	9.30pm
Live Entertainment	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Zodiac's Niteclub	Gullane's Hotel	11pm
Trad and Folk Music with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Live Music	An Táin	10pm
Sharon Turley	Carlton Hotel	10pm
For Folk Sake	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
5th OCTOBER		
One 2 One	Downey's Bar	10pm
Good Ole Trusty	Maud Millar's	9pm
Brendan Loughnane Roadshow	Gullane's Hotel	All Day
Zodiac's Niteclub	Gullane's Hotel	11pm
Eamon Behan Band	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Ken & Steve	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Hickory Wind	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Gaegan Pagans	Dunlo Tavern	4pm
Kensley 3	Dunlo Tavern	10:30pm
6th OCTOBER		
Sharon Turley	Downey's Bar	8pm
Imposter	Maud Millar's	9pm
Derek Ryan Country Night Dancing Doors	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm
Trevor Dixon and Friends	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
7th OCTOBER		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7:30pm
One 2 One	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Line dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm
Pottery Class	Kilconnell Art Space	7pm
8th OCTOBER		
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
9th OCTOBER		
Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm
10th OCTOBER		
Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Baby massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
11th OCTOBER		
Trad and Folk with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Streetwise	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emerald Bar	9.30pm
Vinny Mongan	Carlton Hotel	10pm
The High Reel	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
12th OCTOBER		
Live music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Imposter	Maud Millar's	9pm
Two Below	An Táin	9:30pm
Stephen Blake	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Tír na nÓg	Carlton Hotel	10pm
DJ Kayos	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
The Waves	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
13th OCTOBER		
Buzz the Agent	Downey's Bar	8pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millar's	9pm
Céilí with Rise the Dust	Gullane's Hotel	10pm
Johnny Brady Country Night Dancing	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm
14th OCTOBER		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Line dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm
Ladies Club AGM	Golf Club	8pm
Pottery class	Kilconnell Art Space	7pm
15th OCTOBER		
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Tea Dance - Big Celebration Night	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Laurence Campion & Midnight Medodies	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
16th OCTOBER		
Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Mens Club AGM	Golf Club	8pm

16th OCTOBER (continued)		
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm
17th OCTOBER		
Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Baby massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Themed Night - Spanish Inspired Cuisine	Carlton Hotel	6:30pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
18th OCTOBER		
Hidden Heritage of East Galway	Town Hall Theatre	All day
Table Quiz: Clonfert Pilgrimage to Lourdes	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Naymedici	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emerald Bar	9.30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Trad and Folk with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Tír na nÓg	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Paul Watchorn	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
19th OCTOBER		
Hidden Heritage of East Galway	Town Hall Theatre	All day
National Credit Union Talent Final	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Live music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Book Suckers Literary Festival	Gullane's Hotel	All day
Take Me Out: Cappatagie Camogie Club	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
The Cool Hand Dukes	Maud Millar's	9pm
One 2 One	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Shtick Her Down	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Monthly Wedding Showcase	Carlton Hotel	12pm
Back Stage	Carlton Hotel	10pm
DJ Kayos	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
The Hush	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
20th OCTOBER		
Hidden Heritage of East Galway	Town Hall Theatre	All day
The Galway Man	Downey's Bar	8pm
The Cozy Cartel	Maud Millar's	9pm
Mike Denver Country Night Dancing Doors	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Trad Session John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm
Credit Union Talent All-Ireland Finals	Town Hall Theatre	2pm
21st OCTOBER		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Line dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm
Pottery class	Kilconnell Art Space	7pm
22nd OCTOBER		
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Johovah Witness Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Live Arts Exhibition	Hayden's Hotel	11:30am
23rd OCTOBER		
Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm
24th OCTOBER		
Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Baby massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
25th OCTOBER		
Seán Keane	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Trad and Folk Music with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Strange Brew	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emerald Bar	9.30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Michael Regan	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Buzz the Agent	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
26th OCTOBER		
Live music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Keith & Johnny	Maud Millar's	9pm
Madden Family Band	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Tony Henshaw	Carlton Hotel	10pm
DJ John	Hayden's Bar	10pm
DJ Kayos	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
One 2 One	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
27th OCTOBER		
All-Ireland Seán Nos Dancing	Town Hall Theatre	All day
Yer Man	Downey's Bar	8pm
Washout	Maud Millar's	9pm
Night Owls	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Padraig Pearses GAA Club Fundraiser	Gullane's Hotel	All day
Witches & Wizards Open Classic	Golf Club	All Day
Robert Mizzell Country Dancing	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Chequers	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Trad Session John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm
Elvis	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
28th OCTOBER		
Line dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm
Pottery class	Kilconnell Art Space	7pm
29th OCTOBER		
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm

NOVEMBER Events Guide

30th OCTOBER

Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm

31st OCTOBER

Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Baby massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

1st NOVEMBER

Céilí	Gullane's Hotel	10pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emeral's Bar	9:30pm
Trad and Folk Music with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Paschal Brennan	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Celebrity Mock Wedding	Carlton Hotel	5pm
The Survivor	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

2nd NOVEMBER

Live music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Good ole trusty	Maud Millar's	9pm
Christy & Mike	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Buggy	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Tír na nÓg	Carlton Hotel	10pm
DJ Kayos	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Boru	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

3rd NOVEMBER

Live music	Downey's Bar	8pm
Loose rooster	Maud Millar's	9pm
Mike Denver Country Night Dancing Doors	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm

4th NOVEMBER

Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm
Pottery class	Kilconnell Art Space	7pm

5th NOVEMBER

Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm

6th NOVEMBER

Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm

7th NOVEMBER

Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Baby Massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

8th NOVEMBER

Trad and Folk Music with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Bootleg nation	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emeral's Bar	9:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Ken & Steve	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Chris Nash	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

9th NOVEMBER

Live Music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Live Music	Maud Millar's	9pm
One to One	Hayden's Bar	10pm
No Half Measures	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Michael Regan	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Hickory Wind	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
For Folk Sake	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

10th NOVEMBER

Keep Her Lit	Downey's Bar	8pm
The Hoppy Bar Stars	Maud Millar's	9pm
Mick Flavin Country Night Dancing Doors	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm

11th NOVEMBER

Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm

12th NOVEMBER

Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am

13th NOVEMBER

Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm

14th NOVEMBER

Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday sessions live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
Kevin rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Baby Massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

15th NOVEMBER

Trad and Folk Music with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Keith & Johnny	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emeral's Bar	9:30pm
Job Seeking Skills Programmes	Jobs Club	10am
The Legends	Carlton Hotel	10pm
The High Reel	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

16th NOVEMBER

Live music	Downey's Bar	10pm
The Cool Hand Dukes	Maud Millar's	9pm
Last man Standing	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Fundraiser	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Madden Family Band	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Backstage	Carlton Hotel	10pm
DJ Kayos	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Double Bill	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

17th NOVEMBER

Buzz the Agent	Downey's Bar	8pm
The cozy cartel	Maud Millar's	9pm
Jim Devine Country Night Dancing Doors	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm

18th NOVEMBER

Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm

19th NOVEMBER

Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
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20th NOVEMBER

Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Thanks Giving with Egg Nog Themed Night	Carlton Hotel	6:30pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm

21st NOVEMBER

Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Baby Massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Gables Art Exhibition	Gullane's Hotel	All Day
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

22nd NOVEMBER

Gables Art Exhibition	Gullane's Hotel	All Day
Strange brew	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emeral's Bar	9:30pm
Trad and Folk Music with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Chequers	Carlton Hotel	10pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

23rd NOVEMBER

Live music	Downey's Bar	10pm
Imposter	Maud Millar's	9pm
One to One	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Gables Art Exhibition	Gullane's Hotel	All Day
Shtick Her Down	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Sharon Turley	Carlton Hotel	10pm
DJ Kayos	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Kensey 3	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

24th NOVEMBER

Yer Man	Downey's Bar	8pm
Mikey & the scallywags	Maud Millar's	9pm
Country Night Dancing Doors	Carlton Hotel	9:30pm
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbon's Pillar House	6pm

25th NOVEMBER

Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7:30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Bridge Club Lessons	Bridge Centre	8pm

26th NOVEMBER

Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
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27th NOVEMBER

Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Laughter Yoga	Hayden's Hotel	7pm

28th NOVEMBER

Country & Western Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8:30pm
The Thursday Sessions Live	Maud Millar's	9pm
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Bar	10pm
Baby Massage	Gullane's Hotel	10am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Dunlo Trad Session	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

29th NOVEMBER

Trad and Folk Music with The Beahans	An Táin	6pm
Darken The Distance	Maud Millar's	9pm
Comhaltas Seisiun	Emeral's Bar	9:30pm
Tony Henshaw	Carlton Hotel	10pm
Buzz the Agent	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

30th NOVEMBER

Live music	Downey's Bar	10pm
The Rivulets	Maud Millar's	9pm
Buggy	An Táin	9:30pm
Live DJ	An Táin	9:30pm
Monthly Wedding Showcase	Carlton Hotel	12pm
Paul Burns	Carlton Hotel	10pm
DJ Kayos	Gibbon's Pillar House	10pm
Mary & Liam	Hayden's Bar	9pm
Too Tall Paul	Dunlo Tavern	9pm

To advertise your events here, Contact: ballinasloelife@hotmail.com or Call 090 964 3779 or 085 148 1911

Abbey-Duniry Superintendent

By Pamela Ryan

It is rare in Garda Síochána circles that men and women in the higher ranks of the force get to serve close to their local parishes or neighbourhoods but the exception is proved in the case of the town's newest Superintendent.

Gerard Roche joined An Garda Síochána 28 years ago. Originally he is from East Galway's Abbey-Duniry, near Portumna. "I'm an East Galway man originally," he said, before becoming nostalgic at this time of year.

"I suppose the first interactions I would have had with the town was at the Ballinasloe Fair when I was a young fella coming here with my uncle selling Connemara ponies," he remembered.

Speaking of the much anticipated Fair, he was very commending of the organisers. "It's a great event. A lot of work goes into it and a lot of effort on our behalf as well to make sure that it runs safely and peacefully for everybody."

The decision to join the force was made during his time at school in Portumna. "When I did my Leaving Cert I applied for 'the Guards' and got it and I've never looked back. It's a great career!"

Since then he has been stationed in units all over the country including Dublin, Galway, Sligo, Salthill, Gort "and Ballinasloe where I started out in East Galway. I've served in a lot of different places. This is my tenth station."



Like all other Gardaí, Superintendent Roche attended the Garda College at Templemore, Co. Tipperary. "It was a very different place when I joined, than what it is now. It was very much a training academy based on the West Point system in the United States which is an army system. It was a lot of marching, a lot of drill, a lot of instruction, a lot of fitness and basically a huge amount of discipline involved," he said, adding that it all changed in the nineties: "Now it's a college based system." According to him it is now more of a third level institution, covering a wide range of subjects including the law and fitness is emphasised much more.

The closure of the Garda College and the reduction in numbers of stationed

Gardaí has affected the nation but here in Ballinasloe: "We have no new people coming in to the station," and it has halted individual progression into other career avenues.

Taking up his position as Superintendent and District Officer in Ballinasloe on July 12 of last year has notably been his greatest career achievement to date. "I spent a lot of time as a Detective inspector and in a Detective branch right down through the years so I was happy to take over my own district."

Despite cuts in the force they are still able to run both a 24-hour service here in Ballinasloe and in Mountbellew "and one compliments the other."

"It's a more challenging time to be a manager but that's what it's all about. It's easy to be a manager in good times."

Speaking of problems local to Ballinasloe, Superintendent Roche said: "The most common factor that comes to light is anti-social behaviour."

But tackling these problems is not just up to the guards. "We have a huge emphasis on community policing in the town and in the district and we put a lot of effort into that." The district policing model is based on community policing model and goes back as far as 1993.

Looking down the road, ten years from now, Superintendent Roche hopes to be "very happy, in good health and maybe still in Ballinasloe."

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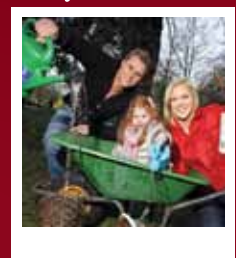
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Ballinasloe Horse Fair & Festival

By Niall Clarke

Ballinasloe Fair and Festival are active again this October with many equestrian activities, amongst which are the Credit Union Horse of the Fair Lunging Competition on the Sunday. The Pony and Cob Competitions will then follow on the Monday. Saturday will see the Country Fair and the Horse and Pony In-Hand Classes in the Fairgreen Arena.

"We are delighted to be running our bakery, art and craft competitions for the 2013 fair. This is the third year the competitions will be held and this year will see the addition of several adult bakery and craft classes to the extensive list of children's competitions. We have also added several new children's art and craft competitions to the programme. We are delighted that SuperValu have come on board to sponsor the event again this year and without this valued support it would not be possible to run the events, a big thanks to Fergal and the team at SuperValu," said Chairman Adrian Ahearne.

The Adult Craft competitions include Best Designed and Made Headpiece, Best Hand Knitted Garment and Best Embroidered Item to name but a few.

Due to popular demand the hugely successful Fear Breige Competition (Scare Crow) is back running for a second year. Last year the competition was supported by local schools and demonstrated fantastic creativity, fun and imagination. Class 1 - Open to Under 16 Best Individual Entry and Class 2 - Open to Best Group Entry



At the Queen of the Fair Selection Night were (L-R) Sponsors Tomás Gullane and Úna McDonagh (Supermacs), Adrian Ahern (F&F Chairman), Alison Duffy (Queen Of Fair 2012) and William Duthie (Director Ballinasloe CU).

(schools, local groups, clubs, residence association). All of the aforementioned classes and competitions will be held on Sunday October 6 in St Michael's Sq at the Festival Tent. The Corrib Oil Dog Show and Food and Craft Fair will also take place in the Square. There will be music on the Gig Rig and some other entertaining events on the day; a really great family day out. Entry to all the Bakery, Art and Craft and Fear Breige Competitions for both kids and adults is free and prices will be in kind. For further information contact Ciara 087 655 5631 or Caroline 085 769 5200. See our website and posters for full details.

To celebrate and mark The Gathering, the Heritage Office, Galway County Council, Ballinasloe Fair and Festival and The Ballinasloe Gathering Group are organising Hurray for Heritage. Loughrea Craft Club and a local historian will work with the local primary school children (4th and 5th Class) on bringing their heritage to life. Each child will become a Heritage Ambassador for Ballinasloe and pledge to tell all visitors and locals

about their rich heritage of the town and its people. The event will be held in the Emerald Ballroom on October 2 and 3 from 10am-12pm and 1-3pm. There will be approximately 30 places available per session and admission is free. Schools can make a booking by calling Ciara on 087 655 5631.

The Fair runs from 28 September until 6 October. Our Office is now open on Main Street, contact number is 090 9644793 www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com



2013 Queen of the Fair Rachel Goode, representing Dolan's, Centra, Birchgrove.

2013 Queen of the Fair Contestants



Garbally College Exam Results



Junior Cert Class of 2013 with their outstanding results with Ms. Sindy Henry Deputy Principal & Mr. Stephen Reilly Principal.

By Stephen Reilly

Garbally students obtained brilliant results in both the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate examinations recently. School management and staff were delighted with the results all round. Over 25% of the pupils obtained between 500 and 615 points. More than 50% of the pupils obtained over 400 points. Leaving Cert pupil Fiachra Muldoon obtained 615 points, a fantastic result.

Junior Cert student Alan Barrett was awarded the Junior Cert Student of the Year Award sponsored by Ollie Colahan & Sons. Congratulations to Alan who obtained nine A's and one B in his Junior Cert. At the Opening School Mass, the principal, Mr Stephen Reilly, congratulated all of the students on their fantastic achievements. He thanked the parents for their tremendous support during the school year and he complimented the Garbally staff for their hard work, commitment and dedication. He wished all of the students every success and happiness in their chosen career paths.

Gene Donohue, Eoghan Costello, Rory Barrett, Diarmuid Claffey and Aaron Carty thrilled with their results.



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Ardscoil Mhuire Exam Results

By Claire Dempsey

The 2013 Leaving Certificate class of Ardscoil Mhuire had plenty of reasons to celebrate with an amazing 25% achieving over 500 points. A further 50% of students scored over 400 points. This placed our students well above the national average.

Caoimhe Divilly from Creagh scored the highest grades overall and is presently studying Business and Commerce in University College Dublin. She has been invited back to take part in the annual Mercy Day celebrations where her achievements will be celebrated by the school and rewarded by a presentation from the Parents' Council.

Principal, Patricia Kilgallon stated: "We are so proud of all our students. The results were incredible. They were a fantastic group of girls and they deserve every success in the future."

The Junior Certificate Class celebrated fantastic results also. The strong cohort of over one hundred students gathered in the school gym for the final class of the day to open the eagerly anticipated brown envelopes. Chloe Carrick had particular reason to celebrate, having achieved an impressive tally of 11 A's in her exams. Principal Patricia Kilgallon praised the achievements of the entire class and encouraged every student to take pride in their results.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
PHOTO 1: Caoimhe Divilly achieved the highest grades in the Leaving Cert Class of 2013.
PHOTO 2: Chloe Carrick achieved 11 A's in her Junior Cert.
PHOTO 3: Natasha Broderick and Rachel Hughes celebrate their Junior Cert results.
PHOTO 4: Some of the Ardscoil Mhuire students who achieved 500+ in their Leaving Cert.



Earlspark N.S. School Reunion

By Peter Mulvihill

Past pupils of Earlspark National School recently held their Reunion at Gullane's Hotel, Ballinasloe. It was a tremendous occasion enjoyed by all who attended. People travelled to the event from England, America and all over Ireland.

The evening commenced with mass celebrated by Fr Kieran O'Rourke and Fr Seán Kilbane, followed by a photo shoot outside the hotel. It was great to see old friends meet and reminisce. A buffet was then partaken of, followed by music and dancing well into the wee hours.

A lot of hard work was done by the organising committee but it paid off in the long run. A large display of memorabilia was on show on the night which included school photographs from 1912 onwards, family photographs, photocopies of roll books dating back to the 1800's, inspectors' reports dating as far back as 1916 and much more. This display attracted a huge interest throughout the night by young and old. Chairman Peter Mulvihill thanked Tomás and Caroline Gullane and their wonderful staff for the use of their facilities and for



Earlspark National School Reunion Committee: Back Row (L-R): Declan Sherin, Patrick Whelan, Peter Mulvihill, Mike Naughton, Seamus Kelly, Marto Craven, Jas Ledwith. Front Row (L-R): Maura O'Brien, Rita D'Arcy, Rosie Bracken, Anne Duffy, Mary Finnelly, Rene Carthy, Carmel Scott.

the wonderful fare he presented. Fr Kieran O'Rourke and Fr Seán Kilbane were also thanked for a beautiful mass, as well as those who donated spot prizes, to Midnight Melodies for the music and a special word of gratitude to all who attended and made it a superb evening which will be well remembered.

Out and About in Ballinasloe



Earls Park School Reunion



Adrian Ahern Chairman of the Ballinasloe Fair and Festival Committee studies form with Ollie Turner (Galway Bay FM) and Sen. Michael Mullins at the Fair and Festival fundraising race night held at Gullane's



Galway Minor Hurling Team Homecoming in Gullane's Hotel



Ard Scoil Mhuire Class of 2013



Members of the All Ireland Camogie Team visit St Killians School, New Inn following their big win in Croke Park.



Social Services Mock Wedding

By Johnny Walsh

Preparations are well under way for the community event of the year in Ballinasloe, which is of course the **Celebrity Mock Wedding in aid of the Ballinasloe Social Services Day Care Centre for senior citizens.**

Indeed preparations have intensified and accelerated in recent weeks, which included promotional video footage of the bridal party at the town marina with the Town Mayor, Councillor Mike Kelly and local personalities including one of Ballinasloe's great characters, Georgie Grehan (Mister Salubrious himself). Sales of tickets are now well underway with tremendous interest already shown by local organisations, businesses and groups of friends booking tables.

Secretary of the organising committee, Brendan Canney, praised the tremendous efforts of everyone concerned in the preparations for our Mock Wedding and in particular singled out Brian Derrane

and John Boland who are co-ordinating the script and rehearsals for the very talented group of local actors. Brendan also encouraged everyone who wishes to attend the wedding to contact either himself at 087 247 1435, Diana Walsh 097 138 7580, Julie Pickering 087 248 8137, Johnny Walsh 087 997 3008 or by calling to the Social Services Centre. The plan is to finalise numbers for the Wedding Banquet (tickets €40) over the next few weeks and thereafter, in the run up to the event, concentrate on

putting together the final touches for the big day. The organising committee intend to further promote the Celebrity Mock Wedding over the October Fair. The big question everyone is asking is who is the bride, but that question won't be answered until the big day itself!

So, let's lift the spirits of our community, give our local economy a boost and at the same time financially support our Social Services Day Care Centre for Senior citizens.



At Ballinasloe Marina during filming of promotional footage for the Mock Wedding were (L-R): Brendan Canney (Organising Committee); JJ Carig; Pat Joe Guinnessy; Terry Noone; Mayor Mike Kelly; Nial Carig; 'Mystery Bride'; Conor McGrath; Cllr. Johnny Walsh and Darren Hogan.

Woolies for Belarusian Winter

Members of the Ballinasloe Active Retirement Knitting Circle once again excelled themselves in the amount of garments and knitted toys they produced for the much deserving orphanage in Belarus. It was a celebrated occasion when Pat Dillon and his team came to collect the clothes and toys. Also joining in were some of the children, who spent their holidays here with families in Ballinasloe. It was sad to see the children return to the orphanage but they really enjoyed the few weeks they spent here. New members are always welcome in the Knitting Circle, founded by Margaret McDonnell. We now have over 20 members and meet each Monday from 10am to 12 noon.



Ballinasloe Active Retirement Knitting Circle members, pictured with some of the Belarusian children receiving their knitted gifts.

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Success at Community Games



Adam McGreal from Ballinasloe won the Gold medal in the Community Games Swimming National Finals



U10 Relay Team: Ava McKeon, Emma Mitchell, Shauna Mitchell, Conor Harley, Shane Naughton and Shane Fitzpatrick pictured with their coach, Ann Burke.



Ballinasloe Swimmers who won medals at the Community Games Finals: Front (L-R): Emma McGreal, Sara McGreal, Adam McGreal, Daithí Ward, Ava McKeon, Charlie Mooney. Back Row: Hannah Gullane, Aibheann Reilly, Emma Loughnane, Tara McKeon, Odhran Dooley, Lorcan Darcy, Fionnan Darcy and Niall Costello.

By Pamela Ryan

Chairperson of the local Community Games committee, Cllr. Carmel Grealy, was overjoyed and very proud of the performances by local athletes recently at the nation finals at Athlone IT.

"They competed to the best of their ability and did extremely well. We're extremely proud of them all in the town of Ballinasloe," said the councillor. The local athletes represented Ballinasloe in six different national final events, and given that "the majority of them are underage," their achievements are to be praised.

Running in the U10 Mixed Relay were Charlie Naughton, Emma Mitchell, Conor Harley, Ava McKeon, Shane Fitzpatrick and Shauna Mitchell. The U10 100m was dashed by Charlie Naughton, the U10 200m by Emma Mitchell and the U10 60m by Conor Harley. During the two day festival the teenagers were representing too as Emma Loughnane entered the U14 Long Puck and Brian Burke ran the U16 Marathon.

The local swimmers also had great success in the festival finals. Seven young Ballinasloe swimmers, including in the boys U13 Relay team, represented Galway at the Community Games National Swimming Finals at Athlone Sports Centre.

At the much anticipated finals champions from each of the 32 counties battled it out in the pool for national honours. Charlie Mooney started the day off by representing Galway County in the U8 Boys Freestyle; he came a respectable fourth in his heat. Adam McGreal was up next in the U10 Boys Freestyle where he performed superbly, finishing in first place and winning a gold National Medal.

Next up were the girls with Tara McKeon competing in the U10 Freestyle; she swam well making it into the semi-final where she came in third place in a close race, narrowly missing out in a place in the final. Daithí Ward competed well in the boys U12 Freestyle. Finally the Ballinasloe Boys Relay Team represented Galway in the U13 Boys Freestyle Relay. It was made up of Lorcan Darcy, Daithí Ward, Niall Costello, Odhran Dooley.

All the swimmers did well to make it to the National Finals. The Swimming Club offers a special congratulations to gold medal winner Adam McGreal, "what an amazing accomplishment!" said club PRO, Monica McKeon.

Cllr Carmel Grealy eagerly awaits further local involvement by local children and teenagers next year. "We look forward to the continued involvement in Community Games and their success in the future."

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Town's An Slua Mór Gathering

By Ciara Croffy

This year, the month of October has been designated the month of The Gathering in town and is synonymous with the Great October Fair. Several local community groups have come together to organise events and it is a real positive example of a community coming together.

The programme includes heritage events, traditional Irish music events, literary workshops, photography workshops, sports events and much more. One of the flagship events during the month will be held over three days in the Town Hall Theatre on October 18, 19 and 20 and will see over 20 lecturers and historians from all over Ireland and abroad gathering to present talks and workshops on The Hidden Heritage of East Galway, including: Tomás Kenny and Barnard Kelly; Joe Mannion and Tom Crehan. The organisers are delighted to be welcoming some so many distinguished historians to Ballinasloe for this year's events and hope to build this Heritage Weekend into an annual event.

As part of our Heritage theme we will also be running a Heritage Bus Tour of East Galway on October 5 and a Kids' Heritage and Art Workshop to celebrate the Gathering on October 3 and 4.

Shem Caulfield will also present a photography workshop in which he will impart his extensive knowledge on taking good quality photographs

and producing an exhibition on a shoe-string. The workshop will focus on 'A Day at the fair' and the course participants will produce an exhibition on the 2013 Ballinasloe Fair at the end of the workshop. This exhibition will be on view in Gullanes Hotel during October.

Sean Keane's repertoire is a blend of the traditional songs learned from Rita and Sarah and songs by his favourite contemporary writers, including Richard Thompson, Tommy Sands, Mick Hanly and Sting, all sung in that calm, carefully weighted manner of his. Sean will perform in the Town Hall Theatre on October 25. The First Annual All-Ireland Sean Nós Dancing Competition will take place on October 27 in the Town Hall Theatre. Music will be provided by the renowned Tom Doherty. Traditional Irish Pub Trail, Famers' Market and much more over the weekend too.

In Keeping with the spirit of the Gathering, the Ballinasloe Booksuckers Literary Group will host their Second Literary Festival on October 19 in Gullane's Hotel. This year we have undertaken an initiative, inspired by The Gathering, to extend a welcome to bookclubs from overseas. The organisers are delighted to welcome former Ballinasloe resident, Sean Moncrieff, to open the event. Sean was educated at Garbally College and further studies at UCD launched him into a successful career as a broadcast journalist and writer. We are also delighted to see the

return of Ciana Campbell as our MC for the day. Ciana is Chairperson of the renowned Ennis Book Festival. This year our committee has worked tirelessly to ensure another distinguished line-up of locally, nationally and internationally published writers and poets. These include poets such as Patrick Deeley and Noelle Lynskey and writers, Mary O'Rourke, Anne McCabe, Emer Connolly, Evelyn Parsons and Maureen Cahalan to name but a few. For further information email Avril at avrilmjc@gmail.com.

Ballinasloe Gathering Pool Tournament will take place on the Bank Holiday Weekend with participants from Ireland, Northern Ireland and UK. For more info contact Tim at 087 272 8058.

For more information please contact Ciara Croffy at ciara.croffy@gmail.com or 087 655 5631 or Marie Mannion at mmannion@galwaycoco.ie.



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Ballinasloe Agricultural Show

By Pamela Ryan

This September will see Ballinasloe's 174th Annual Agricultural Show, held in Ballinasloe Showgrounds.

Taking place on September 28 - it can be said - is one of Europe's most unique shows. Having survived two World Wars and five changes in currency, the show has never been missed. At some point every farming family in East Galway, South Roscommon and West Offaly has had a connection with the show; either on the organising committee or as a competition entrant on the Showground.

On the day will take place the Connemara Mare of the Future followed by four All-Ireland finals: Irish Draught Colt Foal Final, Irish Draught Filly Foal Final; All-Ireland Donkey & Foal Final and the Gain Feed Colt Foal Final.

These competitions will bring together the best stock in Ireland to Ballinasloe for this very enjoyable day. Competition Classes will also include Young Horses; Riding Horses, Mares & Foals; Connemara Ponies; Show Ponies & Working Hunter Ponies as well as the Cattle & Sheep Class in all categories. Show-goers will also find themselves among the Poultry Classes and children's art competitions,



as well as the usual market of horse and cattle products on sale from various companies on the Showground. Children of course, go free!

At the launch Fr. Christy McCormack was honoured and privileged to serve as Chairman of such a unique organisation. Joint Show Presidents, Godfrey Gibbons Snr and Joe Brooks, were delighted with the present condition of the grounds and the development that has been done to improve them in the last five years.

Show Director, Peter O'Connor, gave huge credit to the voluntary workers who man the gates and organise the parking arrangements in the Fairgreen and the

Showgrounds during the festivities. Director Tom Freeman gave special thanks to the FÁS workers who keep the Showground in such fantastic condition, while Director Gerry Stronge gave his thanks to the many sponsors who have contributed to the show in its lifetime. Costing €20,000 to host in October alone, the directors and committee are overwhelmed by the sheer number of businesses and people in the area who have given of their sponsorship and time most generously in these hard times.

The recent launch also saw special thanks going out to the Galway GAA, Duggan Park, for their continued cooperation.

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A Ballinasloe Woman at Heart

By Pamela Ryan

Sheila Bugler was born in England but, at the age of six, her Irish parents moved back to Ireland. They settled in Ballinasloe where Sheila grew up. Now in her forties, Sheila lives in Eastbourne on England's south coast. As she explains to *Ballinasloe Life*, she still feels very strongly connected to her Irish roots.

'Being Irish is very important to me. In many ways, I am a reluctant emigrant. Although I love living in Eastbourne, I miss Ireland. When I started writing crime fiction, it was inevitable, I suppose, that I would write characters that reminded me of the place I still call home.

My crime novels are based in Greenwich, South East London, but the central characters are first- and second-generation Irish. Until recently, I lived in Greenwich. It's a beautiful place that I got to know very well during my time there. Like many parts of London, it has a strong Irish community, built over the years as generations of Irish came to London to find work.

Both my children attended the local Catholic school and the majority of their classmates had Irish origins. In most cases, it was their grandparents who had come to London during the 50s and 60s. Speaking to this older generation, I was struck by how many of them had never planned to settle here. They had come here to find work, but nearly all of them believed that, one day, they would return



'home'. Except they never did. They got married, had children and made good lives for themselves in England. For all of them though, the connection they felt to Ireland remained strong. Many of them still speak about how much they miss Ireland and how quickly they would move there, if only that were possible.

This wistful longing was something I recognised. I was luckier than that older generation. I left Ireland by choice in the late eighties. I wanted to travel and see the world. Not forever though. My plan had always been to return to Ireland. Instead, I found myself repeating the pattern of that earlier generation of emigrants. I got married, had children and made a good life for myself.

Do I regret that it's worked out this way? I don't think so. Eastbourne, where we now live, is a beautiful place. England is a beautiful country. My husband and I have some wonderful friends and we are very happy. I do miss Ireland though, the people, the landscape, my old friends and family. It saddens me that my children see so little of their family.

So I connect with Ireland through my writing. I create characters who speak the way I speak, who have lived in places familiar to me from my childhood. *Hunting Shadows* is the first in a series of crime novels featuring my second-generation Irish character, Ellen Kelly. I have mapped out the plots for the subsequent four novels. Each one draws heavily on Ellen's Irish background, particularly her parents and their lives when they first came to London. My own children are second-generation Irish. Although I have never tried to force any 'identity' on them, both children categorically define themselves as 'Irish' not 'English'. It's a distinction they care strongly about and, although I'd never say so, I'm secretly quite proud.'

Sheila Bugler grew up in Ballinasloe. She studied psychology at UCG and worked in Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland and Argentina before settling in Eastbourne, where she lives with her husband, Sean and their two children. To find out more about Sheila, visit her site: www.sheilabugler.co.uk or you can follow her on Twitter: @sheilab10.

Panto Preview

By Eoin Croffy

Oh yes we can! The drive for five has begun! It has become a Christmas tradition in Ballinasloe over the last number of years, drawn visitors from all over the country and the UK, and has unquestionably entertained audiences with the likes of carriage transformation scenes and short sighted pirates falling from the stage.

Side splitting comedy, larger than life dance routines, lights from London and special effects from as far away as Austria have come together along with Ballinasloe's greatest talent of all ages to offer what has become known as the show of all shows, the panto of all pantos, and it's back!

This year the hunt was on for a Snow White, a charming prince an evil queen, seven dim-witted, not so vertically challenged individuals, cooks, soldiers, talking mirrors and a Granny Smith apple that would knock the wheels of the six o'clock train! There will be a whole new set of problems faced by the award winning production team, John Roe, Eoin Croffy and Olwyn Cronin, but as always they are up to the task after receiving ten months of relaxation after the ill treatment from Long John Silver and his gang last year. Audition day late September in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel Ballinasloe.



Ballinasloe Panto also needs set builders, backstage crew, chaperones, costume helpers etc. so get your name in. 'Snow White and The Vertically Challenged Excavators' promises to explode onto the stage from December 9 to 15 and audiences are pre-warned to set their pacemakers to high, leave the teeth at home and prepare for the most entertaining journey to land in Ireland for a long time.

Oh Yes We Can! Find us on Facebook, on ballinasloepanto.com or 087 141 9760. Hi ho, hi ho. Anyone know where we could get our hands on a talking mirror?

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Live Arts Competition

The Slua Cairde Art Group will be hosting a Community Live Arts exhibition at the Brothers of Charity Tope Centre Ballinasloe. The exhibition is under the direction of Joyce Little, who is an art teacher with Tope Slua Cairde and Fia Nua art groups. The displayed exhibits will be provided by very talented local arts and crafts groups and the exhibition is free to attend. The exhibition is being funded by County Galway Arts Council and will take place on October 22nd in Hayden's Hotel from 11.30am until 5pm.



Ballinasloe Livestock Mart

WEDNESDAY Cattle Sale from 11am

THURSDAY Sheep Sale from 5.30pm



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Busy Time at Town Hall Theatre



By Mary O'Connell

The recent launch of local historian, Brian Casey's book, *Defying the Law of the Land: Agrarian Radicals in Irish History*, in the Town Hall Theatre was a very successful and interesting evening. Brian chose the Town Hall because of its history and its uniqueness in being one of a small number of agricultural halls built in Ireland during the 19th century.

Those present were entertained with stories of how Michael Cusack, founder of GAA, brought a group of hurlers from Dublin to Ballinasloe to show the hurlers of Killimor how to play hurling. These same hurlers founded the Matt Harris Club (Killimor-EyreCourt-Meelick) and went on to play in the first All-Ireland Final against a Tipperary team. Many of these hurlers were agrarian radicals involved in land disputes in the locality and Brian Casey's essay on Matt Harris features in the book.

Over the next few months the Town Hall Theatre will host a variety of events including some associated with The Gathering - *An Slua Mór*, during the month of October. Hidden Heritage of East Galway is three days of lectures by historians, running on October 19th, 20th and 21st.

- The Credit Union All-Ireland Final will bring talented young people and their families from all over the country to town for the weekend of October 20.
- Renowned musician and singer, Seán Keane, will be live in Concert on October 25. Tickets available from the office.
- The All-Ireland Open Seán Nós Dancing competition for under tens to Seniors is on October 27.
- Ard Scoil Mhuire's Production of *Hairspray* runs from November 26 to 28. Always an entertaining show.
- This year's pantomime *Snow White and the Vertically Challenged Excavators* will run from December 9 to 15.
- Pat Shortt's will perform I am the Band February 8, 2014.
- Ballinasloe Musical Society present *Me and My Girl* in March.
- The Country Market continues every Friday morning with a variety of artisan crafts and foods, cups of tea and chat. There will be an extra market on Country Fair Day October 5, at the slightly later time, 11am-4pm.
- Majella Flanagan Theatre Company hosts drama classes for children on Friday evenings. Call (086) 3824545 for more information.

For bookings of any of the events listed above, or any other enquiries to the Town Hall Please Call 090 9643779.

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Prize winner Mary Madden receives award from Ladies Captain, Catherine Owens.

Golf Round Up

Ballinasloe Golf Club are delighted to announce the victory of their Ladies' Senior Foursomes Team at the Connacht Finals. The ladies will now progress into the much anticipated All-Ireland Finals of the competition. The Ladies Captain Prize also brought success to the delighted winner, Mary Madden.



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Local Motorcross Rider to Fly the Flag for Ireland in Belgium

By Pamela Ryan

Dylan Stynes from Ardcar, Creagh, has been chosen to ride for Team Ireland in The Motocross of Nations, which will be held this autumn.

The Garbally College student is one of only three riders chosen from the entire island of Ireland. Having just turned 14 he is actually the youngest rider on the team. Dylan will be representing Ireland in the Coupe de Avenir's 85cc Youth Cup in Belgium.

Dylan and his team mates, Jack Daly and David Galvin - both from Cork - will be competing against teams from Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Iceland and many more.

"It is a chance in a lifetime and I just can't wait to get to Belgium," said Dylan before adding: "Motocross is an extremely demanding sport which requires a high level of fitness. I train regularly and spend a lot of time on the bike to practise techniques and make sure my bike fitness is 100%."



Starting out at just six-years old, Dylan first raced motocross on an automatic bike. In 2007 Dylan won the title of Automatic Southern Centre Champion, followed by Ulster Champion in 2012.

His commitment and dedication to the sport has not seen him outside the top five in any championships he has competed in: Irish, Ulster and Southern Centre, since 2007.

Dylan has also been chosen four times to represent Ireland in the British Youth Motocross Team Event.

His father, Alan and mother, Brenda, are very proud of Dylan and his upcoming competition in Belgium. Dylan and his family wish to thank Dylan's grandfathers, Frank McGuire and Frank Stynes and his brothers Adam and Evan.

"To the people who have 'dug deep' and to those who have given us what they could we are most grateful and wish to thank you most sincerely," said the family.

Dylan's sponsors are Gullane's Hotel, the Chamber of Commerce, Fletchers, Ballinasloe Town Council, Noel Mannion Sports, Declan Egan, Seán Connolly Butchers, Seán Hogarty, John Murray Ltd., Kellers, Pat Lee Balting Glass, Rothwell & Co., Salmons, Daly Shoes, Signs and Systems, Macs Motor Tyres, Alan Johnston Motors, Hayden's Hotel, Ollie Colohan & Sons, Ballinasloe AFC, P. Clarke & Sons, John Burke of Aughrim, Dillon Tyres Ltd and Bread Basket.

Shearwater's Summer Rally

By Pamela Ryan

Ballinasloe locals cleaned up at this year's Carlton Shearwater Galway Summer Rally, where in total 150 cars competed for the range of titles on offer.

Eamonn Dervan and Brian McNamara won the much coveted Conroy Cup while Brendan Dunne and Brendan Murphy won class 2, David Quigley and Des Sherlock won class 6 and Tom Curley and Deane Rafferty won class 20. Galway Motor Club gained wins in class 10 where James Power and Declan Kelly took first place, Conal and Declan Doherty took second and Mike Murphy and Miriam Lally took third position.

Local Ballinasloe father and son crew Niall and Conor Keane placed second in the Historic class. Pat and Jonathon Kelly also placed second in class 8. The rally began with scrutiny in the rear of the Carlton Shearwater where the cars were prepared for the competitions to follow.

Later that same evening the ceremonial start took place in St Michael's Square, where the Mayor of Ballinasloe, Mike Kelly; President of the Chamber of Commerce Donal Scannell and the County Mayor Liam Carroll, along with a large crowd of spectators, were all in attendance. The first car left the hotel on Sunday morning at 9.15am and the rest at 30 second intervals, to head out to the stages. There were a number of titles up for grabs both national and local.



Father and son team, Niall and Conor Keane during the Galway Summer Rally's Historic Class.

After nine challenging stages, 75 cars returned to Parc Ferme at the Shearwater Hotel. Although there was a high rate of attrition, all crews returned safe after mechanical break downs and with others 'running out of road'.

After fierce competition, the overall award went to Welsh Crew Hugh Hunter and Andy Marchbank with another Welsh crew, James Belton and Mark Glennester, in second place. Daragh O'Riordan from Cork finished third.

Galway Motor Club would like to take this opportunity to thank their sponsors for the event: The Carlton Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe, Chamber of Commerce and Ballinasloe Town Council and also to thank the people of Ballinasloe, The Gardaí and the residents on the various stages of the Rally.

Home to Rome Charity Challenge

By Pamela Ryan

Ballinasloe native, Niall Burke, will be the Running Against Cancer [RAC] athlete taking up cycling for the Home to Rome Challenge. He will be cycling in aid of East Galway Cancer Support. His attention was first brought to the charity challenge by RAC's Ken Campbell.

"It all started for me on Facebook - as most things like this do - with a subtle post from Ken Campbell, founding member of Running Against Cancer; a club that I am very proud to be a part of," said Niall.

"The Home to Rome Challenge is something completely different. It immediately struck me as something I would be very interested in doing, yet very apprehensive to do. A few swift emails later I found myself being a fairly committed member and representative of Galway," added Niall, looking forward to the June 2014 start.

It is hoped the challenge will contain one cyclist from every county on the island to complete the challenge, which begins for Niall with a two-day cycle from home to Rosslare. Each cyclist will be completing the challenge on behalf of a cancer charity or association.

The challenge is being organised by Kevin Kelly and at just short of 2,000km over two weeks the challenge works out to be a mighty 1.5 marathons every day! "I met Kevin Kelly, the event organiser



and local Ballinasloe man, at Hayden's Hotel. I'd just run a fairly decent Sunday morning distance and feeling like I'd done so. Kevin almost instantly informed me, after a brief introduction, that cycling the Home to Rome Challenge is the equivalent of running a marathon and a half daily; about 60km. This shook me and instantly made me hope that the water I'd just ordered arrived a fair bit stronger!" said Niall.

From now until the challenge begins Niall will be hosting a series of nine events every month to raise awareness and funds for East Galway Cancer Support, which began with an AstroTurf Tournament in September. There were prizes and presentations after the tournament as well as an after-party in Joe Kelly's.

Niall is currently training very hard for the 2,000km challenge which includes temperatures of above 35° and at least three days cycling through the Alps. "It's not a little holiday on a bike, admiring views; it's a very serious challenge and one I will be taking very seriously. I hope to see all of you at charity events I will be having over the coming months to raise some much needed funds for East Galway Cancer Support," said Niall.

Niall will also be running in the 3rd annual Dublin City Marathon for RAC in October and would like to express his sincerest thanks to Ballinasloe Town AFC for all their support.

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Ladies' Success at County Level

By Nicolas McDonnacha

Ballinasloe's rise through the ranks of Ladies Gaelic Football has been quite sensational, as they have gone from a newly formed club, to a club that has ambitions to win titles at every age group they enter.

In the club's short six-year existence, Ballinasloe Ladies have brought home League and Championship titles with amazing frequency and in the process have been producing some of the best football to be found in Galway. This year, more than most, the rest of the county has really sat up and taken notice as five girls have represented their county with great success.

Sarah Fletcher had an important role in the Galway U14's Connacht title win, which was sealed after an impressive win against Mayo. Sarah and Galway eventually fell at the All-Ireland semi-final stage after losing out to Cork. Sarah will hopefully have a few clubmates alongside her at County U14 next year as the current crop coming up through the ranks are highly talented.

At U21 level, Galway went a step further and reached the All-Ireland final, where Ballinasloe's Chantal Muldoon and Lisa O'Neill lined out at corner back and midfield respectively. This was quite an

astonishing feat from these two girls as they had only taken up football two years earlier after many years of representing Galway Camogie. Both girls were promoted to the Galway Senior panel. Unfortunately Chantal was unable to continue on with the Senior panel but Lisa O'Neill took up the offer and was part of a Connacht title winning squad. The seniors and Lisa, eventually lost out in the Championship Semi-finals.

Arguably the biggest success came at Minor level, as both Faye Mahon and Mary Geraghty were part of the Galway panel that won Connacht and All-Ireland titles. It was a just reward for these girls who have been two of the most dedicated players to pull on a Ballinasloe jersey. The Connacht title was secured after a win against Mayo. Then came an All-Ireland semi-final against the county which had eliminated Galway at U12, U14, U16 and U21 level this year, Cork, from which Galway emerged victorious. Next up for the girls was an All-Ireland final against last year's Dublin champions. Galway finished victorious yet again.

With the County scene now over, focus is back on club fixtures. With trophies already in the bag at U12 and U14 level and with all age groups still involved in later stages of their respected Championships, hopes are high for more silverware.



Faye Mahon and Mary Geraghty with clubmates Niamh Loughnane and Orla McDonagh after All-Ireland Final.



Ballinasloe members Daniel Moynihan, Faye Mahon, Níoclás MacDonnacha and Mary Geraghty after the final whistle, alongside Ciana Ní Churraoin of Micheal Breathnachs and Caltra's Emma Reaney.



Sarah Fletcher (right) with the Connacht U14 Trophy

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All-Ireland U16 Camogie Finalists

Members of the Galway U16 panel, Elle Doherty, Michelle Jennings and Rachel Mannion, contested this year's All-Ireland Camogie final, played in Portlaoise in August. Galway were unlucky to lose out to Tipperary in the closing minutes of a very exciting match. The girls began playing with Ballinasloe Camogie Club at U8 level and have had great success and happy times with the club over the past number of years. The club is delighted with the growing number of players at all levels some of which represent the club at county level. Pictured on the left are: Elle Doherty, Michelle Jennings and Rachel Mannion.



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Karate Club on the World Stage

By Leo Mulvany

Ballinasloe based Itosu-Kai Karatedo Ireland (IKKI) recently travelled to Osaka, Japan to compete in the IKIF World Karate Championships. The IKKI was established in Ballinasloe in 1976 and includes Co. Galway clubs: Ballinasloe, New Inn, Galway (Claddagh), Loughrea, Kiltormer, Eyrecourt, Mountbellew and Co. Laois: Mountrath and Shinrone.

Twenty-five Irish competitors took part in the championships and with family and friends, brought the full team total to 37. Accompanying the competitors were Martha Mulvany, Fiona White, Marie Porter, Trina Kilkenny, Andrea Porter, Angela Kennedy, Padraic Holohan, Sarah Nasiff, Kieran McGourty, Marwan Abbas, Amy Abbas and Ruth Keery.

The competition standard was extremely high with the majority of contestants from the host nation, Japan. All Irish competitors performed extremely well on the day and competed in two events, kata, a challenging solo event which demands perfect form, agility, stamina, power and balance and kumite or sparring; equally demanding as kata but against an opponent. There was a third event, the men's team kumite (a five man team) with only Jake Mulvany and Shane Dolphin afforded the opportunity to spar. Competition day started with a 6am rise, a long day ahead and jet lag thrown in for good measure. However, none of that was a concern judging

from the team performances. From the youngest members, Cerys Porter, 10 and April Curran, 11, through to our young teenagers, Kian, Eimear, Faye and Shane Kilkenny, to the more mature contestants of the squad.

The team worked hard throughout the day. The large numbers of competitors meant that there were over 50 competing in certain categories especially in the juniors, so it took four to five rounds just to get to medals or the semi-finals. Many bouts were lost to split decisions. This is where five judges score a winner 3-2 over their opponent. In a World Championship competition finishing in the top eight is noteworthy and certification was given to John Dolphin and Faye Mulvany for their fifth place in kumite.

Outstanding performances by Jean Kennedy, silver in kata and Karen Dolphin, a seasoned International competitor who took bronze in kata and kumite. A great achievement to take medals in two separate disciplines.

First time at a major competition, Enda Magennis took bronze in kata. Other medal winners Claire Harte and Leo Mulvany took bronze in kumite while Marie Dolphin took bronze in kata.

The IKKI attended their first World Championships in 2002 in Tokyo, Japan and Osaka 2013 makes it four in a row. "Hard work, consistency and coaching are the key elements to building a winning squad," said Leo Mulvany, IKKI

Chief Instructor. It showed on the mats in Osaka, our competitors were confident, focused and were in touch with the best in the world. The stage does not get any bigger than a World Championship. Leo Mulvany was also team manager in Osaka. He pays particular tribute to all the parents for their support and all the competitors for their months of hard work at their club and squad sessions. Also the kata coaches, Marie Dolphin and John Dolphin, kumite coaches, Kevin Casey and Jake Mulvany and sports injury/nutrition/hydration coach Claire Harte for their dedication and professionalism.

The IKKI would also like to thank their many sponsors for supporting team Ireland in 2013. The next World Championships will be held in 2017 in Hong Kong. For further information on the Japan Championships, the IKKI association & the Ballinasloe Club, go to: www.itosukaiireland.org



Osaka Medal Winners (L-R): Jean Kennedy, Enda Magennis, Claire Harte, Leo Mulvany, Marie Dolphin, Karen Dolphin.



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Ladies Rugby & Clans Gathering



Aisling Murphy and Glodagh Duffy, part of Girls U15 squad.



Veterans team: Pat Finn, John Killeen, Kieran McGriell, Brendan Hayes, Mike Devine, Declan Murphy, Declan McKeon, Liam Feehily, Stephen Reilly, Seamus Lyons, John Nalty and Godfrey Gibbons.

By Liam Courtney, Club PRO

All involved with Ballinasloe Rugby Club were justifiably proud of their contribution to The Gathering when running its own *Gathering of the Clans* at the club recently.

The organising committee and their many helpers put in some Trojan work to make the event the success that it turned out to be. 'Near or far, wherever you are Ballinasloe Rugby is calling you home to Graigueawoneen,' ran the billboard invite to anyone and everyone who had an involvement with or interest in the club at any stage over the years and first timers were equally welcome. The 'calling' hit a chord and the numbers who dropped by during the afternoon and evening to meet and say hello or watch a slice of the action, were truly great.

The day's action kicked off with the minis/youth players displaying their skills which, no doubt they will enhance in the years to come and hopefully, for the benefit of Ballinasloe RFC. Meanwhile, those teak tough warriors of yesterday showed that they can still shunt a ball around when taking part in the veterans' game. The action on the pitch concluded with a local selection taking on Terenure College U20s in a friendly.

As pitch activities came to an end there was a switch faster than a scrum half's pass to the club rooms where the gathering kicked off in earnest. It was most warming to see devotees -

covering a spread of seven decades - mingle and chat and all with a common bond; Ballinasloe rugby. It was interesting to hear about the club and all of the happenings over the years that has made it what it is today. Perhaps the most satisfying aspect of the occasion was the renewing of old acquaintances for so many who had not met for some time. After all, this would have been central to this gathering. And so the reminiscing and anecdotes went on long into the good night. And many of yesterday's heroes were not so bad on the dance floor either.

Ballinasloe RFC also have a thriving minis' and youths' section, but with the growing popularity of women's and girls' rugby throughout the country, it was felt within the club that a girls team at U15 level would be a great way to introduce the game to our club. Our first training session was held recently and since then has been extremely well attended. Very few of the girls had ever played rugby before, but their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn a new game was very encouraging. As many of the girls already play Gaelic football and other sports during the summer months. Playing rugby during the winter is an ideal way to maintain their fitness, have fun and make new friends.

Training continues every Saturday at 12.30pm, new members are always welcome. For more information contact Catherine Devine 087 7545068 or Declan Murphy 086 8548046.

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The Story of Great October Fair

By Barry Lally

A local hotel has a restaurant called Marengo. Diners who happen to be historians may wonder what a battle fought in Northern Italy between the French and the Austrians on June 14, 1800, has to do with Ballinasloe.

The explanation is simple. The French, who won that day, were led by Napoleon Bonaparte, who re-named the charger he had ridden in the field Marengo; a horse that was later to carry him to victory at the battles of Austerlitz, Jena and Wagram. Legend has it that Marengo had been bought at the Ballinasloe October Fair.

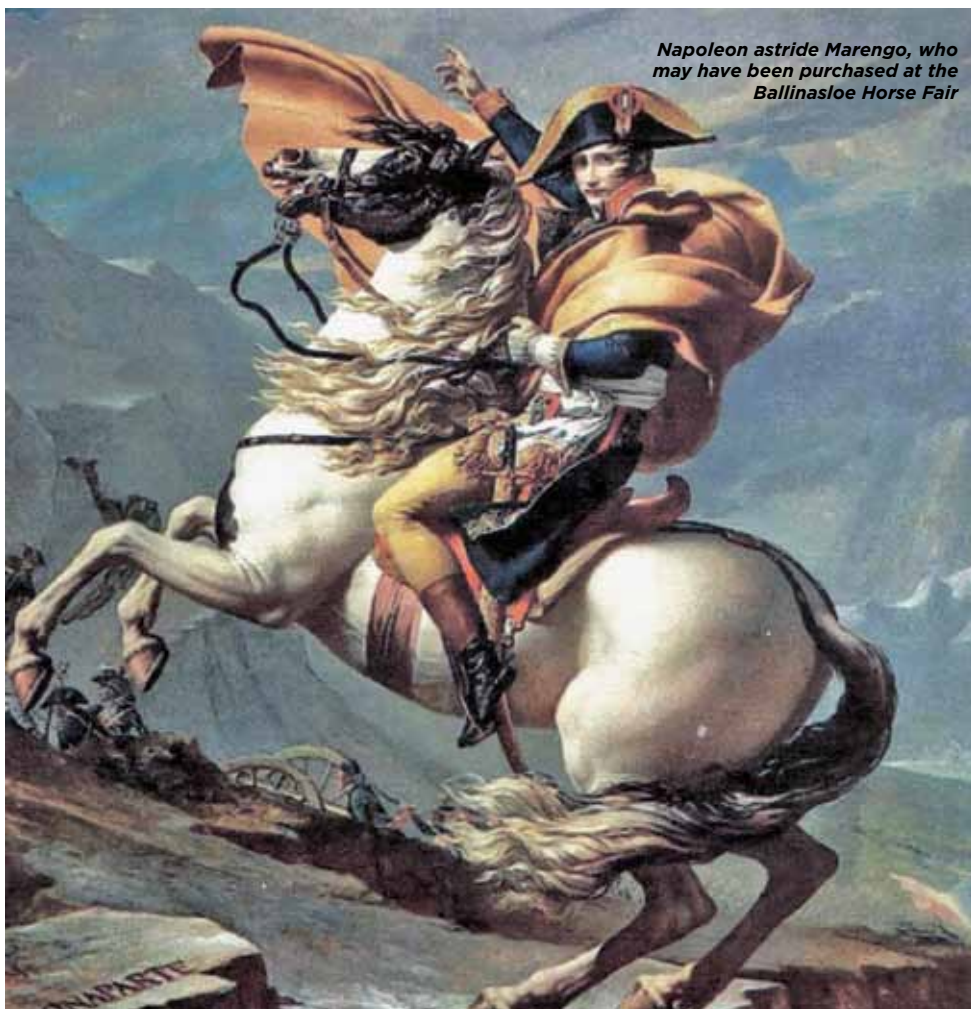
There appears to be no evidence to support this claim, but neither is there any proof that the story is false. Indeed, it may well be true, because continental quartermasters, or their agents, were a regular feature of the fair as major buyers of horse-flesh from the 18th century right up to WWII.

It might be thought that the internal combustion engine had rendered the horse redundant in military affairs as the 20th century advanced; not so. European armies made extensive use of horses to draw gun-carriages and supply wagons because the horse could traverse terrain that a motor lorry would find difficult if not impossible to negotiate. Irish horses were especially prized for their versatility, both as mounts and for draught work.

Odd as it may strike us today, up to 50 years ago horses were a minor - though important - component of the fair which was then mostly about the sheep and cattle until the livestock markets took over. Originally it seems that the week started off with a sheep fair for wether hoggets on a Monday, that was followed by a fair for ewe hoggets on Tuesday. Wednesday was the Horse fair, Friday was for cattle and animals 'missed' earlier in the week were presented at the Country Fair on Saturday.

By the middle of the 19th century however, probably at the behest of the Earl of Clancarty, a Monday start had been precluded; apparently so that the God-fearing townsfolk would be spared the sight of people desecrating the Sabbath by erecting pins in the Green on the eve of the sheep fair. Very likely it was around this time that the convention was established of holding the October Fair in the week in which the first Tuesday of the month fell.

Thursday was allotted to the horse fair, but towards the end of the century there were complaints that the better quality



Napoleon astride Marengo, who may have been purchased at the Ballinasloe Horse Fair

animals were being sold off earlier in the week prior to the officially designated day. The solution was to move the horse fair forward to Monday, in the knowledge that no-one would dare to offer an affront to local sentiment by trading in horse-flesh on the Sabbath. Nowadays, however, there is probably as much, if not more, buying and selling done on the Sunday as on the Monday.

The origins of the October Fair are lost in the mists of time, though there's speculation that it developed in the 16th century in response to the export trade from Galway in hides and salted beef, a trade that expanded significantly in the following century when the city became a victualling port for the British West India Fleet, which meant that Galway merchants required large amounts of meat to process and sell to the navy.

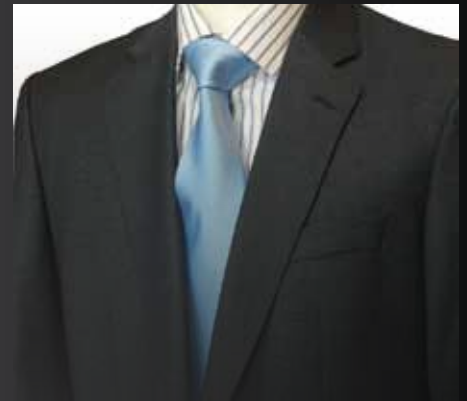
The October fair received an additional boost from the move towards pasture in the 1730s prompted by frequent wars and diseases among cattle on the continent, combined with the exemption of grazing land from tithes. By the end of the century the October Fair had become the principal sheep and cattle mart of these islands and indeed had acquired a European-wide reputation. The Fair continued to expand in the 19th

Century, reaching a peak sometime in the 1860s. Perhaps the most powerful agent in its subsequent decline was the Railway, arriving in 1851. While it initially helped by facilitating in the transport of livestock, it eventually reduced its importance by aiding establishment of smaller fairs elsewhere.

Due to growing mechanisation of Irish farms in the 1950s, it is conceivable that the horse fair would have gone the way of the sheep and cattle fairs by the 1970s had it not been for the efforts of successive Fair and Festival committees, along with the fact that more disposable income became available in the '60s, creating an increased demand for what might be termed 'recreational horses'.

Though the agents of foreign armies who bought the likes of Marengo have been consigned to the pages of history, visitors still flock from far and wide - the continent included - to savour the unique atmosphere of the Fair.

Aside from the Fair's strictly commercial aspect, it is one of the greatest social events of the West of Ireland, also an occasion for emigrants to return and renew old acquaintances. Ballinasloe, in the form of the October Fair, has had for years its own 'Gathering' without anyone thinking to name it so.



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School Goers Research Project

Máire Hanniffy is a Doctoral Fellow at the National University of Ireland Galway's Child and Family Research Centre. She is currently undertaking research in the area regarding what it is really like for children to start primary school for the first time. For more information or to take part in this research, people can ask in Scoil an Chroí Naofa or contact Máire directly on (085) 149 9246 or email her at m.hanniffy2@nuigalway.ie. Máire has said she needs "lots of different views" to complete her research, so all participants are more than welcome to take part.



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