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AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 1: April-May 2014

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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 1: April-May 2014

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If I got a euro for those that told me that this publication would never get to its 4th birthday; 19 issues ago, I'd be a rich man. That "Life" now embarks on its fourth season as a chronicle of what this community is attempting to do month in month out, is evidence enough for the editorial and project team to humbly accept the regard it now has with our readers and subscribers. My personal thanks to the contributors and all of our readers who take time out to stop and comment on what they like and don't like about the magazine, we welcome all feedback.

Local elections are upon us and in offering a platform for communication has details of the nine citizens courageous enough to participate at the rougher end of the democratic process. The profiles were scripted by the candidates themselves. As readers will no doubt from my pen and maybe personality I can be acerbic towards the political system that pertains in this state.

What is equally true is that I respect and value greatly those that engage personally as candidates and elected representatives in the noble call. They are not "all the same", they are motivated in the main by the common good and they do wish to represent and to advance their constituents interests. Without candidates there would be no elections, without us voting there will be no democracy. We all as taxpayers pay for the Local authorities budgets, we shouldn't turn our back on the May ballot box because of hostile indifference to the wider political world but as these are LOCAL elections; focus on the issues and candidates that matter to YOU, to us, to our Community. Engage, ask, point out, lobby, participate now!

Colm Croffy, Ballinasloe Life Editor



With the impending wind down of our local Town Council it is important that we retain services in the impressive Municipal Building and I have no doubt that this will form a key part of discussion with local election candidates over the coming weeks. It is also vital that the services in Portiuncula Hospital are expanded rather than curtailed and now is the time to secure commitments rather than when damaging decisions have been made.

Ballinasloe's location with good Road, Rail and Bus Connections is an ideal location for any Business/Government Agency to set up/expand. Ministers Perry, Hayes & Gilmore have been at various functions in the locality this month and have been made aware of the difficulties facing this Galway Town and catchment area and their support has been sought. Likewise the IDA & Enterprise Ireland are aware of quality buildings available for new/existing industry and we need to push the benefits of locating in Ballinasloe at every given opportunity to key Business Influencers.

We in the Enterprise Centre continue to promote our SME agenda and have found an increasing number of enquiries in recent months which augers well for 2014. Our annual BEST competition once again proved to be a huge success and details of same can be found in the Magazine. Close to 600 ideas have come forward since the inaugural competition 6 years ago. Finally I wish to thank our subscribers. Positive comments are great but without funding we would not be able to continue and ultimately all we want to do is break even. For rate cards contact info@ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie.

*Seamus Duffy, Chairman,
Ballinasloe Area Community Development*

WHAT'S INSIDE



Follow us on Twitter
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- 04 Ronan Mullen on the Election Trail
- 06 The BEST Awards
- 09 Wards Fashions
Millrace — New Director
- 11 Mayor's Awards
- 13 Corrib Oil, Your One Stop Shop
- 15 CU Factor 2014
- 17 YouthWork Very Active
- 18 Ballinasloe Life, Volume 4 Launch
- 19 Sr. Kathleen's Book Launch
- 20 Local Election Candidates
- 23 New Alcohol Strategy
- 24 Events Guide
- 25 Events Guide
- 26 Emma Walsh — Voice of Ireland
- 27 Michaelian Ensemble
- 28 Pink Panthers Jazz
- 29 Newtown School Celebrates 175 years
East Galway Library Art Trail
- 31 Out and About
- 32 Kiltormer N.S. Golden Jubilee
- 33 Support Centre: Four Years on
- 34 Vintage Club Celebrates 5 Years
- 35 Rascal Resources Lead the Way
- 36 WWI Memorial Roll of Honour
- 37 New Heritage Groups
St Teresa's Charity Cycle
- 39 Ballinasloe A.F.C. Roundup
- 41 Success for Ladies U15 Rugby
- 43 G.A.A./G.E.L.S. Cycle Launch
- 44 The Passing of a Golfing Legend
- 45 In Flanders' Fields
- 46 Tidy Towns

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Print: KPW Print, Ballinasloe. **Photos:** Robert Riddell - robertriddell.com, J&S Photos - jsphotos.ie, Jordans - liamjordanphoto.com, Stronges - stronges.ie, Alex Zardov - www.alexzardov.com, Mike Riddell and Evelyn Donnellan.

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Local Senator Rónán Mullen on the European Election Trail

By Colm Croffy

Prominent Irish Senator Rónán Mullen, an Ahascragh native, will be a familiar face to many people. Rónán is running as an Independent candidate for the Midlands-North-West Constituency, of which Ballinasloe is a part. He hopes to be one of four MEPs representing this area.

Rónán has a lot of ties with Ballinasloe. His campaign posters and flyers are being printed in KPW Print. “Ballinasloe was the place where, alongside Ahascragh, we mainly shopped. We sold our cattle there, went to the cinema there, went to weddings in Haydens and visited friends in Portiuncula, where I was born.”

Rónán’s mother, Maura Hobbs, is a Killimor native who trained and nursed in Portiuncula. His father, Tom, who built houses for Galway County Council and alongside with Maura runs a small family farm, is from Woodlawn.

His first Ballinasloe memories are of being dropped into my uncle and aunt’s house on Dunlo Hill. My uncle and aunt were newly married and didn’t mind spoiling us with sweets from Dooleys.

“Another very nice memory from the many times I went to the Mart with my father. I had only 10p in my pocket, so I pulled an Oliver Twist routine and got a plate of sausages and chips for a very modest price indeed from a nice lady who took pity on me!”

Rónán attended Kilglass NS, followed by five years in Holy Rosary College Mountbellew. He graduated with a BA in English and French in UCG, spending a year as President of the Students Union. He went on to get a Masters in Journalism from DCU, before teaching in the Liberties in Dublin. He then became an administrator in Dundalk IT and spent 3 years as a Press and Communications Officer for the Dublin Diocese. He taught Law in IT Blanchardstown and was a columnist for the Irish Examiner and the Irish Daily Mail. He also spent some time practising as a barrister, before taking leave in order to take up his Seanad seat in 2007.

Rónán acknowledges that Ballinasloe has its challenges but sees the town’s potential. “Trying to get people to come into the town, stay here and spend money can be tough. It’s never easy in a time of recession, but there is fantastic value to be had here. I would urge people to try to spend in town and try to keep money and jobs local.” He praises the work of the local development company and says he is very hopeful about the town enhancement plans such as the development of the riverfront.

“Developing the park and playgrounds, will attract families. Ballinasloe can distinguish itself from Athlone and Galway.” Ronan would like to enhance the facilities of the town for Senior Citizens, with the addition of walkways and the development of leisure facilities and the need for developing amenities in Creagh and surrounding areas.



While there is a vibrant feel to the town at the moment, there are certainly some unused premises that could be enhanced.” He commends the cultural life in the area, in particular the Musical and Panto societies. He enjoyed watching his niece Elena among the talented crew of performers in a recent production of *Snow White and Seven Excavators*.

Coming from a farming background, Rónán is also concerned with rural development. He understands the challenges facing farmers and is keen to promote community development. “We want to avoid the agricultural equivalent of ‘ghost estates’,” he says. We want family, not factory, farms.”

Rónán feels strongly about the maintenance of quality medical services in the town. He visited St Brigid’s recently to view the developed facility and challenged the HSE about the bed closures. “Without giving up the fight for quality healthcare facilities, we should look to the space around St Brigid’s hospital for developing other amenities and services. I’d like to see a respite centre for Alzheimer’s - I know there were hopes for that - patients currently have to go to Ballinrobe or Athenry for respite.” He stresses the importance of maintaining the maternity unit in Portiuncula, which delivers over 2,000 babies a year. “There’s no need for people to have to go to Galway when there are such fantastic facilities on our doorstep.”

Rónán is eager to explain what he could do in the European Parliament for Ballinasloe and the surrounding region. “With more and more decisions concerning Ireland being made at European level, it is important to have a strong voice representing our corner of Ireland and Europe. In this election, Ireland will have 11 MEPs out of 751, with only four of them representing this large area of 15 counties,” he says, referring to the new constituency of Midlands-North-West in which he is standing. “As the son of a small farmer from just outside Ballinasloe, I want to be a strong, Independent voice for the locality. I don’t take my line from any party whip. I analyse the issues and speak my mind. I think Independent politicians can do more in Europe at this time. We have seen too much unemployment, emigration and depopulation. It’s time for investment, growth and jobs. That will be my top priority. For example, the European Globalisation Fund is available when larger factories close, to help workers upskill and re-skill. I



would like to see such funds available for when jobs are lost in twos and threes in the retail sector, for example, in our towns.

Rónán says he has never been afraid to call foul when the EU bureaucracy interferes too much in Irish laws and he promises to do so again if elected. “I will resist EU interference with our laws on tax and social issues,” he says. “The EU is at its best when it respects the different cultures and traditions of its member states.”

We shouldn’t apologise for such independent-mindedness, Rónán says. “Ireland has played its part in stabilising the EU and we have taken the pain of the bailouts. I think we should feel very justified in seeking EU support after our contribution. I want to get the best out of Europe, but I stress I will not be afraid to challenge the EU bureaucracy where it interferes in our own affairs.”

More information on Rónán’s policies are available from his website www.ronanmullen.ie. You can also call 086 360 2924, or emailerection2014@ronanmullen.ie

Senator Shopping Local at KPW

Ronan Mullen visited KPW to see the recently installed €150,000 state-of-the-art Wide Format Signage Machine printing his all-weather pole posters, for his election campaign. The full-colour printer has also produced posters, up to 8’x4’ for many of the European Candidates in the forthcoming May Elections as well as for several contesting the County Council Elections, throughout the West and Midlands.

Senator Mullen was impressed with the quality of his printed literature from KPW Print. “I am delighted to be able to deal with such a long-established, local printing company and I am impressed with the professionalism and quality of their work. Local industries now need all the support they can get and I think KPW have to be admired for withstanding the recession when so many other firms closed down in Ballinasloe over the last few years.”

In recent years KPW Print have invested over €1million in acquiring modern equipment such as full-colour digital printing machines, wide format all-weather signage machines, large laminators and computer equipment. General Manager Gabriel Naughton said “We have faced the challenge over the past few years by competing with the best and spreading our customer base to every county in Ireland. We have a committed staff here who pride themselves in their work



Ronan in KPW/Print, with Staff (L-R): Gerry Glynn (Sales), Paul Creaven (Printer), Mark Kelly (Design & Estimating) and Gabriel Naughton (General Manager).



and we will continue to meet our customers’ demands in all aspects of printing. We appreciate the business from Sen. Ronan Mullen, who believes in supporting local enterprises and wish him luck in his election campaign.”

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Our Latest Young Entrepreneurs



Front (L-R): Ellen Butler, Aoife Sidaway, Eimear Costello, Aoife Downey, Victoria Maksimchika, Nicole Curley.
Back (L-R): Michael O'Neill (Garbally College), Grace Dooley, Laura Hession, Hannah Finn, Chloe Carrick, Rachael Coen, Saqib Zardari (Garbally College).

By Kevin O'Connor

The 2014 BEST (Ballinasloe Entrepreneurial Skills Tournament) Awards ceremony, where the town's best and brightest young people were gathered, along with Minister of State for Public Service Reform and the OPW, Brian Hayes, eagerly awaiting the announcement of a winner.

In a marvellous display of entrepreneurial spirit, six winners were chosen out of 11 finalists, who had already beaten 102 entrants, the largest number so far, showed the level of creativity and ingenuity from Ballinasloe's young people.

Sponsored by the Ballinasloe Credit Union and organised by the B.A.C.D. Aoife Sidaway, 12, from Garbally Drive, won a special Judges Award for her project. Aoife, whose parents are Siobhán and Gordon, had an unusual project. She did not design a product, but instead, started working on setting up a Heritage Centre.

"I had the idea for a while and I thought it would be a good way to bring tourism and money into the town," said Aoife. Representing Ard Scoil Mhuire, her intention is to put Ballinasloe on the map as a heritage destination, so by enlisting the help of heritage centres around the country, Aoife designed a way to set up one here. "There are a few empty buildings around, so I would like to base it out of one of those, for example the old Presbyterian Church," she said. "The town has such a rich background, there is definitely more we can do to make the most of it."

Eimear Costello, 13, comes from the Roscommon side of town and was the Runner Up in this year's awards. She designed a gauge that can accurately tell you how much gas is left in a tank. A student of Ard Scoil Mhuire, she said that the inspiration for this design came from bitter experience. "There have been times when we'd suddenly run out because we couldn't see exactly how much gas was left," she said. Eimear,

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whose father Tom is a forestry manager and whose mother Ethel is a Special Needs Assistant, plans to study business in school. She is confident that the product fills a niche in the market and feels that the product would do well in hardware stores. Both Aoife and Eimear credited Ms Finnerty as a big help in the project.

The overall winner of the competition proved that inspiration can flow from the most unlikely sources imaginable and hails from Kilclooney. "One day, I was cooking sauce for pasta and I burnt my hand," shared Lara Clifford, 14, also of Ard Scoil Mhuire. Lara, daughter of Aidan and Antoinette, designed and manufactured protective cone for wooden spoons, which will protect the user from heat injury and painful splatters. The judges were particularly impressed with her design, even going so far as to offer her advice and encouragement on patenting the design. "I'm going to concentrate on the Irish Market for the next three years, then I'd like to expand to Europe," she said. "I'm not too sure what I want to be when I grow up. When you're young, you kind of want to do everything!"

The other winners of the night were Kelvin Kelly and Michael

O'Neill, from Garbally College, in the Agricultural Category, who designed an innovative Silage Pit Covering System. Hannah Finn and Genieve Duncan were awarded prizes for their Customised Connector Charms, which they are already selling online. Finally, Rachael Coen, Ellen Butler, Chloe Carrick, Clare Callaghan, Grace Dooley and Nicole Curley were part of Down to Earth Natural Beauty Products, who garnered praise from the judges for the amount of products they have already developed.

All the girls who won prizes were from Ard Scoil Mhuire, which is a credit to Miss E. Finnerty, who heads up the BEST project in the school. All of the entrants were encouraged to expand on the businesses they have started. Mayor Mike Kelly said: "from what I have seen tonight, I am sure you will all agree, the future of our country is in good hands."

Judges for the BEST Awards programme were Gerry Kelly, John Power and Pat Ward. The Guest speaker for the evening was Junior Minister of Finance Brian Hayes (himself a Garbally College Alumni).



Front (L-R): William Duthie (Chairman BCU), Ellen Butler, Aoife Sidaway, Eimear Costello, Aoife Downey, Victoria Maksimchika, Nicole Curley, Eilish Finnerty (Teacher Ard Scoil Mhuire). Back (L-R): Michael O'Neill (Garbally College), Seamus Duffy (Chairman BACD), Grace Dooley, Pat Ward (Judge), Laura Hession, John Power, (Chairman BESI), Hannah Finn, Gerry Kelly (Judge), Chloe Carrick, Tomas Burke (Teacher Garbally), Rachael Coen, Lyn Donnelly (Manager BACD), Saqib Zardari (Garbally College).



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First Anniversary of Local Business Woman

Last month sadly marked the first anniversary of local business woman. Caroline Riddell (nee Lynch) who ran the successful *Talking Head* Salon on Dunlo Street for a number of years. She was taken from us unexpectedly after a dramatic and swift illness. She was a warm and lovely person and good natured to everyone she encountered. Her late father Felix was a highly regarded and successful Insurance Advisor for years was also widely respected. The shock of her passing stunned the community and the close knit business sector of the town, closed for the mid-morning while her funeral mass was taking place, as a mark of respect. The local Business Community wish to offer again our thoughts to her loving husband Michael, her Mother Maureen Lynch and her family and friends.



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Ward's Fashions - 38 Years on

By Kevin O'Connor

Michael Ward House of Fashion was established in 1976 and has become one of the foremost fashion outlets in East Galway. Founded by Michael and Kathleen, it is still very much a family run business and has been a feature of Main Street that many people will be very familiar with.

"Michael saw an opening in the market, so he took the chance and set up the business," said son Joe who works in the store.

Having changed location a few times in the early days, Michael Ward Fashion moved, from what is now the Supermacs on Main Street, across the road into its current premises in 1990. This building was refurbished in 2004 and turned into the fantastic outlet it is today. With a floor space of 10,900 sq. ft. spread out over two floors, the shop is spacious and wonderfully lit, which shows off the superb styles of the merchandise.

They have a huge range of stylish suits in-store, both for rent and for hire. With rented funeral suits starting from €50 and rented wedding suits starting at €80, there is almost a guarantee that they will have something for you for every occasion. Wedding suits come with all five pieces, namely the jacket, shirt, waistcoat, tie or cravat and trousers. With a large variety of styles and colours available, they will have you looking your very best for any occasion. They also carry a great range of very stylish and affordable shoes to go with their range of suits. Michael Wards is open late on a Friday, until 10 pm. With many people commuting back to Ballinasloe from jobs further afield, this gives them a chance to get in to the shop when they might not have been able to otherwise. People with kids have a chance to put them to bed and head to the shop when they might have been too busy to do so otherwise. Michael Wards Fashions are on Facebook and can be contacted by calling 090 96 42776.

Millrace Welcome Director, Sian

By Kevin O'Connor

Millrace nursing Home is a purpose built two storey nursing home which was opened in six year ago in April 2008.

Located at Bridge Street they provide residents with the highest level of quality of life that is achievable. The team treat each of their residents with the respect and dignity they deserve, as though they are caring for a member of their own family. The Management and Staff are committed to working with each resident to ensure their individual needs are met. The overall aim is to create an environment which feels like home.



Sian Rowe McCormack replaced Rita English, following her retirement after some six years of service. Sian took up her post in late Spring and brings with her 7 years experience of care of the

elderly. Sian has obtained post graduate qualifications in healthcare management, gerontology and health and safety. She strives to maintain a professional updated and friendly approach to the delivery of the highest standards of care.

All the Team at the Nursing Home wish to thank Rita most sincerely for her invaluable contribution to their home and wish her every health in her retirement. Sian welcomes the involvement of our local community and would value and appreciate any comments or suggestions people may have. Sian can be contacted by email: millracenh@yahoo.com, by phone 090 96 46120 or just call in!

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Conradh Na Gaeilge Na Fuinneoga is Gaelaí


Photo 1: Angies Attic, Cearnog Naomh Mhichil, Beal Átha na Slua, Corn Thadgh Mhic Lochlain. (Angies Attic, St Michael's Square, Ballinasloe received the Tadhg McLoughlin Cup for their window). Alan Coughlan, Lucy Wallace, Simon Lynch, Mairín Uí Thuairisg, Ruairi Ó hAnluain. Photo 2: Hubert Dolan Electrical, Sraid Dunlo, Beal Átha na Slua, Corn Thomas Uí Bhaoill. (Hubert Dolan Electrical, Dunlo Street, received the Thomas Uí Bhaoill Cup, for their window display in Irish): Ruairi Ó hAnluain, Hugh Dolan and Mairín Uí Thuairisg.



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Final Edition of Mayor's Awards



At the last Mayoral Awards Ceremony were, Back Row (L-R): Mark O'Donnell (Town Clerk), Maureen Casey (Creagh Neighbourhood Watch), Sean Tully and Phoebe Kenny (Special Eagles Olympic Squad), Kevin Kelly (Director Town Services). Front: Mogie Maher (Galway County Mayor), Martina Maloney (County Manager), Mayor Michael Kelly, Maureen Cahalan (Social & Community Support).

By Kevin O'Connor

Ballinasloe Town Council recently announced the launch of the 2014 Mayor's Awards. This is the fourth staging of the Mayor's Awards, the Council having previously held the Awards in 2008, 2010 and in 2012.

The Awards are being organised with the aim of acknowledging outstanding people and organisations that, through their commitment to participating in community and voluntary activities, have had a significant impact on the quality of life in the area.

Councillor Michael Kelly, Mayor of Ballinasloe Town Council, said that "It is a tremendous honour for me as Mayor to host the fourth Mayor's Awards night." He said that the awards were meant to honour the outstanding individuals, groups and organisations that make invaluable contributions to the community and that the awards were an expression of his wish to formally recognise the work that they do. The awards are meant to publically acknowledge their efforts and achievements. They are also meant to acknowledge the contributions of singular talented and generous people at the highest level. The 2014 Mayor's Awards will acknowledge

outstanding people and organisations who, through their commitment to participating in community and voluntary activities, have had a positive and significant impact on the quality of life of their communities in both the town and the surrounding area. With the impending abolition of town councils, it will be the final opportunity for the office of Mayor to recognise these achievements in a way such as this. Mayor Mike Kelly said, "I encourage you to please put their names forward for a Mayor's Award as these individuals, groups, clubs and organisations make such an invaluable contribution to our town and community."

Nominations of individuals, groups and organisations for the Mayor's Awards are being invited for the following categories; Social & Community Support; Arts, Culture, Heritage & Environment; Civic Pride Award; Sports, Recreation, Children & Youth; Special Recognition Award; and Young Person's Award.

The Mayor and the elected members of the Town Council are anxious to encourage nominations of individuals and groups for the awards. The award categories are not exclusive of each other and that the nominators can review the criteria when nominating individuals or organisation as they may meet the criteria of more than one category. The decision in relation to the awards will be based on the information supplied by the nominator. A judging panel will consider each nomination on its merits and a certificate will be awarded to each nominee who, in the view of the judging panel, have contributed to the enhancement of the quality of life of the community. The awards ceremony will take place in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel, in May 2014 at which the certificates will be presented and the category winners announced.

Nomination forms can be obtained from Ballinasloe Town Council, Civic Offices and Ballinasloe Branch Library, Fairgreen, or downloaded on the Town Council's website at www.ballinasloe.ie/en/CouncilServices/PublicNotices/MayorsAwards2014 or alternatively, people can ring Anne Power or Maria Flaherty in the Civic Offices at 090 96 42263.

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Supermac's All-Star Awards have recognised the outstanding work carried out by owners, managers and employees in the 100 plus Supermac's Restaurants throughout the country, of which more than 60 restaurants are franchisee owned. Winners of the awards locally were: Mac's Diner; Rosie Fallon, Outstanding Customer Service Award. Supermacs, Loughrea (Geraldine McGrath); Best Customer Service Outlet of the Year. Vino Kanapathy of Supermacs, Tuam Road; Manager of the Year Award 2013. Supermacs, Waterford; Quality Award 2013. Supermacs, Eyre Square; Company Outlet of the Year. Supermacs, Athenry; Franchised Outlet of the Year.



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Schools Table Quiz



1st Naomh Treasa, Killure. Front: Rebecca Kelly, Kealan Glynn, Déaglan Mac Bhrion, Caitriona NicCormáic. Back: Teacher Aingeal Úi Cheithearnaigh, Catherine Glynn, Rachel Ni Cheallaigh, Máirín Úi Thuairisg (Quiz Master)



2nd Scoil Úi Cheithearnaigh; Front: Phelim Reilly, Eoin D'arcy, Naoise Murphy, Fintan Donnellan. Back: Ruairi O hAnluain, Teacher, Patrick Dolan andy Naessens, Máirín Úi Thuairisg (Quiz Master).

Corrib Oil Your One Stop Shop

By Kevin O'Connor

For people who want the convenience of a one-stop-shop for all their shopping needs then Corrib Oil in Brackernagh is just what they're looking for.

The weekly shop, a hot dinner, fine wines, gluten free treats, diesel for the car and home heating oil are among the items available at the state of the art store at Brackernagh. With a plethora of fresh food, lots of offers, ample car parking, a spacious forecourt, instore seating area, local suppliers and friendly staff it's the perfect stop off. The store stocks a phenomenal range of groceries with coeliac and dietary requirements well catered for. Or you can opt to buy a cooked breakfast, a full carvery lunch or freshly made sandwiches. Chef Una Flaherty also prepares Corrib Oil's own brand "Chef Made" meals for you to take home and pop in the microwave or oven.

Not only is there a full off-licence in store but Corrib Oil stock Thomas Woodberry's Wines. From satisfying the most discerning connoisseurs to enjoying casual occasions with friends, Thomas Woodberry's is the perfect wine for any time. Woodberrys has developed a range of wines over the past ten years that represent quality. "Our search for quality has led us to producers who work for the best expression of terroir and grape varieties and the resulting wines are truly wines with personality," said a company spokesperson.



Store Manager Anthony O'Brien

Then there's the freshly baked goods. Heffernan's Food Store in Claremorris (winner of Retail Store of the Year in 2012) supplies Corrib Oil with freshly baked goods every morning. Artisan breads and confectionery are all part of the preservative free and handmade range with Corrib Oil being the exclusive retailers for the range. Corrib Oil's own team also produces a selection of baked goodies including scones and tarts so there's something available to satisfy every taste buds.

Corrib Oil believes in rewarding its customers and with over 5,000 people signed up to its rewards loyalty programme in Ballinasloe alone, many

are reaping the rewards. Every time you make a purchase, be it from the Deli, groceries or fuel, you make a saving. Explaining the popularity and great savings to be made with Corrib Oil Rewards, store manager Anthony O'Brien says: "The reward is instant. You buy your goods today and you get your discount today. There's no sitting around waiting for vouchers to come through the post."

Customers even get their 7th Sandwich Free, 6th Tea/Coffee Free and much much more. Ensuring that they are open for every crisis, Corrib Oil operates from 6.30am to 11pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 11pm on Sundays.

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Group 8: Fifth Annual Exhibition

Group 8, the professional artist collective based in Ballinasloe held their fifth annual exhibition in Hayden's Hotel over the St. Patrick's weekend. The theme this year was *After Garbally*. The group used Garbally and its grounds, buildings and people as stepping-off points for installations, photography, fiction, paintings, sculpture, ceramics, batik and poetry.

(L-R): Fr. Dan O'Donovan, Tommy Campbell, Nuala Ní Chonchúir, Grellan Ganly, Fiona Ormsby, Joyce Little, Una Spain, Walter Coughlan, Brendan Grealy who are all members of Group 8. The other members are Zara Little Campbell and John Soden.



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CU Factor 2014



Last year's Ballinasloe CU Factor winners progressed all the way to the national finals!

By Kevin O'Connor

Ballinasloe Credit Union recently announced details for the 2014 CU Factor talent competition. The Final is scheduled to take place in early May, with auditions being in late April. The competition is open to all talents including singing, music, comedy and dance. Entrants must be aged 10-19 years of age. Winning both the Ballinasloe and Galway finals in 2013, local band *Buttons and Bows* progressed all the way to the national final, where they were placed in third place.

The format for CU Factor 2014 remains unchanged from 2013. The County final will take place in the Town Hall theatre in mid-May. The All-Ireland Final is scheduled to take place early in November 2014 at a venue yet to be announced.

Application forms for the Ballinasloe CU Factor are available in the Credit Union Office or online at www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie Speaking at the launch, William Duthie, Chairman of Ballinasloe Credit Union said "The competition is designed to showcase the talents of the youth in the town and its

hinterland. We have seen over the past couple of years that we have some very talented musicians, singers and dancers in Ballinasloe and CU factor gives those individuals the opportunity to showcase their talent on the local Stage. I would encourage the youth of Ballinasloe to again get involved this year, in my opinion they are as good as if not better than those individuals that we see on the talent shows on TV."

For more information on the CU factor 2014 check out the credit union website www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie.



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Martin Costello Dies in New Jersey

Clontuskert-born Martin A. Costello, presenter of *The Irish Radio Show*, one of the longest-running radio shows on the East Coast, passed away in New Jersey, USA at the age of 90. Born in Gorteenaveela in November 1924, Martin learned to play the fiddle at the age of 16 under the guidance of Kiltormer schoolteacher Josie O'Halloran, where his love of Irish traditional music grew. He played hurling with Clontuskert, in goal and won an East Board medal in 1946 with his parish side before emigrating to the States in 1947. In America, he quickly founded The Martin Costello Band. His popular brand of Irish music saw him play at venues in New York, New Jersey, Boston and Philadelphia. On St. Patrick's Day in 2005, he broadcast on AFN Radio, based in Baghdad, Iraq. He is survived by his wife, Bernadette; 3 daughters; 8 grandchildren, nephews, niece, sister-in-law Margaret, as well as many other relatives.



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YouthWork Very Active Locally



By Helen Butler

This year's Youth Work Ireland Week will take place in the middle of April and the theme is 'Celebrating Our Volunteers.' Now in its third year, Youth Work Ireland Week is a celebration of local youth services lead by local people and involves thousands of young people, volunteers and members of the public coming together at youth events.

Ballinasloe has a very dedicated and committed youth work team based in the Youth Centre at Marina Point. Helen Butler is Youth Information Officer, Olive Shaughnessy is the youth worker in the East Galway Youth Project, Edel Kelly and Paul Riddell run the Junction Project and Noreen Connolly is the supervisor of the Community Employment Programme. Junction Project's horticulture project featured in the Irish Times last year.

The Ballinasloe team leaders and young people are planning a great week of events, which include Youth Factor 2014, taking place in Galway city. Then the Irish Youth Music Awards in The Aviva Stadium will see a vast array of young

artists from the ages of 12-20 showcasing their own original music amidst a great festival atmosphere with a range of workshops and mentoring sessions from some top names in the Music Industry. Galway will be represented by Keagan and Evan Forde with an original song *What Are Friends For?*

Hat's Off to Our Volunteers invites young people to design and have fun with creating a hat that can be given to volunteers that in some way represents them, their club and their projects. There is a €500 prize for the best club/project hat. There is also a prize for the best selfie with a celebrity or prominent person in the community.

Youth Work Ireland Week is the official highlight of the year but individual young people have their own highlights. In the past few years members of Ballinasloe group have visited places like Estonia, Liechtenstein, Finland, Sweden, Romania and Portugal on youth exchanges and have hosted youth groups in return from several of these countries.

Some young people even got to mix with dignitaries in the House of Lords, courtesy of Mayor Tom Welby who was so impressed with the work of Comhairle na nÓg. This is the youth project that facilitates young people having a say in issues that affect them. Ballinasloe members have worked at a national level on Junior Cycle Reform, Being Young and Irish and the Constitutional Convention. Locally they have run a 'Shop Local'

campaign and are working towards a discount card system for students. Some over-18 members have graduated to the European Voluntary Service, a programme that supports young people to volunteer abroad for periods up to 12 months gaining valuable work experience and personal development, very useful in these times of high youth unemployment!

Last year's successful *Stop, Block, Talk* seminar on cyberbullying led to the development of a 2 hour programme which is now being run in secondary schools and youth clubs across Galway.

The Art Group, Movie and Book Review Group and upcoming Easter and Summer Programmes provide enjoyment and activity for younger members. Travel, theatre visits, politics, crafts, the list of activities is only limited by what the young members decide they want to do, yet people will still ask what goes on up there and what is youth work? Helen Butler says, "Youth work is all about the young person, a safe space, fun and interesting activities, a chance to make a difference, be listened to and explore new possibilities. The energy, enthusiasm and goodwill of young people is heart-lifting and youth work gives the opportunities for this to be celebrated."

Contact us in Galway through by calling any of our staff: Helen 087-6780640; Olive: 087-7707775; Edel: 087-9030000 and Paul: 087-2582748.

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Ballinasloe Life – Vol. 4 Launch



At the launch, Editor Colm Croffy, Micheál Kitt T.D., Denis Naughten T.D., Chris Wade (CEO Action for Market Towns), Seamus Duffy (Chair BACD), Sen. Michael Mullins and Lyn Donnelly (BACD Manager).

By Kevin O'Connor

Ballinasloe Life Magazine held its Volume 4 launch in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel late this Spring. In Volume 1, Life had a total revenue of €35,000, but cost €40,000 to produce. In Volumes 2 and 3, however, Life turned a small profit, costing €43,500 with a surplus of €200 in Volume 2, and costing €44,900 in Volume 3, making a surplus of €600. With the continued support of local contributors and subscribers, this year it looks like Volume 4 will be the most successful for Life so far.

Each Edition of Volume 4 will have 6000 copies, with the exception of the Christmas Edition, which will have 7500 copies. The magazine is distributed every two months, by voluntary drivers and the Transition Year students of Garbally College to homes and schools in the surrounding area. Since Xmas it is now delivered to all the national Schools in a 12 mile radius of the town. The quality look and feel of the magazine is thanks to the Graphic Designer David Cunniffe at KPW Print.

Lyn Donnelly the Advertising and Circulation Manager for the project gave a very detailed breakdown on the costs and revenues- explaining that of the €130,000 generated from the advertises over three years, nearly 98% of the monies raised were being spent locally.

BACD Chair Seamus Duffy thanked the project team of Brendan Kelly, Lynn Donnelly and Colm Croffy as well as the trainee reporters that had worked so hard on the publication. "What some of us don't realise is that this Magazine is being

used regularly by the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Galway County Council and our Auctioneers to promote and publicise our town and there are reps from other Western Development Companies, Enterprise Ireland, Roscommon, Galway and Mayo County Councils here in the audience tonight to see how we do it."

Editor Colm Croffy explained that the magazine was growing it's online presence with a Blog and over 900 facebook likes and the ability to reach over 10,000 people with messages. The Online edition of "Life" is read by over 4,000 people all over the world. "We will evolve into the APP space in time but the business community needs to embrace the world of facebook and social media to capitalise on this."

Chris Wade is something of an expert on advising provincial market towns, on how to make the most of their resources and assets. While many towns of this size are in crisis, Chris praised the work of the BACD, Life and the commitment of local people to the town.

"There is enough talent in this town to do loads of wonderful things. There is an awful lot of energy in this town, and everyone needs to be rowing in the same direction to make it work," he said. "You need to understand what kind of town it is, and understand the what you've got here that makes you different to other towns. You need to capitalise on your strengths if you're going to grow, improve and do great things with your town."



Project team members: Brendan Kelly, Kevin O'Connor, Lyn Donnelly, Colm Croffy, Seamus Duffy and Guest Speaker Chris Wade.



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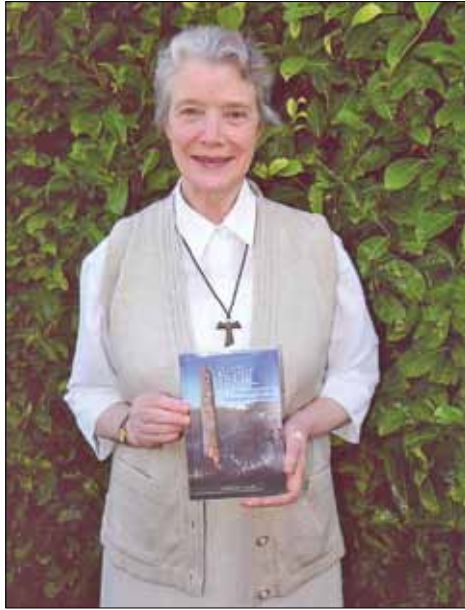
Sister Kathleen's Book Launch

By Kevin O'Connor

Sister Kathleen Lynch is well known to many around town as one of the Portiuncula sisters. She launched a book in Gullane's Hotel recently, entitled *The Sublime Round Tower: An Iconic Call to Contemplative Prayer*.

Originally from Mosney in County Meath, where Saint Patrick baptised one of his first disciples at a Holy Well that now bears his name, Sister Kathleen has travelled all over the world on missions and pilgrimages. She has been to New Zealand, Nigeria, India, Israel, Egypt and the Vatican City. "It was while I was in New Zealand that I was introduced to the writings of John Cassian, a 4th Century Christian monk whose teachings I explore in this book," said Sister Kathleen.

Sister Kathleen has been a resident of Ballinasloe for many years now and is able to recall one aspect of the town and its people that has stuck with her from



her first year here. "The first Sunday on my return to Ballinasloe, there was a Gathering in St. Michael's Church of all the Volunteer Services held in the

town. I was greeted and welcomed by parishioners who rushed to organise a display area for me. To my astonishment I was Table 53. There were 52 Groups of Volunteer Services in the town. I could hardly believe my eyes at the generosity of the people."

"Ballinasloe of the Welcomes reminds me of the musical "Centenary" written by Doctor O'Dowd of Portiuncula, performed for the town some years ago," said Sister Kathleen. "It speaks for itself regarding the community spirit of all involved. A number of the songs captured the welcoming spirit, not only of the hospital, but of the community of the town as a whole."

"The Sublime Round Tower: An Iconic Call to Contemplative Prayer" on sale in Salmons, Ballinasloe, for €9.99 and is also available from www.columba.ie and www.amazon.co.uk. The sale of the book will go towards the sisters' missions in Africa.

Tennis Club Looking For A New Home

The Tennis Club is preparing for an important year ahead, with the Rugby Club expanding, the search is on for a new venue for the town's Tennis Club. "We have great talent and with the right facilities, that talent could really be developed" said Robert Donnelly, a coach who also plays for the Connacht team. "There are no indoor training facilities in Connacht, so we are falling behind the rest, but if we could develop those here, Ballinasloe could become the tennis hub of the west." An example of the local talent is Tom Cafferky, who was recently added to the Connacht U10 Team. He has also been asked to try out for the U12s. Anyone looking to join can contact Chairman Declan McKeon at 087 915 9771.



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Local Election Candidates 2014



Cllr. Tim Broderick
INDEPENDENT

My name is Tim Broderick and I stood in the 2009 County Council Election as an Independent Candidate and was elected in the Ballinasloe Electoral Area. In the General Election of February 2011 I put myself forward again as an Independent Candidate and polled over 5000 first preference votes which was "No mean achievement for a Rookie!"

Since 2009 I have worked tirelessly for the electorate, sometimes without success, but always with a view to a positive result. The most recent issue and for myself it is also one of the most important ones, is the closure of the 22 psychiatric admission beds from St. Brigid's Hospital, which in my opinion and the opinion of respected professionals, is nothing short of "tyranny at its worst!" Even though the beds are almost gone, it is still incumbent on me to speak up for the many patients who have in the past taken solace and security in the knowledge that recovery in the hands of the excellent staff of St. Brigid's was close by. Just because the H.S.E. have forced this decision on the people, it is wrong and the battle must continue.

With the cessation of the U.D.C. it is important that the people of Ballinasloe still have a strong voice in Galway County Council and I feel I am ideal to fulfill this role. You will always be able to contact me for any queries, by phone or email. I have built up a valuable network over my 5 years with other independents, most notably Noel Grealish T.D. (Galway West), Denis Naughton T.D. (Roscommon) and Marian Harkin MEP. If I don't have the solution to your problem, I will still be able to direct it in the right direction.

I would be privileged to get the opportunity to serve and work hard for another 5 years if you the electorate return me on Friday, May 23rd.



Cllr. Dermot Connolly
SINN FÉIN

Dermot Connolly, educated in St Grellan's N.S. and Garmscoil Micheál, is married to Katja and they have one son. He completed the Green Cert through Teagasc and Mountbellew Agricultural College. He was employed for 15 years in Dubarry Shoes, where he was shop steward until he was made redundant in 2004 along with 40 colleagues. He now farms the family farm.

Dermot was elected to Galway County Council in 2004. In 2009 he retained his seat and increased the Sinn Fein vote by 600 votes. He is currently the Cathaoirleach of the Ballinasloe County Council area committee.

Dermot played both hurling and football for Ballinasloe for many years as well as been actively involved in Gaelic Games as a coach, administrator, referee and is currently Leas-Cathaoirleach of Derrymullen Handball Club.

In March 2012, Dermot was part of a humanitarian aid convoy to besiege Gaza managing to deliver essential medical supplies and school equipment.

As an elected representative Dermot opposed rural post office closures, the removal of water services from the local authorities to Irish water as well as the removal of student grants and driving licence applications. He has campaigned for better health services, transport, job creation and flood alleviation measures and campaigns to allow turf cutters exercise their right to continue to harvest turf for domestic use.

Connolly has been very much involved in highlighting the need for the 22 bed unit in St. Brigid's Hospital to be maintained as well as continuing to highlight the need for Portiuncula Hospital to ensure that it is properly resourced and its grade 3 status maintained.



Cllr. Johnny Walsh
LABOUR

I will be contesting the Galway County Council elections and I am asking you to seriously consider me for your no. 1 vote.

As no doubt you are aware, our town council will be abolished in May and the County Council will run the affairs of our town into the future. The very direct focus which our Town Council placed on our town will be completely lost under the new arrangement and we face huge challenges, in that our town will no longer be a budgetary, housing or planning authority.

The local Businesses face a 28% increase in rates and, I have campaigned at national level through the AMAI for such increases to be phased in over a 10 year period and the legislation now allows for this possibility. It is vital that playgrounds and parks in Hymany, Kingfisher Centre, St. Grellan's, Hawthorn, Meadowbrook, St. Michael's and the all-weather track at Dunlo, as well as our local authority housing stock are maintained into the future.

If elected I will continue to campaign vigorously for top class mental health facilities and retention of our maternity and A&E Departments at Portiuncula. A thriving Ballinasloe is vital not just for the people of our town, but also from its rural hinterland, who depend on the town for services and employment.

As a native of Ballinasloe and the only candidate from the heart of the town I am seeking your support. "We have lost our Town Council. Let's not lose our Councillor from Town"

Local Election Candidates 2014



Donal Burke
FIANNA Fáil

The upcoming County Council elections will be critical for Ballinasloe. Without a Town Council, newly elected County Councillors must ensure that Ballinasloe and its surrounding communities do not lose out to the interests of other urban areas within the county.

I am a first time candidate and work as an Architectural Consultant from my office at Church Hill, Ballinasloe. I come from the parish of Clonfert and I'm married to Alison, whom I met four years ago when I began tango dancing lessons. We married in October 2012.

As a professional working in Ballinasloe and with a long-standing involvement in local community organisations, I am acutely aware of the issues impacting on the town and on the villages in its hinterland.

I have been actively involved with the East Galway Mental Health Action Group in campaigning to retain the 22 bed acute admission unit at St. Brigid's and will continue the fight to preserve vital health services in Ballinasloe.

Among other key priorities are support for the less well-off and people with disabilities, positive mental health and incentives to support struggling local business.

I believe what is needed in relation to the development of this region is more 'joined-up thinking,' with town groups such as the Ballinasloe Area Community Development company working alongside groups from surrounding communities supported by active local public representatives.

I will work alongside my colleagues in Galway County Council if elected to ensure that the focus remains on Ballinasloe and that our local organisations get every support needed.



Michael Connolly
FIANNA Fáil

When first elected to Galway County Council I promised to work hard on your behalf. I left my job with Thermo King Galway five months after been elected, to concentrate on local politics.

I have worked tirelessly on a wide range of issues and believe I have kept my promise to people who elected me. I was a founder member of the National Federation of Group Water Schemes and I have served as Chairman of Galway County Rural Water Monitoring Committee for the last 14 years, where Capital funding has been secured every year to upgrade networks and improve Quality in Group Water Schemes throughout the County.

The closure of the 22 bed Psychiatric Unit in St. Brigid's Hospital, is wrong and I pledge to continue to fight this decision as it represents a devastation of mental health facilities in East Galway. I also pledge to fight to protect services at Portiuncula and to ensure that services are enhanced and not downgraded.

I believe that new legislation is now required to change the age-old way rates are assessed on business, resulting in many outlets being forced to close every year. The Ballinasloe area should be designated as a Region of unlimited growth because of its connectivity through the M6 and Rail and other Infrastructure.

I have always been opposed and will continue to fight SACs NHAs and other designations because of their effects on turf cutting, farming and general land use, planning, future road building and the devaluation of property. I am now asking you to support me on May 23rd to allow me continue my work.



Cllr. Pat O'Sullivan
FIANNA Fáil

During my period as a councillor the Town Council has contributed €3.5 million towards the development of Ballinasloe's Leisure Centre. In Partnership with other organisations it co-operated in the purchase and development of the Community Enterprise Centre (BEC) in Creagh and currently being run very successfully with in excess of 165 people employed. The Town Council facilitated Ballinasloe Soccer Club and GAA Club in acquiring and developing their current excellent facilities and recently opened an all weather running track nearby.

Ballinasloe Town Council has been supporting many organisations and events over the years e.g. Great October Fair, Christmas Lighting, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Tidy Towns and many others.

Over the last few months €1.2 million has been provided to local clubs and organisations to assist them in improving their facilities for the benefit of the people of the town and East Galway.

Ballinasloe which has enjoyed urban status since 1879 is now being abolished - a council that has a good track record of helping its community.

St. Brigid's Hospital was established in Ballinasloe in 1833. It has a proud record of delivering excellent health service. It also provided secure employment to many families in East Galway and South Roscommon. Our facilities are now being relocated to serve Political instead of Health priorities.

If I am elected to Galway Co. Council I pledge to work on a full-time basis, not just to protect the existing services and jobs for East Galway but to seek funding for enterprise and cultural activities in the expanded Ballinasloe Municipal Area for future development.

Local Election Candidates 2014



Aidan Donohue
FINE GAEL

My name is Aidan Donohue from New Inn and I have been selected by Fine Gael to run in the local council elections for the Ballinasloe area. I am married to Fiona Lawless from Cappataggle and have 3 children aged 6, 10 and 11. Both Fiona and I worked previously in the Square D factory in Ballinasloe until its closure and now I work as an Account Manager with E Fox Engineers. Fiona works in Ballinasloe Mart as a clerical officer.

I am deeply involved in my local G.A.A. club Sarsfields, where as a player I won 2 All-Ireland Club Hurling titles and 5 Galway County Championships. I have also served as Chairman and am currently Hurling Board delegate for the club and coach some of the underage teams presently.

As a community activist I am involved in our Community Alert Programme, New Inn-Woodlawn Fine Gael branch, Killaan Burial Ground, Galway Mummers Festival and the local Group Water Scheme. This gives me an insight into what goes on in a community and the many challenges they face currently and in the years ahead.

My decision to seek election to Galway County Council is born from a strong desire to serve our community. I have seen at first hand how politics can have a positive impact on peoples lives, I have a strong commitment to the town of Ballinasloe and the East Galway area and I want to contribute to its promising future by becoming your local representative.



Cllr. Michael Finnerty
FINE GAEL

Elected to the Urban Council in 1985 and to the Galway County Council in 1991 – with abolition, Michael is best placed to fuse both together. The experience and the local knowledge built up by the members and staff must be used to achieve best outcomes.

Ballinasloe will now be the County Town for County Galway, whilst Councils change, values don't. Michael's priorities are yours. The two priorities in Michael's re-election efforts are to retain Portiuncula Hospital Services and to abolish pay parking in town. The current report with the Department to move to Midwife led maternity services, needs to be resisted. As Ballinasloe is bookended by both hospitals, the flawed scoring system used to downgrade/ close St. Brigids is a sharp lesson for us all, to be vigilant!

The commercial base of the town is under pressure and most observers agree that the current pay parking system is actively deterring people to stay and shop local. This must be reversed. The ticket infrastructure is in place that will allow people to park upto the two hours limit for FREE. As a public representative I have been to the fore in obtaining funding to keep the hedgerows cut and the drainage systems in place and roads maintained in our rural areas. A member of the Ballinasloe RFC, Patron of the Musical Society and Sponsor of the Great October Fair, Michael is best placed to serve the interests of town and county.



Kevin Ryan
FINE GAEL

Cllr Kevin Ryan sees Ballinasloe as a town that has been let down by past governments, This town is going nowhere at present but if the people unite and vote Fine Gael then going forward we will have councillors who can persuade this government to include Ballinasloe in its plans as we slowly get out of this mess that we inherited three years ago.

Ballinasloe needs a huge injection of money to help create jobs and attract companies to invest here, why does everything have to go into Galway, it is congested enough in the city as it is, bring some industry to Ballinasloe where the people are only too willing to work and save all the expense of costly driving to the city plus higher costs to any employer setting up in the city and the everyday hassle of traffic there.

I worked in the city for sixteen years and would have worked for a little less money if working closer to home as I would have saved it on travelling costs not to mention all the hours travelling and stuck in traffic.

We need fresh thinking going forward on a lot of issues, we need more accountability from people in power and an acceptance that we are all equal but everybody needs to share the workload for the benefit of all and that means everybody that healthy and able whether is ethnic minorities or otherwise. I look forward to continuing to work and represent you.

ELECTION POINTERS: If you are not registered to vote locally you can get on the Supplementary Register by 6th May. If house bound you can register for Special Voters List by 26th April. New Photo I.D. Rules for identification. Voting 7.00 a.m to 10.00 p.m Friday May 23rd. For all official details visit the following: www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/Voting/LocalElections/polling.

New Alcohol Strategy in Town

By Emmett Major

Alcohol plays a complex role in Irish society and here in Ballinasloe, it's no different. Its use is associated with many positive aspects of Irish social and cultural life and it is usually consumed for enjoyment, relaxation and sociability. However, it has to be remembered that the manner in which we use alcohol can create difficulties. It has major public health implications and it is responsible for a considerable burden of health and social harm at individual, family and societal levels.

The town is fortunate in that it is in a position to respond to and help reduce, some of these aspects of alcohol related harm. Recent work carried out in the locality includes the introduction of the Galway Simon's Bridge Centre, the Expect To Be Asked underage drinking campaign and projects undertaken by the Ballinasloe Substance Misuse Response Group.

In order to further progress this work, the Ballinasloe Joint Policing Committee recently endorsed the establishment of a working group with the aim of developing a suitable local strategy



L-R: Inspector Declan Rock (An Garda Síochána), Edel Kelly (Junction Project), Frank Hunt (BSMRG), Nicola Morley (Mental Health Ireland) Justin Campbell (GAA), Aisling Higgins (Galway Simon - Bridge Centre), Emmet Major (WRDTF).

to reduce alcohol related harm in the town. This working group is made up of representatives from local statutory and voluntary organisations and it will be developing the Ballinasloe Alcohol Strategy to run from 2014 to 2016. This strategy will focus on the four key areas of; Prevention; Supply, Access & Availability; Screening, Treatment & Support Services; and Research, Monitoring & Evaluation.

The working group is keen to offer everyone the opportunity to contribute.

They are organising a public consultation, on Monday, 7th April in Gullanes Hotel from 7.30pm, for people to voice any concerns they might have and contribute to the development of the strategy.

Please come along and have your say about: How you encounter alcohol related harm in Ballinasloe? How do you deal with the issue? How can we better prevent problems arising? For further information please contact Emmet Major on 087-6629953 or emmet.major@gretb.ie

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APRIL-MAY Events Guide

1st APRIL		
Uni Slim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
2nd APRIL		
Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8pm/8-9pm
Trad session	An Táin	10pm
3rd APRIL		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9:00 PM
Kevin Rohan	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Dance class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Corner boy	Maud Millars	10pm
4th APRIL		
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Tribute Concert Ambrose Judge RIP	Gullane's Hotel	8.30pm
Jig Jam	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
5th APRIL		
Live DJ on The Decks	Downey's	10pm
One to One	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Live music	Maud Millars	10pm
Stick Her Down	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm
6th APRIL		
One to One	Downey's	8-10pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars	8pm
7th APRIL		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Ballinasloe Alcohol Strategy	Gullane's Hotel	7.30-8.30pm
John Madden thophy	Bridge Club	
8th APRIL		
Uni Slim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Lily Kelly launch	Library	7.30pm
9th APRIL		
Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8 & 8-9pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
10th APRIL		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9pm
Kevin Rohan	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Connaught Ladies Senior Cup	Golf Club	All Day
The Thursday jam session	Maud Millars	10pm
11th APRIL		
Irish Junior Chess Championships	Carlton Shearwater	All Day
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Michaelian Ensemble	St Michael's Church	7.30pm
Connaught Ladies Senior Cup	Golf Club	All Day
Strange Brew	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
12th APRIL		
East Galway Cancer Conference	Gullane's Hotel	All Day
Live DJ on the Decks	Downey's	10pm
Last Man Standing	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Irish Junior Chess Championships	Carlton Shearwater	All Day
Live Music	Maud Millars	10pm
Wallop the Cat	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm
13th APRIL		
Live Band	Downey's	8-10pm
Irish Junior Chess Championships	Carlton Shearwater	All Day
Macey South	Maud Millars	8pm

14th APRIL		
Jehovah Witness Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Presentation of Prizes	Bridge Club	
Ballinasloe Musical society	Gullane's Hotel	
Penitential Mass	St Michaels Church	7.30pm
15th APRIL		
Uni Slim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Easter Football Camp	Ballinasloe GAA	10am-1.30pm
16th APRIL		
Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8 & 8-9pm
Easter Football Camp	Ballinasloe GAA	10am-1.30pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
Chrism Mass	St Brendand Cathedral	8pm
17th APRIL		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9pm
Kevin Rohan	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Easter Football Camp	Ballinasloe GAA	10am-1.30pm
Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
Childrens Mass	St Michaels	6pm
18th APRIL		
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Easter Football Camp	Ballinasloe GAA	10am-1.30pm
Outdoor Stations of the Cross	Duggan Park	12pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
Celebration of the ords Passion	St Michaels and Creagh	3pm
19th APRIL		
Live DJ on the Decks	Downey's	10pm
Black & White	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Imposter	Maud Millars	10pm
The Big Lad	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Easter Vigil	St Michaels and Creagh	8pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm
Easter Holy Communion	Ardrahan	7pm
Easter Holy Communion	Woodlawn	9pm
Easter Holy Communion	Aughrim	11pm
20th APRIL		
Live Music: Dolar Daly, then DJ Keith	Downey's	8pm onwards
Easter Holy Communion	Ahascragh	8.15am
Easter Holy Communion	Ballinasloe GAA	10am
Easter Holy Communion	Clontuskert	11am
One to One	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Washout	Maud Millars	8pm
Vintage Club Classic Car Rally	Pallas Karting Track	All Day
Easter Mass	St Michaels Church	9am, 11am, 12.15pm
22nd APRIL		
Uni Slim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Jehovah Witness Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Easter Vigil	St Michaels Church	8pm
23rd APRIL		
Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8 & 8-9pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
24th APRIL		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9pm
Kevin Rohan	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
25th APRIL		
Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Live Music	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlta	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm

APRIL-MAY Events Guide

26th APRIL

Live DJ on the Decks	Downey's	10pm
One to One	Hayden's Hotel	10pm
National Chess Club Championships	Carlton Shearwater	All Day
Good Ole' Trusty	Maud Millars	10-m
Madden Family Band	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm

27th APRIL

Karaoke With Bimbo	Downey's	8-10pm
National Chess Club Championships	Carlton Shearwater	All Day
Loose Rooster	Maud Millars	8pm

28th APRIL

Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Ballinasloe Vintage Club		

29th APRIL

Uni Slim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm

30th APRIL

Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8 & 8-9pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm

1st MAY

Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9pm
Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
Vera O'Grady Memorial Trophy	Golf Club	
Golf Clinic by Shane O'Grady	Golf Club	5pm
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm

2nd MAY

Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Comhlitas	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm

3rd MAY

Live DJ on the Decks	Downey's	10pm
Connacht Juniors v Leinster Juniors	Ballinasloe RFC	TBC
Mainsafe International Open Classic	Golf Club	All Day
No Half Measures	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm

4th MAY

Nite Owls followed by DJ Keith	Downey's	8-10pm
Mainsafe International Open Classic	Golf Club	All Day

5th MAY

Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Mainsafe International Open Classic	Golf Club	All Day

6th MAY

Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
President Prize	Bridge Club	

7th MAY

Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8pm & 8-9pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm

8th MAY

Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9pm
Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm

9th MAY

Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Imposter	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlitas	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm

10th MAY

Live DJ on the Decks	Downey's	10pm
Washout	Maud Millars	10pm
Stick Her Down	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Up stairs	9.30pm

11th MAY

Live Band	Downey's	8-10pm
The Nudie Suits	Maud Millars	8pm

12th MAY

Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
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13th MAY

President Prize	Bridge Club	
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14th MAY

Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8pm & 8-9pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm

15th MAY

Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9pm
Dance Class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm

16th MAY

Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Strange Brew	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlitas	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm

17th MAY

Live DJ on the Decks	Downey's	10pm
Live Music	Maud Millars	10pm
The Big Lad	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm

18th MAY

Live Band	Downey's	8-10pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millars	8pm

20th MAY

Presentation of prizes	Bridge Club	
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21st MAY

Pilates Class	Downey's	7-8pm & 8-9pm
Trad session	An Táin	10pm

22nd MAY

Progressive 25 Card Game	Downey's	9pm
Dance class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
The Thursday jam session	Maud Millars	10pm

23rd MAY

Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Live music	Maud Millars	10pm
Comhlitas	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan Family & Friends	An Táin	6-9pm

24th MAY

Live DJ on the Decks	Downey's	10pm
Junior/Intermediate Scratch Cup	Golf Club	All Day
Imposter	Maud Millars	10pm
Madden Family Band	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm

25th MAY

Junior/Intermediate Scratch Cup	Golf Club	All Day
Mikey & the Scallywags	Maud Millars	8pm

26th MAY

Buzz the Agent	Downey's	8-10pm
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28th MAY

Trad session	An Táin	10pm
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29th MAY

Dance class	Hayden's Hotel	8.30pm
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	9.45pm

30th MAY

Country Market	Town Hall	9am-2pm
Macey South	Maud Millars	9.45pm
Comhlitas	Emerald Bar	9.45pm
Trad and Folk: Beahan family & friends	An Táin	6-9pm

31st MAY

The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars	9.45pm
Hickory Wind	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm

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

Emma Walsh: Our Girl, The Voice

By Kevin O'Connor

Emma Walsh is a local girl who has been catapulted into the public eye, by delivering outstanding performances on the hugely successful singing show *The Voice of Ireland*. With the help of the public, she could really go places, as she says herself: "The great thing about music is it really is an adventure. There's so many avenues to go down or paths to take."

It comes as no surprise that Emma has been into singing from a very young age. "I started singing when I was four, in school plays, at family occasions, or in musical theatre groups," she said. Talent such as hers runs in the family, as both sets of her grandparents were involved in musical societies. "My mom Jackie and dad Alfie say it must have skipped a generation with them," she says laughingly.

Having moved around a lot in her younger days, Emma attended national school in Shannonbridge, then attended Saint Sarans in Ferbane, before settling in Ard Scoil Mhuire in third year. Emma credits her first vocal coach as her grandfather Ned, who she remembers listening to sing when she was a little girl. She began to hone her skills in when she got involved in the Ard Scoil Mhuire Choir, under Ms Jackson, whose lessons she still uses to this day. "It's also thanks to Marie Power that I got the theatre bug in TY, after playing the lead in our production of *Fame*," she said.



Emma had been thinking about entering *The Voice* for a few years, but in her own words she "just didn't have the confidence." It wasn't until her grandmother gave her some advice that she promised to herself to try. She said "We're here for a good time, not a long time,' and that I would regret it if I didn't do it, so I gave it a shot!"

All the support that Emma has been getting from the town has really had an impact. "Support from local people and businesses has been great," she said. Everyone is so warm and friendly and can't do enough to help. It's great travelling up to Dublin knowing I'm doing them all proud. It's very important to me."

Being on Dolores O'Riordan's team has its advantages. "She's such an amazing talent, I was actually a bit starstruck when

I met her! If there's one thing I've learned from her it's always stay true to yourself and do whatever makes you happy."

Emma is positive about the resources and outlets for young musicians and singers in Ballinasloe. Open Mic Nights and Talent Competitions regularly take place in town and the dates of these can usually be found in our Events Guide. "They are a great way for budding singers and musicians to showcase their talents and gain some performance experience," she said. With the success that Emma has been having, this seems like some very excellent advice to take on board!

"My advice to anyone who wants to do what I did is to expose yourself to as much musically as you can get involved in to perfect your craft and your own unique style."



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The Michaelian Ensemble's April Concerts

By Kevin O'Connor

The Michaelian Ensemble will perform in St. Michael's Church Ballinasloe in mid-April. Founded in 2009, The Ensemble will present *The Crucifixion*, a Victorian work, described as a meditation on the passion and death of Christ.

Soprano Rachel Goode, Bass Seamus Feerick and Tenor Sean Óg Hurley are leading a choir of 50 people. This liturgical work is intended as a prelude to Holy week. This year the choir travel to Knock Basilica to perform for Passion Sunday in April.

This event is being held in support of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, a most deserving organisation. The show is expected to fill St. Michaels Church to full capacity and a further 3000 are expected to attend the concert in Knock. While admission is free, a voluntary contribution would be generously received to aid the chosen charity. More information for the concert is St. Michaels Church can be found in our Events Guide on Pages 24 and 25.

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Pink Panther's Jazz

Pink Panther: Tommy Regan, Des, Pete andy and Joe Duane

By Pat Johnston

Mention jazz in Ballinasloe and the word is practically synonymous with the Duane name. Joe and Des Duane are the lynchpins of The Pink Panther Jazz Group which has been making a stir at low key sessions around the town in the past three years.

Their roots in the genre go back to their father Ger, who played jazz piano and his brother Dermot, who played classical. These boys are as Ballinasloe as you can get having been born over the family pharmacy in Main Street. Joe remembers sitting under the piano as his father played and pressing the pedals as he listened to the music of George Sheeran and Count Bassie.

Despite the Anti-Jazz campaign of 1934, a coalition of cultural nationalists and some Catholic clergy alarmed by the influence of foreign music. Ballinasloe town had a vibrant music scene and Joe recalls the names of musical legends like Breezie Sheridan, the Burgoynes and a Mrs. Croghan from The Pillar Bar who played in local bands, the music of ragtime, the Charleston, on to Dave Brubeck in the 60's and up to the Beatles.

In time, Joe went for music lessons to Ms. McGuire "in Ancel's house before it became a restaurant." Ms. McGuire played the double bass with the Aughrim Slopes. Here he learned to read music and play the piano.

By 1963 the lure of the Beatles led Joe to take over the German-made Framus Archtop Boudoir guitar which his father had bought for £13. "It was hard to play but it had a lovely sound." Des got lessons from the legendary John Feely. Then he took up the saxophone and taught himself to play that instrument.

In the mid-70's Joe was playing with *Frank Hession and the Western Rovers*, adapting Beatles numbers like *Norwegian Woods* and *You've Got To Hide Your Love Away* to the pubs of

the area from the *Dog and Duck* in Ballykeeran to *Mothers* in Kiltormer. Then he got some gigs with Sid Shine and Frankie McDonald's Big Band playing in the *Jolly Mariner* with Seanie Tierney, who he described as a "fantastic singer." There were thirteen in that band, mainly from the army. When trumpet player Frankie McDonald went to the States in the summer of 1980 Joe was in for six weeks.

One of his favourite memories was seeing the bonfires blazing and the All-Ireland champions Galway take the Liam McCarthy cup across the Shannon as he made his way to his gig.

But by the '90's Joe's priorities had changed and work and family took over, although there were sporadic outings and link-ups for occasional gigs in places like Minnie's in Main Street Killeen's in Shannonbridge and Gullane's Hotel.

"But you can't kick it," Joe says and now that he and Des have more time for themselves they have brought together a group of like-minded musicians to form The Pink Panther with Mancini's piece of that name as their signature tune. On drums they have Tommy Regan and Éamon Ó Dalaigh plays keyboard while Pete and Andy do bass and vocals. They also feature Una Ní Bhroin in an occasional guest spot. Joe says, 'We play mostly standards, *Mac The Knife, Autumn Leaves, All of Me, Sweet Georgia Browne* and Des leads a mean version of Dave Brubeck's *Take Five*.

The group is building up a following of people who have an interest in jazz but rarely get to hear live music, the way it was meant to be heard, in small intimate settings. They have done a lovely bank holiday early evening gig in the Táin Bar, played a cool session at a charity gig for Pieta House in The Pillar Bar and they are also lined up to play at The Mayor's Ball in the Shearwater Hotel in May

If you want *The Pink Panther* to play at your function contact duanejoe@gmail.com or 087 9969812.

Newtown Celebrates 175 Years

By Kevin O'Connor

Newtown National School stands in a beautiful rural setting 3 kilometres from Ballinasloe town, just on the R357 heading towards Roscommon. Although situated geographically in County Roscommon, Newtown N.S. is one of the five excellent primary schools in the parish of Ballinasloe.

The school stands on the grounds of the original building, which was erected and opened in 1903. The first Newtown school was set up in 1839 and stood on an adjacent site to the present building. A long tradition of teaching and learning exists in this small area.

The original building has seen a lot of change in its time. The old two classroom school had its first extension in 1996 and this consisted of a multipurpose room. In the year 2000, this became a third classroom. A major modernisation and extension project was undertaken, which was officially opened in May 2010. The present day school is a modern, bright and well equipped building with three large classrooms, two supplementary

teaching rooms, a library, office, kitchen and staffroom. The school boasts plenty of fine facilities include a playing pitch, tarmacked playing areas, a basketball court and outdoor sheds for sports equipment and shelter/changing areas. Newtown N.S. is a primarily a Catholic school supporting a catholic ethos, but at the same time is welcoming to children from all nationalities and religions.

The school currently employs three classroom teachers, (including the principal Mary Parker), one learning support teacher, one resource teacher, one SNA and one part-time secretary. They are an enthusiastic, hardworking and dedicated team who teach and support all children in a happy and well balanced environment.

Newtown school takes part in all local activities, events, competitions, parades and initiatives and are very much involved in the local community. They have a hardworking and supportive Board of Management chaired by Father Dan O'Donovan, together with an active and involved Parents Association.



Parents and children are welcome to call in to the school at any time of the year. Enrolment packs are available from the office, or people can phone the school at 090 964 3043 and they will send out further information via post.

Class teachers and staff are available any day, after 3 pm, to meet with prospective new pupils and parents. You can phone the school to make an appointment, or find more information online at newtownros.scoilnet.ie, or by emailing the team at newtownnatschool@eircom.net



East Galway's Library Art Trail

By Kevin O'Connor

Plans are underway to organise the annual East Galway Library Trail to bring art out into the local community. Started a number of years ago, the joint initiative between Galway County Council and local artist Joyce Little, has been a great success allowing up and coming artists in the Ballinasloe area to exhibit their artwork in libraries throughout East Galway.

The organisation of the Library Trail has now been handed over to local artists, Jackie Eastwood and Heather Rafter, currently in their final year of a part-time Art & Design Degree at Galway and Mayo Institute of Technology. "We are delighted Jackie and Heather are continuing the very successful Library Trail. It is important to give local talented artists the opportunity to show their work and for everyone in the outlying areas to access contemporary art," said Mary Dillon of the town library.

The majority of the artists on display will be painters, with one Mike Casey displaying photography. The items on display will be available to view for about a month, before being moved to another location. Killimor Library will play host to Tomas Finn, painter; Ballinasloe Library will house works by Lily Kelly, a painter; Woodford Library will carry work by Fiona Cawley, a painter; Eyrecourt Library will be displaying pieces by Ness Kelly, a painter; and Portumna Library will become home to works by Mike Casey, a photographer.

This year's exciting Trail will take place during April and May with each exhibition on display for four weeks. Everyone is welcome to attend the openings, the times of which are available in our Events Guide

For further information on the Library Trail please contact Jackie Eastwood 087-2341535 or Heather Rafter 085-7482911.



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Out and About in Ballinasloe



Enjoying Poetry and Roses were Dolores O'Neill, Aine Heavey, Anna Goode, Maura Hughes and her grand-daughter Aoife.



Pictured at the Rachel Goode Benefit Concert in St. Michael's Church in aid of Galway Hospice which raised over €4,000 for the Charity were Organist Marie Power, Baritone Conor O'Meara, Soprano & Organiser Rachel Goode, Bass Peter O'Reilly, David Kenny Boy Soprano, and Conductor Michael McCullagh.



Gnó le Ghaeilge, Foireann Óstán Gullanes, Corn Uí Cheithearnaigh (The Gullanes Hotel team, Ballinasloe won the Cheithearnaigh Cup for operating business through Irish). (L-R): Tomas Gullane, Claire Curley, Fintan Leslie, Mairín Uí Thuairisg, Sínead McKeigue, Ruairí Ó hAnluain, Regina Kelly, Joan Colleran, Mary Tuohy and Caroline Gullane.



Ballinasloe Credit Union Art Competition — Age 11-13 Winners: Ronan Hanrahan 2nd, Aaron O'Donohue 3rd, Peter Donohue 1st. Also pictured are ?????????? and BCU Chairman William Duthie



Scenes from St. Patrick's Day Parade.



Ballinasloe Vintage Club members, Michael Hyland and Peter Salmon preparing for their Classic Vintage Season.



BEST Award Winner Laura Clifford, with Minister of State for Public Service Reform and the OPW, Brian Hayes and Seamus Duffy (BACD)



Minister of State for the Dept. of Enterprise, John Perry T.D. and Mayor Michael Kelly with Directors of BACD and clients of the Enterprise centre at a recent visit during Enterprise week.



Kiltormer N.S. Golden Jubilee

By Kevin O'Connor

2014 will be a year of celebration for Kiltormer National School. 50 years ago, the students and teachers marched from the 'Old school' on the Eyrecourt road to the 'new school' Scoil Phádraig Naofa in the heart of the village.

The new building was erected by McKeons Builders and consisted of 3 classrooms and housed 101 pupils, with 3 teachers. It was formally opened by then Minister for Education, Dr. Patrick Hillary. In 1975, a general purpose room was added to the back of the school. As years passed and the school attracted more students, prefabs were added and finally in 2012, a new classroom and refurbishments were added. This school supports four Teachers, a Caretaker, a Secretary and a Cleaner.

Situated in the heart of the village itself, the school benefits from the wonderful local amenities. The local GAA sports complex accommodates P.E. classes as well as sporting and community events. There is a new playground beside the school and it is only a short distance from the local Catholic church. The area is steeped in history with The New Gate monument, St Thomas' Church and the Crystal Ballroom all nearby.

The school today has ample accommodation for its mainstream classes, with learning support and resource teaching provided. St. Patrick's NS is a catholic school, but welcomes children

of all faiths. There is a great emphasis on numeracy and literacy, but there is also a love for Gaelige, Sport and the Arts. the pupils take part in hurling training, visual arts, singing and instrumental music. The school also has state-of-the-art equipment, boasting interactive whiteboards, a school website and school blog. As you would expect from pupils who come from Ballinasloe stock, the school has had its share of sporting glory over the years. Importantly, all the school's activities are supported and encouraged by the Board of Management and Parents Association.

The school and the community are looking forward to celebrating their Golden Jubilee. Principal Gráinne Dooley and Chairperson of the Board of Directors Father Christy O'Beirne held a meeting in February with a view to holding a special Jubilee Mass and Parish celebration in June. This will be preceded by an evening event in the school in May when past pupils and members of the community bring along photos of their school days. These photos will be scanned and uploaded onto the "Beo" heritage website, under the guidance of Mr. Brendan Smith, DERI, with NUIG. This is exciting, because it means that the photos can be viewed by past pupils on line, all over the world.

There is more information for anyone who is interested on the Kiltormer 50th Anniversary Facebook page, or the school website www.kiltormerns.com. People can also telephone the school at 090 96 27109



Kiltormer N.S. Jubilee Committee.



Staff and Pupils of Kiltormer N.S.

Support Centre: Four Years On

By Kevin O'Connor

In the heart of Main Street, there is an unassuming, two storey building that plays home to one of the most inspiring institutions in the locality. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, above Dolans Auctioneers, Ballinasloe Cancer Support Centre opens its doors from 4 pm to 6.30 pm every Monday and Wednesday and from 10 am to 1 pm on Friday and carries out its uplifting work. The centre is open to all Cancer patients and their families and serves all ages.

Formed in March 2010, the Centre is without a doubt one of the best in the county. There are facilities here that would rival and even surpass, any found in some of the larger cities and towns. "We offer a range of therapies to patients; counselling services, reflexology, acupuncture, holistic massage and bereavement support," said John Kilcommins.

He set the organisation up after going through treatment for his own cancer. "I was lucky that I had a background in the health shop, so I knew what I could do to help myself. When I got my confidence back afterwards, my daughter suggested I set it up to give something back." The group organises regular educational courses in the centre, on topics ranging from nutritional information, to home security and developments and breakthroughs in the treatment options.

Recently, Dr. Gerry Potter, who discovered Solvestrol, an alternative treatment to chemotherapy, held a seminar here and there is a course on nutrition for cancer patients coming very soon. "All the services we provide are completely free of charge. Everything is run by trained volunteers. One of the best things about the centre is that you see people who are so willing to give up their free time in aid of all this," said John.

The moment anyone walks in the door, they would be blind not to see the very strong sense of family warmth in the place. The centre is heated and there are cosy chairs everywhere. Tea is practically on tap and the volunteers are so friendly and chatty that a short visit can stretch "Everyone who comes in,



no matter how down they might feel, always, always leaves feeling happier, more positive, than when they came in," said John. "We used to be in Society Street, but we needed more space. We were donated this space in autumn of 2013. It used to be an office space, but we have made it our own."

The 1200 square foot Centre boasts very impressive facilities, with 2 Therapy Rooms, a Main Reception (with all the armchairs), a Kitchen, Toilet Facilities and an Office. This area caters for East Galway, South Roscommon and North Offaly, a catchment area of thirty thousand people. "People come from Athlone and nobody is ever turned away," said Michael Manning. There is a volunteer committee of 10-12 people and a team of 10 highly committed volunteers. "It is an entirely voluntary organisation," said Antoinette Kenny. Everyone involved either knows a sufferer or have fought through it themselves.

The Support Group and Centre are affiliated to the Irish Cancer Society and is a member of the National Standards Committee. Recently they were twinned with Strides for Life, which provides people with a walking programme that can help to reduce cancer re-occurrence by 50%. Judith Roche, Claudia Caulfield and Jim Curly were the people that trained from the centre. Because everything is voluntary, the centre relies on donations and fundraising to keep going. Ashley Kenny from Forever Living raised €750 by raffling a hamper and received a donation of €200 from Moore Insurance. All donations work toward improving the services the centre can offer and the transparency of the organisation means that people can see exactly how they helped.

The Ballinasloe Cancer Support Centre is an initiative the town can take justified pride in. John Finnerty and Paula Holmes from Galway Rural Development work 19 and a half hours a week to help develop the centre. Since they began working, the Centre has gotten a Facebook page with 435 Likes, where you can find up-to-date information on upcoming events. For more information, people can call 090 964 5574



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Vintage Club Celebrates 5 Years

By Ivan Mullen

According to the Ballinasloe & District Vintage Club P.R.O. Anthony Grenhan "What creates success is undoubtedly the people within the group. We currently have 85 members who range in age and from all walks of life. It is this diversity that has been key to our success."

Members' individual interests is where the club's progress is directed and this approach over the years has taken many extraordinary avenues which today has allowed us to become one of the most innovative clubs within the national scene.

We have had our ups and downs with that unusual approach. It would have been far easier just to copy what other clubs around were doing but that was not where we wanted to be and it is not where we are. As many of our members are community leaders in their own local areas and parishes, this has enabled the club to participate easily in local festivals and parades common place in Ireland now.

St. Patrick's Day parades, for instance are small events without the inclusion of vintage and classic vehicles to entertain the crowds. Other aspects from individual members interests, include the utilization of the Hymany way from the O'Sullivan Beara route. Member Pat Glynn organises short walks over this route during the summer months. He can be contacted at. 086 864 8119

Another member, John McGann from Ardrahan, recently competed in the Tractor world show at the 3 Counties show grounds at Malvern near Cheltenham in the U.K.

A group from the club attended in support of John and his family over the weekend. Some of the shows organisers expressed an interest in visiting us in Ballinasloe this July.

Most weekends there is some event or other our members attend, taking place all over the country and reports from them are eagerly discussed at our monthly meetings held in Gullanes Hotel which are well attended.

All our events are run by a subcommittee, one such group, headed by Michael Hyland, Shane Burns and Niall Keane takes place three times a year and involves a special classic car day held at the Pallas Karting complex in Tynagh. This event draws classic cars from the province and beyond. It's highly organised event by the lads involved with each up-coming event waited for in anticipation by its patrons. Our next such event is 20th April. Shane can be contacted at. 087 977 6386

The County Ploughing Championships taking place on the 4th of May next will be held in Daly's farm. It will host a strong club presence with displays from neighbouring clubs on display also.

We are currently preparing for our annual club auto-jumble scheduled for the 27th April, next at Carey's Equestrian Centre, Creagh, our second such event the first being the same location and date last year which received great support. It consists of over 40 Antique and brik-a-brak traders special interest and collectables with craft stands as well as auto-jumble to cater for the vehicle restorer as well as special exhibits on show during the day also. Damian and his father Sean open their state of the art complex to the club and our patrons for the day and also provide a small equestrian event to entertain the crowds. Club P.R.O Anthony Grenham and Club Vice-Chairman Ronnie Cobban head up the clubs committee organizing this event. Anthony can be contacted at 086 4183131 regarding bookings and event details.

Another project has the members occupying their evenings by trawling through family photographs to enable a story board of local history to be collated by the club and recorded for the future use of the community. The effort is being supported by this publication and it is hoped that it will spread to other established groups within the town area as time progresses as the long term resource it will provide will be immeasurable to future generations. Club treasurer Michael Glynn can be contacted regarding this effort and also for club membership at 087 628 3954.

Senator
MICHAEL MULLINS
YOUR LOCAL OIREACTHAS MEMBER

For advice or assistance
Contact me at:

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Rascal Resources Lead the Way

By Declan Finn

Rascal Resources LTD is a company based in the Enterprise Centre which makes educational resources and games for children.

Lisa-Ann Roche, a native of New Ross, Co. Wexford, but now living here in town, is the latest entrepreneur to open an office at the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre. Founder and managing director of Rascal Resources, Lisa-Ann recently decided that it was time to take the plunge and open an official headquarters, moving the company to the next level.

“With anything starting out, you have to bide your time and see how it goes, so I have been using my sitting room and my spare bedroom to run the company up to this point. With sales growing and more orders coming in, I needed more space. Rascal Resources is getting to the stage where a corner of my sitting room is not practical anymore,” said Lisa-Ann.

Lisa-Ann qualified as a Speech and Language Therapist in 2007 and has worked in Athlone since graduation. She is an avid stage enthusiast which she credits to her upbringing in New Ross where she was involved in musicals and plays throughout her teenage years. A keen sports person, Lisa-Ann played football, rowed with New Ross boat club and was a New Ross majorette for thirteen years. Rascal Resources LTD. was set up as she found it increasingly difficult to source effective games



and products to help the teaching and learning of language in the early years. Lisa-Ann set about researching how she might be able to turn her old cornflakes box ideas into exciting and pioneering games to enhance language development for children of all levels. “We wanted the game to be exciting and colourful because children learn best when they’re having fun,” said Lisa-Ann

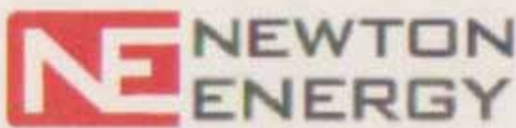
Pair the Square, the first in a planned range of language products, was born out of the necessity to enhance the children’s learning in a carefully graded scheme. The game enables children to match picture to picture, discuss and compare the pictures as well as playing memory and association games. As the child’s language develops and they become

more confident, they can develop full sentences or make up stories associated with particular pictures. The supervising adult can change the sliders of the game to suit the language ability of the child. With no words printed anywhere on the game it suits all children from 18 months upwards including children learning Irish or children learning English as a second language. *Pair the Square* level 2 verb pack will be available from April with other products currently going through the prototype stages.

Backed by the Enterprise Ireland Innovation Voucher Scheme, Rascal Resources LTD, using Tullamore designers *Dezynamite*, as well as Galway artist Niall O’Reilly is leading the way in creating Irish products to aid language development in children.

Rascal Resources has been steadily increasing their traction in online sales and independent retailers. Although still in its infancy, *Rascal Resources* have had initial approaches from nationwide retailers and distributors for Great Britain and mainland Europe. The company was also chosen to front Bank of Ireland’s Enterprise initiative.

The website www.rascalresources.com along with Twitter and Facebook provide a full back-up service to professionals and parents alike, as well as a web video series exhibiting ways to get the best out of your child. *Pair the Square* is available from Salmon’s, Ballinasloe as well as the website.



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WWI Memorial Roll of Honour

By Kevin O'Connor

This Roll of Honour was originally housed in the British Legion hut in the Fair Green in Ballinasloe. A newly formed group, Ballinasloe World War 1 Heritage Group, has been formed to restore the roll of honour and research the soldiers listed on it.

Officers and committee of the group are as follows:

Chairman: Stephen Connell

Secretary: Douglas Rafter

Treasurer: Gerry Devlin

PROs: Brian Casey and Evelyn Donellan

Committee: Frank Burns, Frank Kelly, Brendan Donnellan, Oliver Donnellan, Paddy Riddell.

It was also decided that as much information as possible on all aspects of this period be collected and recorded as this may be the final opportunity, the 100th Anniversary of the Great War, to do so. Anybody with queries, information, memorabilia etc. can contact any of the committee members listed above.

Documents and photographic information will be scanned and the originals returned to the owner. Artefacts will be photographed, documented and returned to the owner also.

This is the first step in this project. It is the aim of the group to gather this information from local people and to co-ordinate it into a full and final account of the locality and its people during The Great War. A book containing all the information gathered will be produced at a later date.

A permanent place to store and display the memorial with donated artefacts, medals and photos will be sought. This long term project requires funding and all contributions will be gratefully accepted at Ballinasloe Credit Union.

Account Details: Douglas Rafter, Ballinasloe World War 1 Heritage Group A/C No. 28138. Details of how the project is progressing and any interesting information and status of memorial will be reported in Part II in the next issue of this publication.



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New Heritage Groups Formed

By Pat Johnston

As the country moves through the Decade of Commemorations, there is a growing interest at a local level in trying to understand and maintain knowledge of our past heritage. Two groups have recently formed in town, each dedicated to investigating and preserving aspects of our own local history and broadening our understanding of life in East Galway during the revolutionary period 1913-1923.

St. Brigid's Heritage Group is concerned with another facet of the town's history. The overall aim of the group is to collect, preserve and record the intellectual and material history and heritage of St.

Brigid's Hospital and to keep alive the memory and the story of St. Brigid's from the point of view of patients, staff and neighbours of the institution. The group is made up of Martin Gavin, Una Spain, John Goode, Ann Duffy, John Johnston and Rita Darcy. Chairman Martin Gavin said that the hospital was a central part of the life of Ballinasloe and its hinterland for nearly two hundred years.

From Creagh himself, Martin says that everyone in Creagh had a connection with the hospital but that it was also a self-contained community with its own farm, vegetable gardens and orchards, as well as bakers and butchers, laundry, tailors and

cobblers. He stressed the importance of preserving these memories and hand them on to future generations. Members of the group have been collecting memorabilia and photographs relating to the hospital community and in 2012 they mounted an exhibition of memorabilia as part of the Ada English School. In 2013 they held a photographic exhibition in Gullane's Hotel.

They will hold the fourth commemorative event honouring Ada English, patriot and psychiatrist 1875-1944, with a weekend incorporating exhibitions and lectures with preparatory outreach through schools and a camogie tournament as well as music and song in the Autumn of this year.

St Teresa's School Charity Cycle

St Teresa's Special School is hosting a Charity Cycle challenge on 18th May 2014. Joining them on the journey is Mark McKeigue of Turas who is helping arrange the Charity cycle which will cater for both experienced and novice cyclists (as there are two routes to cater for everyone). For the novice cyclists there is 30km cycle and for the more experienced cyclist there is a 100km cycle. Registration will take place on the morning of the 18th May at 9.30am. Race starts at 10.30am. Entry fee for the charity cycle is €25

St Teresa's are currently fundraising to buy a bus for our school, allowing our pupils go on social outings, horse riding and swimming. We are fundraising to add to a grant provided by Ballinasloe Town Council for which they are extremely grateful. The Directors, Staff and pupils have thanked the Ballinasloe Credit Union and local businesses who are supporting this project. As well as thanking everyone who contributed spot prizes and have arranged fundraising activities. The cycle will follow a circular route via Ballinasloe-Portumna-Loughrea ending back at Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre. For further details please contact Simon 087 971 9387.



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Ardscuil: Connacht Champions



Panel: Kiva Healy, Erica Greene, Michaela Dunne, Niamh Loughnane, Ciara Ryan, Ashley Walsh, Jennifer Kelly, Gráinne Lohan, Aine Ryan (C), Claire Kelly, Faye Mahon, Amylouise Dempsey, Heather Payne, Jade Ward, Claire Geraghty, Aine Galvin, Natoya Fogarty, Gráinne McNally, Erica Connell, Ellen Grehan, Michelle Kelly, Vivien Mulryan, Ellen Finnerty, Macy McDermott, Sarah Fletcher, Michelle Leonard, Claire Butler, Jennifer Kelly, Louise Connolly.

Garbally: Connacht Finalists



Soccer Club Win National Award



By Kevin O'Connor

In a star studded evening in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, at the Local Authority Members Association Annual Awards, presented by RTE's Miriam O'Callaghan. Town F.C. took the overall national winner as Best Local Sports Club, beating a host of other sporting organisations and towns!

All this following last year's fantastic season, which saw the clubs senior team win the Roscommon Challenge Cup, the Roscommon and District Premier Division Cup, Premier Division Cup and the crowning glory of winning the Connacht Cup in May.

Club captain Peter Keighrey won the Roscommon Herald/Supervalu Sportstar Award for May. This is an excellent position for the club to be in, as they face into a semi-final to retain their title of Connacht Champions at the beginning of April.

The Under 16 squad have also done the club and town proud, winning the Athlone and District Schoolboys/Girls League in

March, winning the clubs first trophy of the season. The soccer club will soon play host to Liverpool club Halewood, as part of a tradition over 10 years old, called the Bob Pasiley Cup. Set up by local people living in Liverpool and club members here, every second year Halewood visit and vice versa. It gives the young people, namely the Under 12's, a chance to test their skills against teams they wouldn't normally get to play.

The team will play a number of matches, in order to get to know each other. It isn't all about football though, as this year the two teams will also be going to outdoor pursuits trips and other activities. Halewood will be staying in Gullanes Hotel, in between all the madness that is in store for them.

Sonia and Davey Dowd organised for the Under 9 squad to attend Ireland versus Serbia in the Aviva Stadium in March. with a little over 50 adults and kids going, it was a great day out for everyone who went.

They club was also represented in the St. Patrick's Day parade by the Under 9s and Under 8s, with almost 30 kids involved in the end.

Heather Payne of the Under 14 team is on the international call-up to play with Ireland in April in the Bob Doherty Cup. Heather, who has played with the club since she joined the Under 8 team, will play against England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in April, which is a fantastic opportunity for her to represent the club and the town.

Meanwhile off pitch, work is progressing with a massive €200,000 plus facilities revamp, part funded by the Town Council. The construction of stand alone new players, referees dressing rooms and showers will allow the Club to increase current useage of it's two grass pitches and two astro turf pitches by 8 teams. In time it will be able to facilitate Ladies Soccer at the Curragh grounds.

Anyone interested in joining the soccer team can contact the club on Facebook, or Jason Fallon at jaysonsports@hotmail.com and 087 176 1749.

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The Boys U10 Freestyle Relay Team who represented Ballinasloe at the Trojan Swimming Gala was held at the National Aquatic Centre recently Adam McGreal, James Mooney, Conor Hogan & Charlie Mooney.



Girls U10 Medley and Freestyle Relay team who represented Ballinasloe at the Trojan Swimming Gala was held at the National Aquatic Centre recently: Ailbhe Hanrahan, Ava McKeon, Tara McKeon, Ruth Dolan along with their coach Kyo



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Longfellow, 1874 (Marituri Salutamus)

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EMAIL: millracenh@yahoo.com

Girls Rugby: Winning Double



Back (L-R): Stephen Reilly, Catherine Devine, Abbie Hynes, Aoife Horkan, Ellen McLoughlin, Leona Larkin, Aoife Dudgeon, Beibheann Parsons, Amie Hawkins, Aine Galvin, Georgia Codyre, Aisling Murphy, Sara Dent, Marie Codyre, Declan Murphy. Front (L-R): Breann Walsh, Roisin Lyons, Emily Gavin, Meabh Deely, Natasha Sheppard-Walsh, Aoiheann Reilly, Eva Sinclair, Niamh Kenny, Gearoid Finneran.

By Barry Lally

Ballinasloe Rugby Club is set to enjoy a substantial expansion over the coming months. With the club enjoying success in all age groups and membership increasing, this new project will put Ballinasloe on the map as a rugby destination, just as their club is becoming the team to beat.

Paul Spencer is a quantity surveyor and he, along with Liam Loughrey, are leading the development of the new facilities. Two new changing rooms are being added to the clubhouse, which will include showers and toilets and a sand based training area will be prepared in the summer months. This will help to ensure that the two pitches at the club kept in good condition. The new sand based pitch will be a state of the art training facility and will be similar to the one found in Naas.

With a budget of €200,000, the construction of these two additions will, at its peak employ 12 people. The work is being carried out by Paul Flynn Construction and the changing rooms are already under construction. "Obviously, with the weather behaving the way it does, we won't be able to start work on the sand pitch until the summer, but we hope to begin work on that in June," said Paul Spencer. "It is partly funded by the Town Council, who have been very good to us over the years."

This development will vastly improve the already excellent grounds in the town. The club already host Connacht games and regularly host the Connacht women's team. Rabo 12 teams already come to train in Ballinasloe, so the new training area will make the club an even more desirable location.

Early in March, a young, enthusiastic girls' rugby team took to the hallowed ground at the Sportsground in Galway to compete in the U15 Rugby Connacht Cup Final against Westport RFC.

Having recently wrapped up the inaugural Connacht League in early January, the Girls' Rugby team were attempting to do what no other Ballinasloe rugby team had achieved before and win a league and cup double.

Played in ideal conditions on a perfect pitch, this game lived up to all expectations as the top two Girls U15 teams did battle for the Connacht Cup. Bragging rights were even, with the two teams having played each other twice already this season, with one win to each team.

In an exciting match, Ballinasloe fought bravely to the very end, with their hard work and determination paying off in the end, as they were eventually rewarded for their superior pace, fearless tackling and sheer commitment. In a match that reflected the hard work and commitment of the coaching team Stephen Reilly, Catherine Devine, Marie Codyre, Gearoid Finneran and Declan Murphy and of course the girls themselves, Ballinasloe were the convincing winners and made history that day. Next season, the club intends to start a Girls' U12 section and re-inforce the U18 team with recruits from the U15's.



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Ballinasloe won Gold, Silver and Bronze in the U10 400m at the Galway Indoor Championship. Left to Right. Aoibheann Fitzpatrick 2nd, Ava McKeon 1st, Caoimhe Ni Thuairisg 3rd.



Ballinasloe U11 Boys Relay Team came in first (L-R) Mark Kilkenny, Charlie Naughton, Shane Fitzpatrick and Conor Harley



Shane Jennings, Odhran Dooley and Brian Burke at the All-Ireland Schools Cross Country C'ship at Cork IT on March 8th

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GAA/GELS Cycle from Croke



Pictured with Micheál, in the saddle, at the launch were (L-R): Jim Lally, Gerry Roche, Pat O'Sullivan, Liam Cunningham, Donal Fenton, Noel Dillon, Jack Dillon, Ronan Lally, Seamus Duffy, Gerry Seale, Therese Dillon, Brendan Hayes, Damien Naughton, Kathryn Gibbons.

By Donal Fenton

Iconic GAA commentator and veteran Irish broadcaster **Micheál Ó Muirheartaigh** was in town recently to launch the latest GAA Fundraising initiative.

Funds from this event will go towards Ballinasloe GAA for their ongoing and capital development requirements and to Galway East Life Support (GELS) for their ongoing activities in raising awareness and providing support for those affected by suicide.

The sprightly, Bilingual Kerryman waxed a little lyrical about the themes of suicide awareness and indeed his passion for the GAA, before encouraging young and old, in both languages, to take to the Rothár for three great causes: the GAA, the Charity and your health!

Whilst Yorkshire will see the start of the Tour de France in July, our pedalling heroes will be foraging for Green Stage Jerseys on August 30th and will comprise

of four stages, Croke Park to Kilcock, Kilcock to Kinnegad, Kinnegad to Moate and finally Moate back to Ballinasloe. Cyclists can do as little as 32 kilometers or the entire distance of a saddle splitting 152 Kms or 95 miles for the imperialists.

As the cycle's momentum builds and the number of teams being entered snowballs, a buzz is generating around town, with teams of four in training to get their Peleton skills and their fitness levels up to speed for the tarmac highway from Liffeside to Suckside.

Galway East Life Support (GELS), a charity that do so much to raise awareness about suicide and with the impending closure of further mental health units in St. Brigid's Hospital may have an even heavier load to bear. Ballinasloe GAA recognise the importance of this charity to the area and are delighted the charity have teamed up to try and make the event a success.

Gerry Roche, the local Superintendent and is a founder member of GELS. said

"People don't like to talk about suicide and you don't want to force it on people but we need to raise awareness of the dangers and of the help that is out there."

The need to provide proper sports and social facilities for the youth is now greater than ever locally. The large population and interest in GAA is representative of what is happening in many towns nationwide, the closure of services and business puts further financial pressure on clubs and a greater burden on charities.

Pat O'Sullivan, Chairman of Ballinasloe GAA Club explains "We have developed progressively in recent years, in terms of participation, facilities and results and after winning the All-Ireland Junior Football title in Croke Park last year, it's fitting that we go back there again to commence this great event. We are committed to providing and further developing proper sports and social facilities for the youth. This Charity Cycle will help fundraise for that as well as helping a very important local charity."

It's hoped that each team will raise €250 each with a target of at least 90 teams. There will be souvenir cycle jerseys (given to participants before they depart) and refreshment stops along the way. The cycle is sure to be a lot of fun and coupled with fundraising will be a rewarding and hopefully gratifying experience. All subscriptions and donations to the various participating teams are greatly welcome. For further details about the cycle contact 0872369665.

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The Passing of a Golfing Legend

By Joe Moore

Ballinasloe Golf Club lost one of its most respected and popular members with the recent passing of Tim Creavin, Shralea, Creagh, Ballinasloe. Tim, who had been in poor health for a number of months, passed away in the loving care of his family.

Born in Taughmaconnell in 1931, he was the second youngest of a family of five boys and three girls. After completing his education, Tim worked as a psychiatric nurse in St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe. It was there he met his wife Kitty (nee Reddan) and the couple married in 1955, later to become parents to four daughters.

A keen and competitive sportsman, Tim loved clay pigeon shooting and the outdoor life in pursuit of game before getting "the golf bug." He joined Ballinasloe Golf Club in the early seventies and took to the game immediately. He endeared himself to many with his wit, banter and tales as he became something of a character on golf courses all over Ireland, while his prowess on many fairways in Europe was legendary. Many of his timely quips will be remembered and quoted for years to come by friends and foes alike.

Being very competitive, it didn't take Tim long to get his handicap down to single figures. He represented the Club at inter-club level and was a prominent member of the Jimmy Bruen team for many years. He was also a successful team manager, captaining the 1992 Central Towns and the Connacht Seniors team in 2000 top victory. Up until recently he enjoyed playing in the Wednesday Seniors' competition and was involved in a regular fourball for many years.

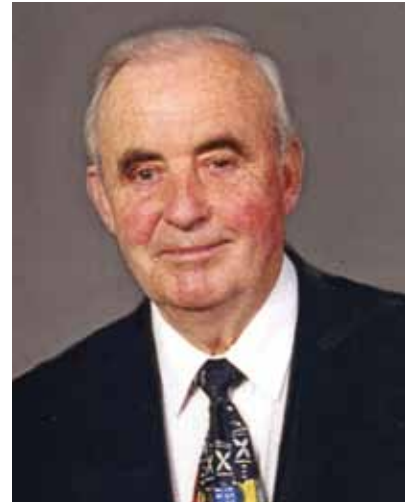
Tim Creavin gave a lot of his time to the development of his beloved Golf Club. He was a committee member for many years, helping out in many projects including researching the history of the club when its centenary year came round with the production of a remarkable publication. Elected Club Captain in 1992, he also served as Course Manager before being

elected Seniors' Captain in 2000. And when the club decided to run a series of fund-raising "Progressive 25" nights, Tim and his good friend, the late Tom Glynn were the first in every night and regularly featured among the prize winners.

Large numbers attended his reposing at the family home and also at his funeral mass in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Creagh. As his mortal remains made their final journey to Creagh Cemetery, there was a huge turnout of colleagues from St. Brigid's Hospital as well as members from the Ballinasloe Golf Club and the Millennium Golf Society, of which he was a past Captain, forming a guard of honour to remember a great sportsman, a true gentleman and a devoted family man.

The late Tim Creavin is survived by his wife Kitty, daughters Doris (Culleen, Ballinasloe), Ita (Waterford), Jackie (Ardrahan) and Siobhan (Yorkshire); sisters Teresa Harney (Drum) and Evelyn Dravins (Tubbercurry); sons-in-law Ollie, Ray and Roger as well as his beloved eight grandchildren, nephews, nieces and many other friends and relatives.

Ar dheis De go raibh a anam dilis.



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In Flanders' Field



By Barry Lally

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row
That mark our place and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly,
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

Some older readers will recall visible reminders of Ballinasloe's involvement in the First World War: the British Legion Clubhouse on the Fair Green, disabled veterans selling poppies on the streets on Armistice Day. Many townsmen had enlisted for active service in the various theatres of war and at least a hundred paid with their lives.

The fact that there is no local war memorial speaks volumes for the subsequent development of public attitudes to both the fallen and the survivors of the conflict. Put bluntly, they came to be regarded in some quarters as traitors and indeed during the War of Independence ex-servicemen were targeted for assassination in certain parts of the country. How did this situation come about and what substance if any is there in the charge of treason that had been levelled against them? In this centenary year of the outbreak of the Great War it seems appropriate for us to ask those questions.

To be a traitor is to betray one's country by going over to the enemy, a deliberate act of perfidy. In 1914 the overwhelming majority in Nationalist Ireland had no quarrel with the neighbouring island. Rather, their opponents were the Ulster Unionists who were blocking the implementation of the Home Rule Bill and were supported in their intransigence by a threatened mutiny of army officers. Civil war between North and South seemed imminent and was only averted by the pistol shots in Sarajevo that ignited the European conflagration.

Home rule was suspended for the duration of the war and John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, in an attempt at national reconciliation, offered the services of the Irish Volunteers to the Allied cause. Some from the ranks dutifully answered the call to arms, while a small minority broke away to form what would eventually become known as the Irish Republican Army. In a blatant exploitation of the rampant sectarianism of the time, British propaganda aimed at Nationalist Ireland represented Germany as a Protestant country whose brutal soldiery had perpetrated unspeakable atrocities in Catholic Belgium involving priests and nuns as well as other members of the civilian population. Army recruiting posters featured the traditional accoutrements of stage-Irish: wolfhounds, shawl-clad colleens, round towers, ruined abbeys, harps and shamrocks. Potential recruits were assured that the war would be a short one, with everyone home in time to celebrate Christmas with their families.

Though farmers had been told that a German victory would entail the confiscation of their holdings, members of the agricultural community were decidedly unenthusiastic about flocking to the colours. Wartime prices for produce were at a record high, all available labour was required to work the land and a son returning from the front minus an arm or leg would be of little use about the farm.

In the towns and cities recruits were forthcoming from all classes but mostly from the underprivileged section of the community where a tradition of military service existed. Joining up was a socially acceptable thing to do, as well as being financially attractive, especially to married men whose wives and children were paid a Separation Allowance enabling them to live in frugal comfort.

Popular attitudes to the war were to change in the course of time. Hostilities seemed to drag on interminably, casualty figures continued to mount, the Easter Rising intervened and an abortive attempt was made to introduce conscription in the final year of the struggle. Initially, though, it is true to say that the great mass of the Nationalist Ireland was solidly behind the war effort.

The shift in public opinion that culminated in the 1918 electoral victory of Sinn Féin brought forward the notion that there was something shameful if not downright criminal in having at any time in the past served in the British Armed forces, an idea that was reinforced when the I.R.A. found itself in conflict with these same forces during the War of Independence. Thus, veterans returning home found themselves stigmatized or worse for having done what their own clergymen and political leaders had urged them to do a few short years before. In the circumstances it's hardly surprising that half the demobbed Irish soldiers chose to remain abroad.

Happily in recent decades Irish society has shown a greater readiness to embrace the totality of our past, an evolution largely to the credit of Presidents Robinson and McAleese. The men from Ballinasloe who laid down their lives in the Great War may not have all been saints or heroes, but they fought on the side that historians tell us could lay claim to the greater measure of right and we have no reason to disown them. The least we can do is to pay them the tribute of our understanding.

*We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved and now we lie
In Flanders fields, in Flanders fields.*

New Volunteers and New Ideas Needed For Tidy Towns

By Kevin O'Connor

A town as substantial as Ballinasloe needs a significant amount of local, voluntary effort from the community to keep clean and the Tidy Towns group is focused on harnessing this and spreading the workload.

At an initial meeting this Spring, Westport's Tidy Towns presented on their own recent success in the National Competition and how Ballinasloe could achieve similar progress in the years to come. With attendees from the Chamber of Commerce, Residents Associations, Community Groups, Sporting Organisations and Town Council Members, nearly every facet of the town was represented and the wheels have been set in motion for the positive plans ahead.

"What Westport have achieved is remarkable and we hope to emulate that success here," said Chairperson Cllr. Carmel Greal. "We got some excellent ideas that evening and that has informed our policy for the rest of the year. We also looked at what last year's judges said and have identified the areas that the town needs to improve on." Encouragingly, many groups in town have stepped up their commitment to the project and have taken on more responsibility. "We're now working with the sports clubs and residents associations, who have agreed to 'Adopt-an-Area' which basically means that they are taking over maintenance of an area near them," said Carmel.

In order for the Tidy Towns project to be a success, more involvement is needed from the community at large. The



current committee is comprised of a handful of volunteers and the town is too large for them to be able to cover every area. Carmel stressed that a greater involvement is required from the community at large to make this initiative a success. "It can be someone out walking their dog who brings a picker with them, or shopkeepers keeping the front of their premises looking nice," she said. "If people could give us one hour a week, every two weeks, or even a month, we could really make a difference."

One of the main projects for the competition this year is the Tesco Roundabout, which is in need of refurbishment. They have also planned a Spring Clean-up of the town, which will last for the whole month of April. The Town Council is supplying bags, pickers and gloves and will organise the collection of the rubbish collected by the volunteers. "The National Spring Clean runs this year from April 1st to April 30th. This year, it is vital that the residents associations play a strong role and the Town Council along with the Tidy Towns Committee wish to encourage people from the town to take pride in their local environment and take action against litter" said Caitriona Morgan Town Clerk.

As ever, the Tidy Towns Committee is seeking more ideas on how to improve the town's performance in the competition. "What we need is an 'All-Hands-on-Deck' approach to this project," said Carmel. Anyone who wants to get involved or contribute ideas can do so can find more information in the Civic Offices, or by emailing tclerk@ballinasloetc.ie

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