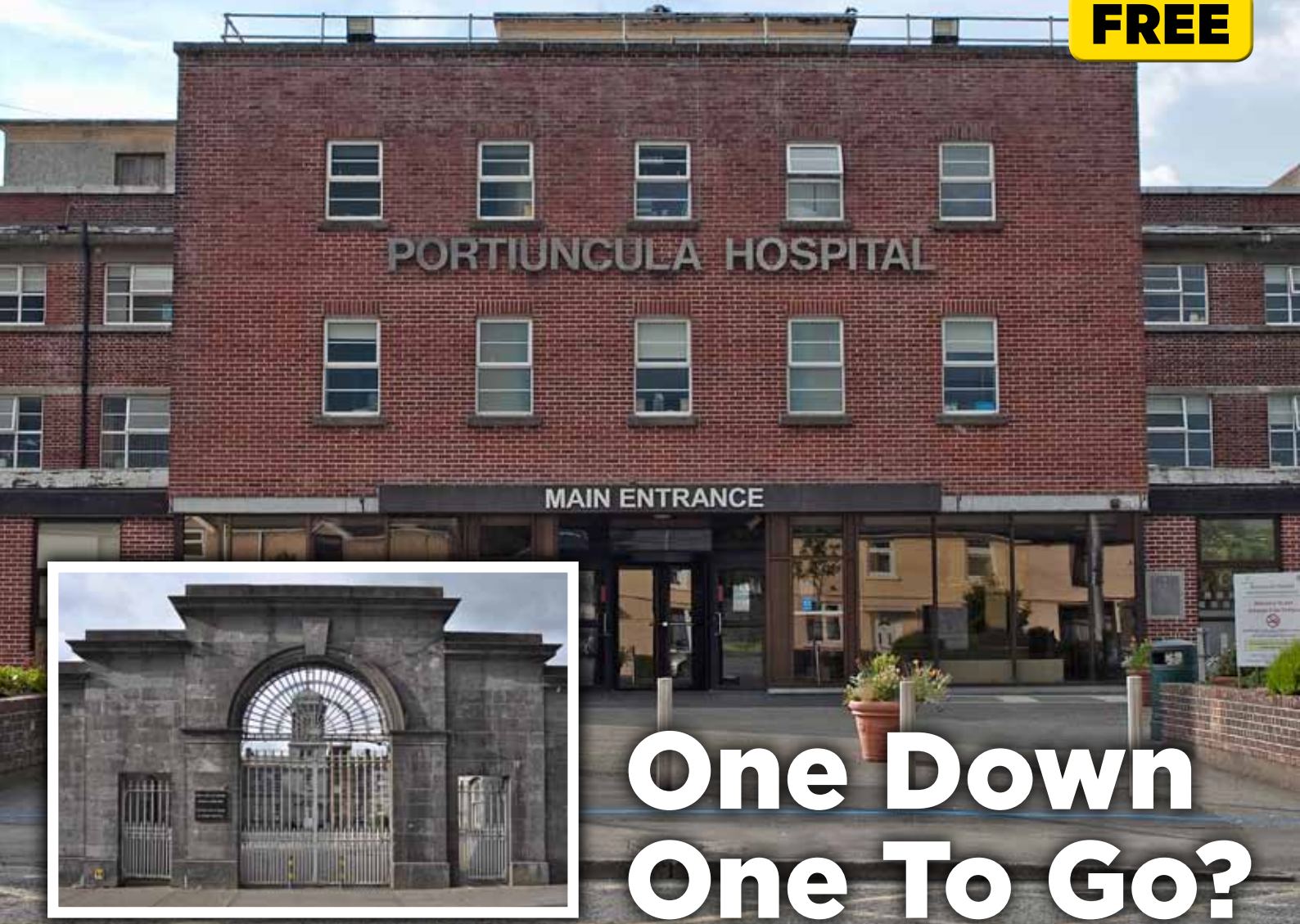


# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 2: June-July 2014

**FREE**



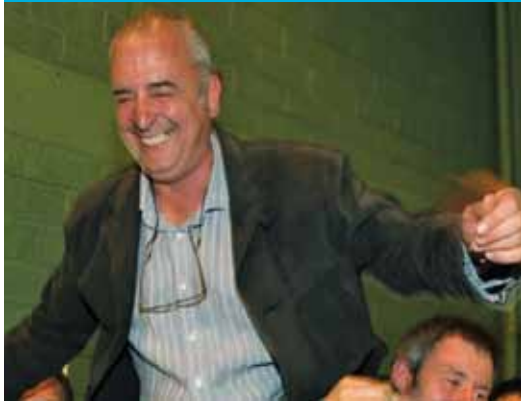
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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 2: June-July 2014

## REAMHRÁ



*It's easy to condemn those that try. Having witnessed the last meeting of the Town Council last month and again witnessed the recent count in UCG for the locals, one can only be struck by the real desire of both locally elected and public officials to do their level best for citizens.*

*There was a genuine sadness in the final meeting, that irrespective of the rows, there was always a focus on doing what was/is best in the long term interests of town. There was no applause or bunting*

*as they left the offices for the last time, but we should put on the record our thanks to those who for the past five years sought to put the wider interests above self or indeed party.*

*We wish well those six brave souls who are to carry our hopes and aspirations for our community at local and regional level for the next five years. Theirs is an onerous task with diminished resources and institutional indifference from time to time. We should too spare a thought for the defeated candidates, their families and their supporters they cared enough to go forward and though unsuccessful on this occasion they too deserve our gratitude.*

*The massive rejection by the voters of Govt. Parties' candidates speaks volumes for the growing disconnect between a community growing from indifferent to hostile to the State and those that purport to control it on behalf of all it's citizens. We have for the past five years been consistently at the wrong end of Government decisions, when it comes to state services across a variety of sectors. Their removal, down sizing or to use the favourite Orwellian term of the moment "Reconfiguration of services has left us reeling, economically and physiologically.*

*As the County Town with a wider hinterland of a growing population to the midlands and east of us the balkanisation of all services to Galway City does not constitute good medium or long term planning. The vote suggests a line has been drawn in the sand.*

*Colm Croffy, Ballinasloe Life Editor.*



*Are far away hills really Greener? That is the question you need to ask yourself before you talk negatively about your area. The odds are that when you do comparisons what you have on your doorstep is just as good if not better than those same far away hills!*

*We need to protect what we have already, be it Services, Amenities or Retail, so the next time you discuss your town look at all the positive aspects that it has and ask what can you do to make it better.*

*The Hospital needs to be protected (a recent experience took me 55 minutes to get a parking space at UCHG), local shops need to be supported and all the various clubs and organisations are crying out for volunteers.*

*I congratulate the six newly elected County Councillors and wish them well in their new enhanced roles. We in Ballinasloe Area Community Development Limited will require their input and support to a Community plan we are developing and look forward to a strong working partnership over the next few years.*

*Seamus Duffy, Chairman,  
Ballinasloe Area Community Development.*

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# Anti-Government Backlash in Locals

By Colm Croffy

It was a decisive day for anti Government parties and especially Independents and Sinn Féin in the first ever elections to Ballinalsoe District Municipal Area as part of the Galway Co. Council Elections.

All the wise owls were calling it 2 Fine Gael, 2 Fianna Fáil, 1 Sinn Féin and 1 Independent prior to polling with more or less a tussle within the Big Beasts of the local jungle Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael to see which of their candidates would not make it. Whilst we all now know the results - the story of the town boxes from the tallies again underscores Tipp O'Neills (the former US Senate Speaker) dictum that all politics is local, practically 70% of all first preference votes cast went to Non Government candidates.

Within the seven town boxes, again from the tallymen and women, Dermot Connolly garnered in excess of 820 votes, followed by Timmy Broderick at 515. Town Councillor Johnny Walsh was marginally ahead of his nearest rival Michael Finnerty with 390 and 380 votes apiece. Pat O'Sullivan was fifth with approximately 330 votes and Donal Burke taking about 130. The story of the count was very much Timmy Broderick's commanding almost two quota poll emulating Joey Callinan's pre

Dail tilt in the locals some years ago. The huge patterns of 1s for Broderick and 2s for Connolly and vice versa was significant. In fairness to the town voters in plumping for Sinn Féin's Dermot Connolly as the area poll topper and with Timmy as number two they were rowing in behind those who it appeared did most of the rowing against some very unpopular Government decisions over the recent past.

Since the poll much comment has centred locally on the loss of at least one local Town Councillor bemoaning the fact that neither of the two outgoing Town Councillors Pat O'Sullivan or Johnny got elected. In the context of 22,000 of an electorate and some 11,000 of a valid poll - to have one person elected from just the citizens with their 2,800 or so votes at play seems a big ask. Whilst Johnny Walsh had not been elected to the County before, Pat had and is a significant high profile Fianna Fáil representative down through the years at both Urban and County level.

Some party strategists in both the Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael camps were musing that with almost three first preference quotas, either of them could have sneaked a third seat. But in fairness the winds of change on the day were very much in the Independents and Sinn

Féin's sails. Polltopper Tim Broderick of Kilconnell, was adamant minutes after being declared elected that his mandate was to continue to challenge the Government on the reckless decisions they had made in the downgrading of healthcare services and the removal of the 22 beds in St. Brigids. "I am both honoured and humbled with this huge vote from the people of Ballinalsoe and this vote will send a message to the Government that we have taken enough, 78% of the people want the decision reviewed."

Dermot Connolly in his comments after the first count echoed those of Timmy and after thanking those who voted for him especially in such large numbers in town; he turned his thoughts to his party and endorsement of the Sinn Féin message of putting people first "We are all in this area suffering the effects of decline and this needs to be stopped. This vote acknowledges all the hard work that Sinn Féin have been doing since the last election and the extensive canvass we put it. It says that decline of the town centre has to be reversed, the beds returned and the services in Portiuncula have to be enhanced not reduced! The Civic Offices have to remain an important hub for people looking for their local services under any new county plan."

Moylough based Michael Connolly of Fianna Fáil explained how he did not really canvass in the town as it was part of an agreed strategy. "It was my first time moving from the Tuam area to the Ballinalsoe area and I am really



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delighted to be elected on the third count. I look forward to working with the community of the town and I made a pledge at the start of my career as a public representative to ensure that people in the rural bye roads and villages who are as much entitled to services that we are all now going to be paying for, will get them". On the sixth count after the elimination of Johnny Walsh newly elected Eyrecourt native Donal Burke

(who has his Business in Ballinasloe town centre) was delighted with his first time out result and promised " he would work tirelessly for the people of the locality and how he was looking forward to five years in the service of his constituents." Fine Gael Veteran and outgoing co-opted Councillor Michael Finnerty from Tobergrellan, Ballinasloe was " delighted to win a further mandate from the people on my own merit, this

is however a huge protest vote day and we will listen to the people, this is a wake up call for our Government and hopefully they'll heed it." He also had words of consolation for his party colleague Kevin Ryan stating that he had been in that position twice and that there " would always be another day." New Inn based Aiden Donohue thanked all his supporters and voters for the trust they had placed in him and pledged that he would "Do all that he could do" for his constituents.

Johnny Walsh hung on following proceedings with huge interest until his elimination on 923 votes at the end of the fourth count he was stoic in defeat admitting that the tide was truly running out for Labour "I want to thank the people of town and especially my family and campaign team for the huge effort they all put in on my behalf. It's been a long campaign. I will not be making any hasty decisions."

Neither Kevin Ryan or Pat O'Sullivan made any public announcements on their respective futures.

Candidate	Count 1	Count 2	Count 3	Count 4	Count 5	Count 6
Broderick, Tim (Ind)	3275					
Connolly, Dermot (SF)	2059					
Connolly, Michael (FF)	1514	1800				
Burke, Donal (FF)	1154	1389	1463	1489	1554	1616
Finnerty, Michael (FG)	845	1021	1084	1092	1305	1544
Ryan, Kevin (FG)	835	970	992	1027	1081	
Donohue, Aidan (FG)	785	1164	1206	1227	1312	1702
Walsh, Johnny (Lab)	664	826	919	923		
O'Sullivan, Pat (FF)	615	838	924	951	1161	1225



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## Supermac's All-Star Awards

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*Geraldine McGrath, Manager of Supermac's Loughrea, pictured receiving an award recently for Supermac's Best Customer Service Outlet of the Year from Directors Una and Pat McDonagh*

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# Hair Gallery Setting The Trends

By Pat Johnston

Anita Mitchell a Ballinasloe native, has recently joined her amazing talents to The *Hair Gallery* on Dunlo Street. Anita has been perfecting her craft for over 10 years, most of that time with Award-winning MOHH Hair Academy and Salon.

It was while she was at MOHH that she developed her love for upstyling and colour, mastering the art of creative hairdressing. Anita specialises in formal hair and complete restyles, whether it's for Weddings, A Day at the Races, or a completely new you. Anita has also presented some of her work in Confetti Bridal Magazine and at the Visionary Awards.

Founded by Tina Ward some 20 years ago at The *Hair Gallery*, you will find all age groups and genders catered for, from the Tiny Tots first hair cuts, to prestigious senior citizens. All occasions, Communions, Confirmations, or Wedding Parties are not a problem, even out of hours' times for special events.

The staff, made up of Tina Ward-Kelly, Josi Regan and Amanda Parkes, are dedicated to their craft, as they continually keep themselves up skilled. Recently, Tina, the coordinator and proprietor of the salon, fine-tuned her cutting skills at the famous Vidal Sassoon of London and she brought back the knowledge she learned there to the staff to keep them up skilled. Tina, herself a tutor believes that the key to success is education and keeping up standards by regularly up-skilling to keep up with latest trends.

All the staff are dedicated, friendly and hard-working. Josi is a native of Banagher and is well known to many customers from her years at the salon. She is married to Declan Camon, one of our friendly local butchers and is always welcoming to her customers, swapping banter with her clients and has many a laugh keeping up spirits, minding everyone all the time.

Local girl Amanda Parker is also paving the way in the hairdressing world and looking after lots of young students with her emerging talents. She recently showcased her talents at the ALFA Par Academy in Dublin doing her Masters in



Tina Ward-Kelly with her staff Anita Mitchell (left) Josi Regan and Amanda Parkes

Colouring. She has also workshops in cutting and colouring with DKY of London and attended workshops and training with the Award Winning Martha Galvin, one of Ireland's leading Irish Hairdressers in up styling. Amanda caters for students with student rate prices that are very popular, offering a more affordable price range.

"We offers senior citizen rates on certain days services. There are plenty of discount specials from elite stylist Anita and also discounts on services with Tina. All the staff have gone through training to find the suitable products for your hair care." The salon offers services to suit all pockets, which is reflected by experience and time taken for the service" states Tina.

Customers will find luxury service at affordable prices, using on-trend products from Keune and Alfa Par. Open from Tuesday to Saturday, opening late on Thursday's by appointment. They also offer Out of Hours services for special occasions such as weddings or parties.

To book an appointment at the *Hair Gallery*, phone 090 96 43921, or find them on Facebook. They offer many great value for money offers, from discount cards to customer draws.

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## Coronation Street Stars Return

Two Coronation Street stars recently embarked upon a tour of Ireland. Samia Ghadie (Maria) and Anthony Cotton (Seán the Barman), took part in the tour, which was organised by Sean Fletcher and Modern Media. As part of their trip, they were treated to a visit to Viva Night Club in Athlone. Part two of the tour will take place later in the year in Dublin. Fletchers Expert will also be broadcasting live from Paul Weller in Kilmainham with RTE 2FM broadcaster Rick O'Shea in late June. Listeners from all over Ireland can win prizes from Fletchers Expert Ballinasloe, as they've signed another year's deal as prize sponsors for the Rick O'Shea show.



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# Acupuncture: Get to the Point

By Pat Johnston

The second report by the Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing has found that more than one third of over-fifties are obese and this is strongly associated with the onset of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Well, winter is over and, despite Operation Transformation, walking clubs and fast and slow diets, many of us have yet to make inroads into our personal weight issues.

Okay so we all know that it's "eat less and exercise more" but is there an easier way? Isn't there an equivalent of nicotine patches, or electronic cigarettes? What about acupuncture? I asked acupuncturist Ann Bruen if acupuncture could be the answer to the weight loss issue. She tells me that acupuncture can assist weight loss especially where there is fluid retention and low energy levels. Points are used to stimulate the will power and advice on nutrition and supplements is given.

Ann came to acupuncture and homeopathy through her own search for solutions to health problems within her own family over many years. She is a qualified pharmacist with knowledge of disease and medication and her studies in Limerick led to her accreditation as a fully qualified practitioner of traditional Chinese Acupuncture. Now she continues to work as a locum pharmacist and sees acupuncture and homeopathy as complimentary medicine which deals with everyday ailments, she explains: "Acupuncture is a system of medicine going back thousands of years and it is approved by the World Health Organisation. Using very fine sterile needles, specific points on the body are chosen. It has been scientifically proven, using CT scans of the brain, that by needling certain body points a reaction occurs in different areas of the brain. By stimulating the correct areas the body is encouraged to heal itself."

"Homeopathy is based on the age old theory of "Like curing Like" and was used in Roman and Greek medical practice. The prescription remedy chosen is specific to the individual rather than to the disease. So two people may present the same symptoms but will be given different remedies. I find



that Homeopathy is especially effective in treating childhood illness but its benefits are not confined to children.


In my experience, Acupuncture works wonderfully on physical/physiological level in a relatively short space of time while Homeopathy works energetically over a longer period of time."

While we hear of people going for acupuncture to help give up cigarettes, Ann has treated back pain, insomnia, facial rejuvenation and nausea from pregnancy. Acupuncture is highly recommended for infertility treatment. She has recently completed additional courses that specialise in the area of infertility.

Most clients come to Ann by word of mouth, having been referred by previous patients or their family members. Many come on a regular basis to maintain their good health and energy levels. "Some people come when all else has failed and while acupuncture and homeopathy are not miracle cures, the outcome has been successful in quite a number of cases."

Ann says, "I realise that when someone comes to me they are placing their trust in me. As a professional practicing in pharmacy for over 30 years, acupuncture for almost 20 years and homeopathy for 12 years I take this responsibility very seriously."

On the issue of cost, Ann says she has a standard fee for the first consultation and, depending on the duration of the treatment, a sliding-scale of fees apply. "I also have a discounted fee structure for senior citizens and medical card holders. Also, fees can also be recovered under certain private medical insurance plans," she said.

So, to get back to the original question of weight loss, acupuncture may not solve the problem, but it may very well kick-start the process. 

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## Book: A Window on The Past

A book on Ballinasloe and surrounding parishes will be published soon. The second of three volumes on the history and folklore of the parishes of Clonfert, the author Declan Kelly released the first volume, *Loughrea: A Parish History*, earlier this year. What makes this an eagerly awaited publication is the use of several images of the town from the 1940s by the late Rev Dr Kevin Egan, a local curate and later diocesan archivist. Many of the buildings depicted have since been demolished. The images have detailed captions, the result of 10 years research. Declan is an archaeologist and native of Creagh. The launch will be in Gullane's Hotel, date to be announced.

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# The Let's Get To Work Project



By Kevin O'Connor

The Let's Get to Work Project is an initiative by the Brothers of Charity Services. This Pobal funded project supports individuals with a disability to develop the skills and opportunities to access and participate in volunteering, work or education in the local area.

The Ballinasloe Let's Get to Work Project's Outreach Support Workers Sarah Reynolds and Carmel O'Neill are based in Church Hill. Their role is to support the Project's participants in developing their skills and to help them seek opportunities to obtain and maintain work. Project participants have the chance to access training and work experience and self-employment opportunities in a variety of areas of interest to them.

One of the project participants, Emer Hobbins, has been taking part in a work experience placement in the Railway Veterinary Clinic in Loughrea where she works with Siobhan in the Dog Grooming Studio every Thursday. Emer has recently

attended an Animal and Pet Care course in Athlone Community College. Emer is really enjoying putting her new found skills into practice in the Dog Grooming Studio. Emer said 'I really enjoy getting experience of dog grooming and meeting different breeds of dogs. Because I love dogs, I can really connect with each dog that I work with.'

"We really appreciate the great support the Project has received from local businesses and organisations who have facilitated the Project participants' work experiences and training over the past year. We would also really like to acknowledge the Project participants, whose enthusiasm and commitment has contributed so much to the success of the Project here in Ballinasloe," said Sarah Reynolds.

If you are interested in the Let's Get to Work Project or would like to get involved your support would be very much appreciated. For further details please contact Sarah or Carmel on 087 9154565.

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## Local Choir Wins National Prize

Ardscioil Mhuire Junior Choir were crowned National Champions in the Junior Post-Primary category of the 35th Annual Navan Choral Competition recently. The 52 member choir had stiff competition from schools like Alexandra College, Dublin, but achieved ultimate victory. Singing contrasting pieces, Westside story standard, *I Feel Pretty* and the traditional Irish piece *The Morning Lark in the Clear Air*, the choir was singled out for their inspired interpretation of the songs. Directors, Ms. Caroline Jackson and Ms. Maeve Higgins were overjoyed at the choir's success and praised the girls' dedication on their victorious return to Ballinasloe.



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# Shearwater New Staff Team

By Kevin O'Connor

The Carlton Shearwater Hotel welcomed over 300 delegates of the Irish Primary Principals' Networking Conference to Ballinasloe for two days for the first time in its history.

IPPN's Annual Deputy Principals' Conference brought deputy principals, education advocates, Department of Education officials and other education partners together annually in May. The event combines professional seminars, plenary sessions with keynote speakers of national and international renown along with time for professional engagement with colleagues and peers. Keynote addresses were delivered from Minister Ciarán Cannon, Fr. Peter McVerry and Brendan McCabe, IPPN President.

The Hotel will be hosting more business events this summer and looking forward to hosting delegates and guests for the summer season. Meanwhile General Manager Gareth McGuinness announced and welcomed the new management staff members.

## CATRIONA KEARNS - Assistant Spa Manager

Catriona Kearns is the new assistant spa manager at the C Spa in the Shearwater hotel. Catriona's experience ranges from owning her own beauty business to holding managerial roles in some of the top spa locations in Perth, Australia. While living in Australia, Catriona trained extensively in advanced skin treatments and body therapies, which further developed her level of expertise. Top brands that Catriona has worked with include *Elemis*, *Ultraceuticals*, *Uspsa*, *Advanced Skin Technology* and many more.

## CATRIONA CONDON - Sales & Marketing Manager

Catriona has worked in the hospitality and event sector for 11 years in the USA. She moved back to Westmeath in 2004, setup and ran her own wedding and event planning business for almost seven years. She later moved into the hospitality industry and served as the Sales Manager for the *Fitzpatrick Lifestyle Group* in Dublin.



## LILY FORBES-FOULGER - Operations Manager

Newly appointed Operations Manager Lily Forbes-Foulger brings over 30 years of experience in the Hospitality industry to the Facility. A native of west Cork Lily attended the Cathal Brugha Street Catering College in Dublin, went to New York for 2 years and spent the next 17 years working for Fitzpatrick's Hotel Dynasty in Cork at the *Silver Springs* where she was Deputy Manager. In 1996 Lily moved to the *Shannon Oaks Hotel* in Portumna for the next 16 years. She had a brief spell at the *Castletroy Park Hotel* in Limerick before coming to work at the Shearwater.

## SINEAD CRAUGHWELL - Reservations & Events Manager

Revenue Manager Sinead Craughwell brings over 16 years experience from the Hotel industry. She hails from Galway City and earned her qualification in GMIT where Sinead managed in the *Great Southern Hotel*, Eyre Square for over 10 years. She moved to *Galway Bay Golf and Country Club* Oranmore for 2 years as rooms divisions manager. Her qualifications then brought her as Front Office/Revenue Manager in the *Station House Hotel* in Clifden. After working in Galway Hotels she was then promoted to Revenue Manager at *Bewleys Hotel* Dublin airport where she gained vast experience of a large 500 bedrooomed property.

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# Creagh Training Centre Takes A Ballinasloe Mayor's Award

By Philip O'Connor

Excitement is building in Creagh Training Centre's soccer club as it prepares to send three of its athletes to the Special Olympics Ireland Games taking place in Limerick this summer. Sinnitta Finnerty, Nikita Cosgrove and Caroline Lynch are the three lucky Ballinasloe natives who will be toting out for Team Connacht at this year's games which are being held from the 12th-15th June 2014.

"I am just so delighted to have been selected. It will be a great experience for me as I was never involved in anything like this before" said Nikita Cosgrove. Her teammates and fellow club members Sinnitta Finnerty and Caroline Lynch are really looking forward to getting to travel to Limerick and spending time with "their favourite coach, Johanna!" Two other athletes from the club were selected to play with Team Connacht, namely Damien O'Grady and Lorraine Geehan, but they are unable to take up their places.

Johanna Lahart, one of the club's coaches and co-founding members, will be accompanying the girls to Limerick, having been selected as head coach for Team Connacht. A head coach in 2010 and part of the Team Ireland squad at the World Games in Athens in 2011, she is only too aware of what lies ahead for the girls. "The Limerick Games will be an amazing experience for the athletes, the atmosphere, the sportsmanship and the new friends they will make. It really is a life altering event," said Johanna.

The club has received a real morale boost in recent times, winning the coveted Sports, Recreation, Children and Youth Award at the recent Ballinasloe Mayors Awards 2014. "It's always good to have your achievements publically recognised, especially at such a prestigious local event." said Philip O'Connor, who is also a coach, representing the club on the night.



Dr Martin McAleese, Fionnuala Treacy, President Mary McAleese and Tony Cannon at a special ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin to mark the great achievements of Team Ireland at the European Games in Warsaw, Poland in 2010. (Photo: Sportsfile).

The club was set up ten years ago in 2004 by Johanna and Philip, both instructors with the HSE run Creagh Training Centre, a centre in Ballinasloe for adults with intellectual disabilities and mental health difficulties. Through their work they recognised a need for increased participation in recreational activity among their service users. The club started with only a handful of players and has since grown to some 20 members today.

There is an active men's and a women's team who take part in weekly training sessions as well as regularly scheduled Special Olympics soccer events throughout the year.

The club has had numerous successes down through the years. In 2006, a mere two years after its formation, two athletes from the club were selected to play for Team Connacht in the Special Olympics Ireland Games in Belfast. Having won this competition, these players then went on to represent their country as part of the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai, China in 2007.



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(L-R) Sinnitta Finnerty, Nikita Cosgrove, Johanna Lahart (Head coach) and Caroline Lynch

Christine Kelly, one of the chosen players at the time, recalls the occasion vividly. 'I just couldn't believe it! It was my first time ever on a plane. I was so nervous! But once I was over there I really enjoyed the games. I made loads of friends and even got a hug from Ian Dempsey!' she said.

In 2010, another of the club's members, Fionnuala Treacy, was selected to play for Team Ireland in the European Summer Games held in Warsaw, Poland. 'I really enjoyed the experience' said Fionnuala, 'and on our return, I got invited to meet President Mary McAleese in Áras an Uachtaráin. That was a very special day for me.'

2010 also saw the club had five athletes selected to play for Team Connacht at the Ireland Games in Limerick, with three of these going on to play for their country in the world Games held in Athens, Greece in 2011. With all these successes under



Christine Kelly pictured with Ian Dempsey, Today FM broadcaster and Special Olympics Ambassador, at the World Summer Games in Shanghai, China in 2007.

their belt, it is little wonder that coaches and players of Creagh Training Centre Soccer Club are waiting in eager anticipation of the big games taking place in Limerick this month (June).

Despite the chock-a-block trophy cabinet, coaches Johanna and Philip are keen to point out that its contents play only a small part in the clubs overall achievements. "The real measure of our club's success can be seen in the difference participation has made to our member's lives", said Philip. 'They are healthier, happier people. They get to socialise and make new friends. They become more recognised and respected members of their local community and they get to travel and experience different cultures.'

## Creagh Cemetery Renovation Works

In January 2013 Creagh Community Dev. Council embarked on a Cemetery Enhancement project which involved the erection of 45 fallen headstones and restoration of over 80 graves that had fallen into disrepair, the vast majority belonging to extinct families. The headstones were restored by Dolphin Stoneworks, Aughrim and the graves were repaired by Creagh Council. The overall cost will be approximately €26,000 (€5,800 of which was a grant supplied by the Town Council). Mass will be celebrated in the Cemetery on Sunday, July 6th @ 12 noon by Bishop John Kirby. (Full report to follow in our August edition)



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# Songfest Set For Gullane's



By Kevin O'Connor

For the second year running *Songfest* is taking place on 8th June in Gullanes Hotel, hosted by the BARA Singers. The event offers an afternoon of song and friendship from a practical pop up choir.

Starting at 3pm, the afternoon features Choirs and singing groups from Active Retirement groups all over the Western Region. Anticipated Groups from as far afield as Foxford, our own local voices and all points in between will give a total group of over 50 under the direction of Noel Madden, with musical accompaniment by our own Marie Power.

Typical well-known numbers from Ragtime, the Musicals, Traditional Airs, Classical and indeed contemporary will make up the programme which could be compared to The Voice of the World. Admission is €10 and proceeds will go to the Make a Wish Foundation Charity.



## Happiness is Connecting with People

By Maureen Cahalan

Capturing someone's attention is relatively easy, holding their attention takes a completely different set of behaviours and respectful manners. Our intentions do matter, however it is how they are received that matter most, negatively received can have avoidable but serious consequences.

The three hats most of us want to wear are health, happiness and love. Everything else should take second fiddle, yet sometimes, everything else restricts our vision. We are born with our hands clenched, symbolising a readiness for life. At the end, they are always open, affirming that our flight through life has landed, the distance between is called a lifetime. One of the secrets to progressing in life is the ability to connect. We have to take the first step, as this shows intent on our part. People respect people who make a genuine effort. Learning the art of appropriate 'pleasantries' always works with a warm approach, the technique always endears and builds relationships.

With a genuine and sincere approach, we have nothing to be afraid of. People typically respond when we are more open and light-hearted. It's comforting to know that health, happiness and love are within our reach; we just have to grasp and hold on to them. Best of luck to all.

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# New *Fusion* Restaurant Opens



Staff, Helen, Harry, Raymond and Lillian Chieng.

## By Kevin O'Connor

A new restaurant has opened up in the middle of town, specialising in homemade Malaysian food, but also bringing together a wide array of cuisines from around the world. "We specialise in authentic Malaysian home cooking, but we brought other foods we experienced from around the world into our menu as well. We have dishes from Paris, Italy, all around the world that we love ourselves, and enjoy cooking," said Raymond Chieng.

Raymond, 32, is originally from Malaysia, and is married to Lillian, who is originally from Shanghai. They have a young son,

Isaac who is just over three-years-old, and are expecting another baby girl in the next few weeks. "I lived and worked in Ballinasloe for many years, so I know the town and think it's a great place to work," said Lillian, who is a Chartered Accountant and Tax Consultant. "The people are very nice and friendly, so when we heard that there was an opportunity to start our business here, we were eager to set up." Raymond recently qualified as a Software Designer from AIT, but got experience in the food industry his uncles restaurant JiaJia in Athlone. Fusion is a 70 seat restaurant, and is capable of hosting parties of up to 40 or 50 people, and welcomes

Communions and Confirmations as well as Hen Parties and other events. "More and more people are looking to hold their events locally, and we're happy to accommodate any size party," said Lillian. "Also, seeing as how we have youngsters ourselves, we have made the effort to make it kid-friendly. We have booster seats and baby-chairs, and plastic cutlery for families with small children. That said, we really encourage feedback, and do all we can to meet the high standards people expect of us."

Freshness is key in Fusion, so it's no surprise that they source the food from local suppliers. "There are some ingredients and spices that can't be found in Ireland, but wherever possible, we go local," said Raymond. Their delivery service is focussed on bringing the food to you freshly made, with minimal time being spent between the food leaving the wok and arriving to your door.

"Our guideline with the food is that it must be to a quality you'd be happy to feed your own family," said Raymond. "We try to remember our customers' specific needs. For example, one of our customers prefers red peppers to green, so we're happy to make everything the way people like it."

Fusion Restaurant can be found on Facebook, and will have a webpage up and running soon enough. In the meantime, they can be contacted on 090 964 5419.

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# Last Meeting of Town Council

By Kevin O'Connor

The nine elected members and the Executive met for the very last time, bringing to an end over 173 years of direct democratic control of the town's affairs by salaried officials and elected representatives, on 20th May.

The Town Commissioners came into being in 1841 and the first meeting was called by order of the Lord Lieutenant at Craig's Hotel on February 22nd. Their first responsibility was the public lighting of the town and a gas works. On the 16th March 1880 Ballinasloe was constituted an Urban Sanitary District and in 1897 the Urban Council was established.

And so that evening the Ghosts of recent and not so recent events, campaigns, personalities hung in the air as the councillors took their seats on the semi circle desks: Gerry Broderick, Aiden McGrath, Cathal Concannon, Michael Breathnach, Lucy Loyd Keighrey, Johnny Walsh, Carmel Greally and Pat O'Sullivan.

On the raised bench under the Crest (soon to be consigned with the Mayoral Chain to the Heritage zone of the new Library) sat Senior Staff Officer Ann Power, Caitriona Morgan Town Clerk, Mayor Michael Kelly, Director of Services Kevin Kelly, County Council Manager Martina Maloney and Town Engineer Adrian Headd. The minutes of the last meeting are to be posted on Galway County Councils official site but it was



a countdown from 7.30pm all the way to an exhausting 10.55pm finish where what seemed a modest agenda took an age, as the devil is always in the detail.

After an Agreed Adjournment owing to the sad passing of Cllr. Greally's husband Jimmy, the minutes and then the formal affairs started. Members and Executive sought to bring clarity on what assets that the Town was transferring to the County Council. A whopping balance sheet of houses, land, facilities, offices, yards, etc. etc and cash balances totalling €84 million (along with the liabilities) are being taken in hand by the County on the 10th of June. Much was made that the Town Enhancement project is still being stalled by the inability of the new Semi-State Irish Water to agree to the proposals, a mere 45 years on when the concept of revisiting the towns Victorian water and sanitation infrastructure was first mooted!

It emerged almost €10.8 million has been ring fenced for the Capital projects namely the €4.6million for the Library, the

conclusion of the Capital Grants Scheme, the Town Enhancement (including the sewer and water mains upgrade, the development of the Convent Gardens and inner relief road to the rear of Society Street, linking to the rear of Gullanes hotel and the development of the Riverside walks, the Track Building. The balance of a €22 million cash fund will be maintained by the County to ensure that necessary remediation works to the landfill site can occur. It was very unsatisfactory for the members not knowing exactly what services and personnel would remain in the Civic Offices which will now become the new Municipal District Office but assurances were given that car taxing and rent payments would still be made at the premises.

It was interesting to see the nine councillors all unanimous in wishing to dispose on favourable terms some land to the Gaelscoil but being thwarted by Standing Orders. The best they could do was to pass a final unanimous resolution that the County Council would look favourably at their first meeting on completing the transaction.

A taste perhaps of the hard realities of the years ahead where instead of being fully in control, we will be petitioning the bigger Authority for our needs. The usual speeches were read into the record from the Mayor, the Managers and members expressing sadness and also a hope that the new authority would work for the betterment of the formal county town.



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# Hospital Watch

By Colm Croffy

In the wake of the forced closure of the 22 beds in St. Brigids, after an investment €3.2 million and as peoples worst fears are being stoked with no one in the district (including many public representatives) believing the HSE or Senior Government Politicians on the future of Maternity Services, Life will provide an update in each edition on the 200 Bed facility.

Our acute general and maternity hospital is one of three in the Galway and Roscommon University Hospital Group and one of the six public hospitals in the Northwestern Health Board area. Facts are hard to come by as all staff in HSE land have effectively been gagged, but there are plenty of retired health care professionals in our community who will help illuminate some of the inconsistencies of approach by Officialdom.


Ours is one of two in the Tri Hospital Campus that offers 24 hour Casualty or A&E. Since Roscommons' A&E closed some years ago, over 12% of an increase of patients have used our local hospital. There is an internal report on "Reconfiguration of A&E services that will remove the 24 hour service to an 8 to 8 rostered one. The last five internal HSE Reports all insist that the journey duration from Ballinasloe to the UCHG Campus is 40 minutes!

The Minister for Health speaks regularly about the money in the system following the patient despite an increase in activity and especially in A&E usage - there has been NO increase in budget for our local hospital. The official record of the Dáil is interesting; Deputy Ulick Burke warned back in 2009 that the Emergency and Maternity services are under real threat. That has not changed. Out of 45 Public Acute and General Hospitals ranked by Ratemyhospital.ie Portiuncula was rated 9th out of 45 countrywide last year. The Average score on this system (voted by users) was 64%, Portiuncula scored 83% whilst the largest hospital in our group, UCHG, scored 65%.

In Maternity Study Analysis done by the same site, it ranked Portiuncula 2nd in the country to the Private Mount Carmel

Hospital in Dublin for Maternity Services. The internal confidential report presented to staff at the Hospital just before the election was briefed to UCHG staff some three weeks previous; it recommends 6 options for reconfiguration of Maternity Services, all but one (the do nothing option) feature the closure of the Maternity Unit as we know it. The report uses erroneous demographic data, incorrect journey times, population assessments completely at odds with the spatial strategy and other more recent CSO derived reports. It uses models of maternity practice from peripheral parts of the UK and Scotland for evidence.

The report grudgingly admits A) Portiuncula's beds in Maternity are the most utilised at 87 % in all of the five units, B) Portiuncula's Maternity have more births per consultant and C) It has more cost effective deliveries. The report concludes "the current level of activity at each of the sites is decreasing with the exception of Portiuncula."

The Board of the HSE West are proceeding to consult with stakeholders, staff and patient groups on how best to move forward in the light of less available resources and the European Time Directive for Junior Doctors. 

## SOME FACTS

Sold as Public Hospital Catchment Area	2006 East Galway, South Westmeath, Roscommon. Also Offaly, North Tipperary, Longford - 156,000. U.C.H.G. 1 96,000
Staff Numbers	650 Approx
Total Budget (Public/ Private)	€55 million
Wage Roll Annualised	€45 million
Number of Births Annually	2053
Number of Patients Treated	55,000 per annum
Regular Beds	180
Day care beds	20
Average Cost to HSE per birth according to "High level Review of Maternity Service in WNW"	€3,673 U.C.H.G. €5,059
Trolley Watch (INO compiled figures for people in trolleys admitted via A&E) to end of May 2014.	278 U.C.H.G. 1348

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# Musical Society Byrne Scoops National AIMS Nomination

By Kevin O'Connor

Ballinasloe Musical Society are tickled pink that one of their longstanding members has received the highest accolade with the Association of Irish Musical Societies (AIMS) for his role as Gerald Bolingbroke in their acclaimed *Me and My Girl*.

After ten years on the stage for B.M.S. Patrick Byrne is delighted spooked by all the attention and is looking forward to the trek with many fans, to the Awards Weekend in Killarney. Many previous roles include: *Diesel*, *West Side Story*; *Tinman*; *The Wiz*; *Eugene*, *Crazy for You*; *Luther Billis*, *South Pacific*; *Cogsworth*, *Beauty and the Beast*; *Pirate King*, *The Pirates of Penzance*.

He is also a member of Relays Drama Group, The Acorn Theatre Company, No Fixed Abode Drama Group and has featured in numerous plays with each group. Patrick likes to get involved with the set building side of things too. More recently he has broken into Film by doing a short film (*Space Mag*) Big River Films (UK). Reign-Pilot shot in Cong, Mayo. 1916 Seachtar Dearthadta-Abú Media. Feature film trailer for Two Joker Films-Dublin.

He first got bitten for stage when his Society stalwart friend Bernie Dudgeon asked him to take part in *West Side Story* as Diesel in 2004. The rest as they say is history. He credits his love of stage and musical performance to his love of mimicry and a great enthusiasm for making people laugh!



Amongst the Directors that he enjoyed working and honing his craft were Simon Cannon, Mary McDonagh, Peter Kennedy, Majella Flanagan and Paul Norton and in the drama world credits Liam Curley and Eamon O'Donohue as being hugely positively influences.

"If by any chance I do win the award in Killarney I will be dedicating it to my late father as I know he would be very proud of me. To the youth in the town and surrounding areas I would encourage them to get involved in the Arts as it is a great way of meeting new friends and great for your confidence. Never give up your dreams."

Patrick a qualified Carpenter by trade and is married to Siobhan (nee Minton) and is rearing a family of two boys Patrick and Eoin. BMS also warmly congratulated Creagh Native Declan Kelly for his AIMS Nomination with the Patricians of Galway's presentation of *The Producers*, in his portrayal as Franz Leibkind as Best Comic Actor.

The president Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina issued an invitation to Members of AIMS to an afternoon Garden Party at Aras an Uachtarain in July. Members from Ballinasloe Musical Society will be attending on the day, along with members of Musical Societies from all over the country.

The Society have announced their new show for March 2015 where the Charles Addams' family comes to devilishly delightful life in a new Musical Comedy, *The Addams Family*.

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# Take A Deep Breath... and Play Rihanna!

By Kevin O'Connor

Fergal D'Arcy and John Mulvihill are two young, creative entertainers from Ballinasloe who have taken a pipedream about a Ballinasloe based documentary on DJs and created something special. *DJ Diaries* was launched in May of this year and has received a lot of attention from national media, including Her.ie and Potatoe.ie.

The webisodes are based loosely on fact, with a sprinkle of fiction and a dash of home based Ballinasloe humour. The first episode, *The Joys Of...*, explores both sides of the DJ Booth and the ridiculous challenges one can face with the merriment of revellers.

Fergal broadcasts daily on iRadio and earlier this year he picked up the Silver PPI Radio Award for Best Music Programme. When we asked him how he got into DJing, he said "On my eight birthday, I got a Fisherprice tape recorder and spent the majority of my time listening to Atlantic 252 recording songs and presenting shows with teddy bears. I always knew I was going to end up shouting and roaring for a living."

John has being DJing locally for the better half of two decades and is always a favourite for parties, clubs and community events. A lesser known fact is that he has always been passionate



about video production and editing. "When everyone else spent their confirmation money on bikes, clothes and Nike Air Max, all I wanted was a camcorder," he said.


The fusion of both music, as a form of expression and multimedia, has allowed the duo to now share their experiences with everyone else. But what started as a pipe dream couldn't have evolved to its current form without support from the locals in town. "We owe a lot to other DJs in town who encouraged us along the way. Ballinasloe has a lot of talent and we're a town that knows how to keep people entertained," said John.

"As a town, we've been hit hard; three factories closed, St Brigids is virtually gone and Portciuncula looks like it's on the way out. It's hard to believe, but when the locals saw *DJ Diaries*, they all

got onto us, saying 'Well done lads! This is great for the town!' If our webisodes give the natives one bit of hope, John and I are in it for the long haul. The more people we can get involved the better," said Fergal.

"There's a huge amount of goodwill in Ballinasloe, people want to get involved. As track records go, Ballinasloe has always been a breeding ground for new talent and this doesn't happen by accident," said Fergal. "Take Eoghan Costello and Bryan Mulrey, (the younger version of John and Fergal's characters 'Fox' and 'Wooly'), both of these guys played lead roles in the Pantomime and musical this year. I tip my hat to them. We've seen what positive publicity can do for a town, all you have to do is drive to Boyle and see what Mooneboy has done for their town. Our vision is to do the same for Ballinasloe."

Episode two, *The New Housemate*, is currently in pre-production and they are recruiting actors right now. To get involved you can contact the lads on facebook at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCiTp5-H-OwdrMFbtHuErpKw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiTp5-H-OwdrMFbtHuErpKw)

Both John and Fergal regularly gig in Ballinasloe between An Táin, The Ould Sod, East and Thee Place. Watch their first webisode at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HncO411wNOY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HncO411wNOY) or simply look up *DJ Diaries* on Youtube. 

## Battle of Aghrim Centre

The Battle of Aghrim Interpretative Centre opens again in June. Along with a coffee shop, an interactive exhibition, with a film, story panels and a model battlefield. The centre also has local arts and crafts for sale. The centre also carries the late Martin Joyce's battlefield artefacts collection. There are Childrens activities, free parking and baby changing facilities as well as maps for the 10K battlefield route that can be guided, cycled or driven. They also launch a new *Heritage Bites* programme. For more info, call 090 967 3939 or visit [www.galway.ie/battleofaghrim](http://www.galway.ie/battleofaghrim). Open Tues- Sat 10.30 to 4pm and Sun 2-5pm.





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# New Library Begins

(L-R): PJ Clancy (Town Foreman), Kevin Kelly (Town Manager), Cllr. Lucy Lloyd-Keighery, Cllr. Carmel Grealy, Mayor Mike Kelly, Cllr. Gerry Broderick, Cllr. Michael Breathnach, Caitriona Morgan (Town Clerk), Peter Rabbitt (County Librarian), Adrian Headd (Town Engineer).

By Kevin O'Connor

Contracts were formally signed last month between Galway County Council and Clancy Construction from Thurles, Co. Tipperary to develop the former Mercy Sisters Convent and Chapel complex of buildings at Society Street, Ballinasloe which will enable the sustainable future use of these protected buildings as a Public Library and Gallery Space.

The proposed works will accommodate a new Library within the ground floor of the refurbished terraced houses and chapel structure along with a new extension to the rear. The refurbished Chapel at first floor level will be used as a public gallery/function space. The new library and public gallery will be connected by a new purpose built linking structure. The two upper floors of the terraced houses will be refurbished and developed for office and ancillary uses.

The new Library when completed will provide for a modern, inviting and bright reading and activity space but at the same time complementing the existing architectural heritage of the Chapel and Convent Buildings. The construction works which are due to commence within the next few weeks at a build cost

of €3.3m will take approximately 14 months to complete. In 2006, the Town Council purchased the Convent for less than €3.m with a view to Galway County Council refurbishing and developing the buildings for use as a branch library. During 2013, Ballinasloe Town Council allocated the lionshare of the funding required for this project from the Council's own Capital Programme. Funding was also received from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for the design phase of this project.

In one of its final public acts the Ballinasloe Town Council presented a plaque to the County Manager of Galway County Council, Ms. Martina Moloney at the site for the new library project to acknowledge the support and funding from Ballinasloe Town Council towards the new Library and restoration project.

The Convent Complex was evacuated by the Nuns in 2004 and sold two years later. The Church was designed by the famed County Surveyor James Kempster and built in 1864 on the grounds of an old Cavalry Barracks on the street that was often known as Soldiers Row before it took the modern day title of Society Street.

# New Track Building Sod Turned

By Kevin O'Connor

Just before the abolition of the Town Council, they and David Langan Construction signed contracts for the construction of the new Athletics Clubhouse in Dunlo. A new clubhouse will include changing rooms, shower facilities, toilets and storage.

Mayor Mike Kelly said it was an honour to turn the first sod. The construction will cost €106,000 and will take approximately 16 weeks to complete, so all going to plan the new Athletics Clubhouse will be ready and open by the end of September. €50,000 of the funding came from the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, with the remainder of the funding and the site itself being provided by Ballinasloe Town Council.

At the moment, the park comprises a 400m running track along with a community pitch contained within the inner area of the track, which is open late in the evenings from 5pm to 8pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. The Club house caps out a total of expenditure of over €6million on sports, recreation and leisure facilities in the Dunlo/Brackernagh area over the past decade between the Council, the Soccer Club, the GAA and the Athletics clubs with support from Leader, Rapid, Dept of Sport, Lottery funding and the clubs own fundraising efforts.

As a result of the huge investment and integrated planning in a primary residential area the town now boasts one the most modern sports and recreational zones in a town centre in the country. There are plans by the Executive and the various groups using the facility to host Connacht Championships and other hallmark Athletics meets in the track when the final sports markings are incorporated into the site.



Stephen Connell (Ballinasloe Community Resources), Anne Burke (Athletics Club), Mayor Mike Kelly, Kevin Kelly (Town Manager), Laura Naughton, John Boland & Deirdre Hogan (Ballinasloe Active Retirement), Caitriona Morgan (Town Clerk).

A talented athlete who uses these new track facilities is 17-year-old Veronica Burke. She will soon compete in the National Race Walking Championship, where look to add to her already impressive collection of medals. These include a gold in the The Aviva Connaught Schools Track and Field Championships Senior Girls 3K Race Walk. The English Championship U17 5km last September. Even more recently, she had the honour of representing Ireland in Prague in a 10km in April as part of the Irish team.



Veronica won another National Medal in March at the All-Ireland Indoor Juvenile Track & Field Championships at Athlone IT. She put in an electrifying performance to win the silver medal in the U19 Girls 1500m Walk, adding to the gold medal from the Connacht Championships. She also brought home a gold medal in the Isle of Man U20 5K.

# JUNE Events Guide

<b>1st JUNE</b>		
Black Shadow	Downey's	8pm
Washout	Maud Millars	8pm
Pillar House Trad Session	Pillar House	6pm
Hickory Wind	Pillar House	10pm
Jason Travers, Tom Maguire, Fiona Ennis	Carlton Shearwater	9pm
Galway Community Games	Ballinderrin	All Day
The Madden Family Band	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm
Sara O'Keane	Joe's Bar	9pm
<b>2nd JUNE</b>		
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	9pm
Charity Day Ballinasloe Eagles	Golf Club	All Day
Charity Eagles Day	Golf Club	All Day
Galway Community Games	Ballinderrin	All Day
The Pink Panther	An Táin	8pm
<b>3rd JUNE</b>		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
<b>4th JUNE</b>		
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
<b>5th JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
The Thursday jam session	Maud Millars	10pm
Lady Captain's Mixed Foursomes	Golf Club	All Day
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
<b>6th JUNE</b>		
Paddy Hughes - Healer	Gullane's Hotel	1-8pm
Red Tape	Maud Millars	10pm
The Trouble Clefs (Juniors)	Haydens Hotel	5-6pm
The Trouble Clefs (Seniors)	Haydens Hotel	7-8pm
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
Rite of Reconciliation	St Michaels Church	Various
The Beahan Family and Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
Junior Disco	The Auld Sod	8.30pm
Karaoke Night and Jive lessons,	The Auld Sod	10pm
<b>7th JUNE</b>		
Good Ole Trusty	Maud Millars	10pm
Ultan Conlon	Pillar House	10pm
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
Galway Gospel Choir	St Brendan Church Eyrecourt	7pm
Wallop the Cat Downstairs	An Táin	9.30pm
Live DJ Upstairs	An Táin	9.30pm
The Sauce Mechanics	The Auld Sod	9pm
Gaegan Pagans	Joe's Bar	9pm
<b>8th JUNE</b>		
BARA Singers & Friends	Gullane's Hotel	3pm
Sharon Turley	Downey's	8pm
The Deans	Maud Millars	8pm
Noreen Kenny Lady Captain's Prize	Golf Club	All Day
Trad Session	Pillar House	6pm
Jim Devine	Carlton Shearwater	All Day
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
Mass with Blessing of Children	St Michaels Church	12.15pm
Mass	St Michaels Church	All Day
Toddlers disco	The Auld Sod	2-4pm
Trad session	The Auld Sod	6pm
Sarah O'Keane	The Auld Sod	9pm
Think Big	Joe's Bar	9pm
<b>9th JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
<b>10th JUNE</b>		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
Sacrament of the Sick	St Michaels Church	4pm
<b>11th JUNE</b>		
Novena 7.30am, 10am & 8pm	St Michaels Church	Various
Breton Welcome Evening	Eyrecourt Community Centre	7.30pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
<b>12th JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
NCBRI Open Day	Golf Club	
<b>13th JUNE</b>		
Paddy Hughes - Healer	Gullane's Hotel	1-8pm
Strange Brew	Maud Millars	10pm
The Trouble Clefs (Juniors)	Haydens Hotel	5-6pm
The Trouble Clefs (Seniors)	Haydens Hotel	7-8pm
Seán Keane (€20)	Pillar House	8.30pm
The Beahan Family and Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
Karaoke, Jive lessons	The Auld Sod	
<b>14th JUNE</b>		
Beggars Velvet	Maud Millars	10pm
Noreen Kenny Lady Captain's Prize	Golf Club	9pm
The Chillbillies	Pillar House	10pm

Hickory Wind	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm
The Woodbines	The Auld Sod	
Ollie Rocks	Joe's Bar	
<b>15th JUNE</b>		
Dollar Daly	Downey's	8pm
Macey South	Maud Millars	8pm
Lady Captain's Consolation Prize	Golf Club	
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Mick Flavin	Carlton Shearwater	
Live trad	The Auld Sod	6pm
Sway	Joe's Bar	
<b>16th JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	9pm
EGCS Public Information Evening	Gullane's Hotel	7-9pm
<b>17th JUNE</b>		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Lady Captain's Consolation Prize	Golf Club	
<b>18th JUNE</b>		
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
<b>19th JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
The Thursday Live Sessions	Maud Millars	10pm
<b>20th JUNE</b>		
Paddy Hughes - Healer	Gullane's Hotel	1-8pm
Washout	Maud Millars	10pm
Trouble Clefs (Juniors)	Haydens Hotel	5-6pm
Trouble Clefs (Seniors)	Haydens Hotel	7-8pm
The Beahan Family and Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
Karaoke with Frank Nestor	The Auld Sod	9pm
<b>21st JUNE</b>		
Live Music TBC	Maud Millars	10pm
Chris Nash	Pillar House	10pm
The Big Lad	An Táin - Downstairs	6-9pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	6-9pm
Live Music with "Big Deal"	The Auld Sod	9pm
DJ Alan	Joe's Bar	9pm
<b>22nd JUNE</b>		
Shane Moore	Downey's	8pm
Imposter	Maud Millars	8pm
Open Week Golf Club	Golf Club	All week
Trad Session	Pillar House	6pm
Gerry Guthrie	Carlton Shearwater	9pm
Trad Session	The Auld Sod	9pm
Live Music TBC	The Auld Sod	9pm
Buzz the Agent	Joe's Bar	9pm
<b>23rd JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	9pm
<b>24th JUNE</b>		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
<b>25th JUNE</b>		
Trad session	An Táin	10pm
<b>26th JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
<b>27th JUNE</b>		
Feile Peil	Annaghdown	5.40/7pm
Jig Jam	Maud Millars	10pm
Trouble Clefs (Juniors)	Haydens Hotel	5-6pm
Trouble Clefs (Seniors)	Haydens Hotel	7-8pm
Irelands Great Famine Conference	Carlton Hotel	9.30am
The Beahan Family and Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
Karaoke and Jive lessons	The Auld Sod	
<b>28th JUNE</b>		
Feile Peil	Ballinasloe	11am
Feile Peil	Annaghdown	4pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars	10pm
Ultan Conlon	Pillar House	10pm
Great Famine (Conference)	Carlton Hotel	9.30am
Live Music (Downstairs bar)	An Táin	9.30am
Live Dj (Upstairs bar)	An Táin	9.30am
Night Owls	The Auld Sod	Slider
<b>29th JUNE</b>		
Night Owls	Dowley's	8pm
Tug Of War National Finals	Clontuskert Field	1-5pm
Feile Peil	Ballyhaunis	10am/2pm
The Nudie Suits	Maud Millars	8pm
Trad Session	Pillar House	6pm
Robert Mizzell	Carlton Shearwater	9pm
Trad Session	The Auld Sod	6pm
The Sauce Mechanics	The Auld Sod	9pm
<b>30th JUNE</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars	9pm



# JULY Events Guide

Open Week Golf Club	Golf Club	All Day
Tiny Tots Summer Camp	Tiny Tots Creche	9am-1pm
Starcamp	Town Hall Theatre	9am-2.30pm
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard	10am-2pm
<b>1st JULY</b>		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Tiny Tots Summer Camp	Tiny Tots Creche	9am-1pm
Starcamp	Town Hall Theatre	09-14.30
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard	10am-2pm
<b>2nd JULY</b>		
Tiny Tots Summer Camp	Tiny Tots Creche	9am-1pm
Starcamp	Town Hall Theatre	09-14.30
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard	10am-2pm
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
<b>3rd JULY</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
The Thursday jam session	Maud Millars	10pm
Tiny Tots Summer Camp	Tiny Tots Creche	9am-1pm
Starcamp	Town Hall Theatre	9-14.30
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard	10am-2pm
<b>4th JULY</b>		
Beggars Velvet	Maud Millars	10pm
Trouble Clefs Juniors	Haydens Hotel	5-6pm
Trouble Clefs Seniors	Haydens Hotel	7-8pm
Tiny Tots Summer Camp	Tiny Tots Creche	9am-1pm
Starcamp	Town Hall Theatre	9-14.30
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard	10am-2pm
The Beahan Family and Friends	An Táin	6-9pm
Karaoke and Jive lessons	The Auld Sod	
<b>5th JULY</b>		
Jig Jam	Maud Millars	10pm
Chris Nash	Pillar House	10pm
Wallop the Cat	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm
The Chaingang & The Crime	East Nightclub	9pm
Sarah O'Keane	Joe's bar	9pm
<b>6th JULY</b>		
Night Owl	Dowley's	8pm
Commemorative Mass	Creagh Cemetary	12pm
Loose rooster	Maud Millars	8pm
Trad Session	Pillar House	6pm
Michael English	Carlton Shearwater	9pm
Live music	The Auld Sod	9pm
Trad Session	The Auld Sod	6pm
Frank Dempsey	Joe's bar	9pm
<b>7th JULY</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Live acoustic session	Maud Millars	9pm
Cúl Camp	Ballinasloe GAA Club	All Day
<b>8th JULY</b>		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Open week Golf Club finish	Golf Club	9pm
Cúl Camp	Ballinasloe GAA Club	All Day
<b>9th JULY</b>		
Cúl Camp	Ballinasloe GAA Club	All Day
Trad Session	An Táin	10pm
<b>10th JULY</b>		
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel	11am
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
Cúl Camp	Ballinasloe GAA Club	ALL Day
<b>11th JULY</b>		
Strange brew	Maud Millars	10pm
The Trouble Clefs Juniors	Haydens Hotel	5-6pm
The Trouble Clefs Seniors	Haydens Hotel	7-8pm
Cúl Camp	Ballinasloe GAA Club	All Day
The Beahan Family and Friends	An Táin entertainment	6-9pm
Karaoke and Jive lessons	The Auld Sod	9pm
<b>12th JULY</b>		
Live Music	Maud Millars	10pm
Pink Panther Jazz Band	Pillar House	10pm
Live Music	An Táin - Downstairs	9.30pm
Live Music	An Táin - Upstairs	9.30pm
Live Music	The Auld Sod	
Gaegan Pagans	Joe's bar	
<b>13th JULY</b>		
David and Alan	Downey's	8pm
Imposter	Maud Millars	8pm
Trad Session: John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Patrick Feeney	Carlton Shearwater	9pm
Live trad session	The Auld Sod	6pm
Live music	The Auld Sod	
Slider	Joe's bar	

<b>14th JULY</b>			
Ciorcál Camhrá	Gullane's Hotel		7.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars		9pm
The Woodbines	The Auld Sod		9pm
<b>15th JULY</b>			
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel		9pm
<b>16th JULY</b>			
Trad Session	An Táin		10pm
<b>17th JULY</b>			
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel		11am
The Thursday Jam Session	Maud Millars		10pm
<b>18th JULY</b>			
Live music	Maud Millars		10pm
The Trouble Clefs Juniors	Haydens Hotel		5-6pm
The Trouble Clefs Seniors	Haydens Hotel		7-8pm
The Beahan Family and Friends	An Táin		6-9pm
Karaoke and Jive lessons	The Auld Sod		9pm
<b>19th JULY</b>			
Good Ole Trusty	Maud Millars		10pm
Captains Prize Joe Gaffney	Golf Club		9pm
Annual 3 Town Fundraising Cycle	The Birchgrove		1pm
Hickory Wind	Pillar House		10pm
Madden Family Band	An Táin - Downstairs		9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs		9.30pm
The Woodbines	The Auld Sod		9pm
Dave Byrnes	Joe's bar		9pm
<b>20th JULY</b>			
Live Music	Downey's		8pm
Washout	Maud Millars		8pm
Captains Prize Joe Gaffney	Golf Club		9pm
Trad Session	Pillar House		6pm
Mike Denver	Carlton Shearwater		9pm
Battle of Aughrim Re-enactment	Aughrim Village		All Day
Live Trad Session	The Auld Sod		6pm
Live music	The Auld Sod		9pm
Shark	Joes bar		9pm
Pat Cahill 6KM Fun Run/Walk	Aughrim Village		11am
<b>21st JULY</b>			
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel		7.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars		9pm
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
<b>22nd JULY</b>			
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel		9pm
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
<b>23rd JULY</b>			
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
Trad Session	An Táin		10pm
<b>24th JULY</b>			
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel		11am
The Thursday jam session	Maud Millars		10am
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
<b>25th JULY</b>			
Macey South	Maud Millars		10am
The Trouble Clefs Juniors	Haydens Hotel		5-6pm
The Trouble Clefs Seniors	Haydens Hotel		7-8pm
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
The Beahan family and friends	An Táin entertainment		6-9pm
Karaoke and Jive Lessons,	The Auld Sod		9pm
<b>26th JULY</b>			
The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars		10pm
Hickory wind	An Táin - Downstairs		9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin - Upstairs		9.30pm
Colm Galligan	The Auld Sod		9pm
DJ Bosco	Joes bar		9pm
<b>27th JULY</b>			
Shave Moore	Downey's		8pm
Loose rooster	Maud Millars		8pm
Ger Flynn	Pillar House		10pm
Mick Favin	Carlton Shearwater		9pm
Trad session	The Auld Sod		6pm
Live music	The Auld Sod		9pm
Sarah O'Keane	Joe's bar		9pm
<b>28th JULY</b>			
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel		7.30pm
Live Acoustic Session	Maud Millars		9pm
Trad Session	Pillar House		6pm
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
<b>29th JULY</b>			
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel		9pm
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
<b>30th JULY</b>			
Upriver Summer Camp	Croffy's Yard		10am-2pm
Trad session	An Táin		10pm
<b>31st JULY</b>			
Ciorcál Comhrá	Gullane's Hotel		11am

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

# CU Factor

By Kevin O'Connor

The final of the Ballinasloe *CU Factor* Talent Competition took place to a packed hall in Scoil on Croi Naofa recently. The 19 acts performing were chosen from auditions three weeks previous.

The performers ranged in age from 6 to 18 and comprised of 11 individual acts and 8 group acts. Each of the 19 performers must be complemented for their outstanding performances on the night. They treated the audience to a great night's entertainment of singing, dancing and music.

Five adjudicators were assigned with the most difficult task of selecting two acts to represent Ballinasloe in the Galway final on the 25th May in the Town Hall Theatre.

After much deliberation the adjudicators selected a local Dance group (Dancing Stars) from the Sarah Clogher School of Dancing as the winners. Amy Costello (10) who performed a Sean Nós dance routine was runner up on the night. Sarah Daly (17) from Kilconnell who sang John Legend's *All of You* finished in 3rd place. Aisling Kenny, Arlene Earls and Sheena Cannon (all 13 and from New Inn) finished in 4th place after performing a contemporary Irish dance routine with hurls. Brian Mullery (16), Michaela (17) and Lucian Brookes (18) all from Taughmaconnell charmed the audience with their rendition of *Wagon Wheel* and finished in 5th place. 6th place went to David Kennedy (12) from Eyrecourt who sang *Time To Say Goodbye*

MC Nigel Salmon and Chairman of Ballinasloe Credit Union William Duthie were fulsome in their praise for all 19 contestants. The adjudicators who had the difficult decision of selecting the winners were Fiona O'Leary, Frances Leahy, Martina Doherty, Patrick Byrne and Paul Drysdale. The Dancing Stars and Amy Costello will represent Ballinasloe Credit Union at the County Final on Sunday, 25th May in the Town Hall Theatre.



*Nigel Salmon MC and Shane McNeill Asst. Manager BCU with Sarah Clogher and her pupils the Dancing Stars: Anna Coen, Alison McManus, Lauren Byrne, Abbie Buchan, Maeve Casey, Michelle Gorovenco, Dariya Plaksiy, Niamh Costello, Millie Rushe, Clodagh Glennon, Aoibhinn Coughlan, Isabelle Madden, Kaytlin Flood, Hannah Kelly.*



*Amy Costello with Nigel Salmon MC and Shane McNeill Assistant Manager BCU*



*David Kennedy (6th) with Nigel Salmon MC and Shane McNeill Assistant Manager BCU*



*Aisling Kenny, Arlene Earls and Sheena Cannon (4th) with Nigel Salmon MC and Shane McNeill Assistant Manager BCU*



*Sarah Daly (3rd) with Nigel Salmon MC and Shane McNeill Assistant Manager BCU*



*Brian Mullery, Michaela and Lucian Brookes (5th) with Nigel Salmon MC and Shane McNeill Assistant Manager BCU*

# New Town Development Plans

By Kevin O'Connor

UK based company ACTION FOR MARKET TOWNS are being commissioned by B.A.C.D. to undertake a large-scale research, needs, benchmarking and Development Strategy for the town.

BACD are taking the lead role in coordinating and facilitating, with the support Galway County Council, The Chamber of Commerce, the Credit Union and the hinterland groups of South Roscommon and East Galway. This is a wider more European exercise than the restrictive 5 year Town Development Plans produced by the old Town Council.

Town Benchmarking addresses how to understand, develop, evaluate and ultimately improve the economic viability of towns and their hinterland. The approach has been used widely in the UK, since 2004 and captures Key Performance Indicators for town revitalisation. By using this information and comparing performance, formal strategies and action planning will be more focused and effective.


It is hoped we can build on our strengths and distinguish ourselves from competing commercial offerings of larger centres, out



*BACD Ltd Board Directors. Back L-R: Aidan McGrath, Cathal Concannon, Seamus Duffy (Chairman), Shane McNeill, Sean Fletcher, Micheal Dolan, Noel Madden, Dan Dowling & Joe Lyons. Front L-R: Tina Kelly, Lyn Donnelly (Manager) and Ann Conlon. inset: Paul Hargadon & Garrett McGuinness.*

of town retail and even online shopping. The plan will also look at educational, amenity, services, healthcare and sporting facilities.

Ensuring maximum engagement by all groups within the community and that organisations are sure on the key areas that we will be researching and focusing on a project coordinator has been engaged for the summer season to

prepare. Every group in the catchment area will be approached in the coming weeks for input and analysis. Chairman Seamus Duffy stated "This is one of the priority action items for our new Board elected at our AGM and we hope to be launching this Development Blue print on the town to the community and to the new Municipal District Council in Winter of this year." 

## Over 150-Year-Old Apple Tree




By Sean Tully

In 2007, I took five apples from the old tree at home to be identified at Seed Savers in Scariff, in County Clare. Our grandfather had told us the name and variety of the apples, but it had, unfortunately been forgotten.

The response from Seed Savers was: "The apples you left in to be identified would appear to be a variety that originally came from America and was on sale about 150 years ago. The variety appears to be 'American Mother,' or 'Mother,' and would have been sold by Nash's Nursery in town

That is probably where the tree was bought. The great Ballinasloe historian, Rory Kilduff told me that Nash's nursery was in River Street where the Crosby family residence is, in Millbrook house. That information confirms what our grandfather said, that the tree was there before he was born in 1876. The Fruit Expert, a book on fruit written by Dr D G Hessayon, an American publication, states that "it is an age old American variety introduced in to Britain over 150 years ago.

Eating qualities are excellent, sweet, juicy and distinctly aromatic. Despite its listing as a 'desert apple' it has long been a favourite for apple pies in the States. Growth habit is upright, Cropping is irregular and full sun is needed." This description fits perfectly, as we all remember the delicious tarts made over the years by our mother, sister and wives. 

# Last Ever Mayor's Awards Night

By Kevin O'Connor

The final ever Mayor's Awards took place in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel at the beginning of May. There was a total of six award categories, covering 'Social and Community Support,' 'Arts, Culture, Heritage & Environment,' 'Civic Pride,' 'Sports, Recreation, Children and Youth,' 'Special Recognition,' and 'Young Person.' The winners were chosen from those people who had received public nominations in March. Over 90 nominations were received in total. The first Mayor's Awards were held in 2008 and every two years since.

Galway East Life Support (GELS) won 'Social and Community Support' Award. GELS Chairman Gerry Roche and Secretary Arthur Carr accepted the award. Formed in February 2013, this is a great achievement for such a new organisation. "It's all about saving lives through education, prevention, awareness and support," said Gerry. "It means an awful lot to us, we've put in an awful lot of effort." Winning a Mayors Award is exactly the kind of recognition a group like this deserves and will certainly go a long way towards raising awareness for of the group and the work they do.

Ballinasloe Musical Society (BMS) won the 'Arts, Culture, Heritage & Environment' Award. BMS has been providing the people of Ballinasloe with an outlet to express themselves since 1923 and they received the award for the work they have done in promoting the arts and culture in the town. "it's a great boost for the society. Even though we are on the go a long time, it's great to be acknowledged," said Frances Leahy. "There's a huge team involved in this, with about 70 people in the society, all putting on an annual production." With their production of Me and My Girl just behind them and the Town Hall Theatre's new roof nearing completion, excitement is already building for their next show.

Carmel Grealy was the winner of the 'Civic Pride' Award. "I've been very much actively involved in my community for over 41 years, starting with the Community Games," said Carmel. "It means an awful lot to win a special Award like



this in your own town," she said. She is able to recall what made the Community Games in Ballinasloe such a success. "1973 was the first time we had Community Games here, when our famous rugby team won an All-Ireland Silver Medal. We had the likes of Gearoid Geraghty, Noel Mannion and my own son Seamus and a lot of others on that team. We also had a lovely girl called Mary Walsh who won a bronze medal in swimming that year. It was through her winning that the interest in building a new swimming pool in Ballinasloe began!" she said. Among many other things, she is also involved in the Tidy Towns Committee. "If you looked at all the positive things in our town, you'd see we have more positives than most towns of our size."

Creagh Training Centre Special Olympics Club were the winners of the 'Sports, Recreation, Children & Youth' Award. Philip O'Connor who received the Award on behalf of the club, said "We're proud to be part of Ballinasloe, especially representing a group of people that are often forgotten about - those that suffer from mental health issues and intellectual disability." The club has 20 members in Creagh, with the Connacht club having over 500 members. These club members will go on to represent Ireland at the All-Ireland games later in the year.

Seán Riddell won the 'Special Recognition' Award for his work with various sports teams throughout the years, one of his most recent achievements being that he coached the Ballinasloe GAA Junior Football Team to All-Ireland success in 2013. "Seeing the Town Council going is sad," he said. "Even though we might give out about it, they are there as our guardian." Sean spoke about community spirit of the town. "When we took on the journey with the Junior team and we got to the semi-final up in Cavan and the support was unreal. Then we got to the final and it's not like old times when I was growing up, when you'd hear the next day that the shops were out of milk, bread, sausages and rashers. This time, when we went to Croke Park, it didn't matter what sport you played or what you were, it was just the town together. It was about Ballinasloe, rather than just the team. That's probably the memory I'll have of all the sporting achievements until the day I go."

The final Award was picked up by Seamus Daly, who won the "Young Person's" Award. Seamus has done great work in the town for raising cancer awareness and has even set up several organisations to help to spread awareness and information about cancer. "Both my parents were diagnosed with cancer and in my Leaving Cert year I started PSA Ireland to raise funds and awareness for prostate cancer. I also gave a hand setting up and running East Galway Cancer Support," he said. "I moved to Ballinasloe from New Zealand when I was seven and I was welcomed into Ballinasloe. We have a great community here."

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Kevin Kelly (Director of Services), Mayor Mike Kelly, Gairiona Morgan (Town Clerk), Keith Finnegan Galway Bay FM.

"I instigated these Mayor's Awards back in 2008 as a way of recognising all the voluntary groups, Organisations and Clubs that do so much work on a voluntary basis in Ballinasloe," said Mayor Mike Kelly. "Unfortunately it's our last, but over the last 6 years a lot of people have, deservedly, won these Awards. The life of any town is community and when a community comes together and cooperate, it's amazing what they can get done. Ballinasloe is a great place to live, work and do business and with the abolition of the Town Council, cooperation is the key word we need to focus on now."

While the value of the voluntary work people undertake in town cannot be measured, the Mayor's Awards were a way of recognising and rewarding those individuals and clubs that took part in helping the community. A large attendance of well over 250 enjoyed the hospitality and were treated to some great music and singing from the *Music Matters* (New Inn), *Pink Panther Jazz Band*, David Kennedy and Rachel Goode. MC was Galway Bay FM's Keith Finnegan.



David Kennedy, Mayor Mike Kelly, Rachel Goode

## Shortlisted Nominees in Each Category

### SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This category covers a broad spectrum of activity from work with target groups such as people with disabilities and efforts made to support and integrate the elderly into the community. Individuals and groups contribute significantly to the fabric of our community through their work under this important heading.

- Ballinasloe Cancer Support Group
- Ballinasloe Mock Wedding Organising Committee
- Bernadette Finn
- East Galway Cancer Support Group
- East Galway Mental Health Action Group
- Galway East Life Support (GELS)
- Society of St. Vincent De Paul

### YOUNG PERSON'S AWARD

Recognising the contribution that young people make in our community, through work with a variety of groups from youth organisations, support groups to representative bodies.

- Aoife Sidaway
- Ballinasloe RFC U15 Girls Team
- Seamus Daly
- Team Explosion

### CIVIC PRIDE AWARD

This category recognises individuals/groups/residents associations that have shown a sense of civic pride within their community to undertake a wide range of activities in their area and continue to work on making it a better place to live

- Ahascragh Development Association
- Ballinasloe LIFE (Community Magazine Project)
- Carmel Greally
- Resident Association (St. Grellans, St. Teresas, St. Annes)
- Creagh Comm. Dev. Council (Creagh Restoration Project)
- Hillcrest Resident Association
- Hymany & Curragh Park Residents Association
- Martin Healy
- Muriel & William Duthie
- Running Against Cancer (RAC)

### SPORTS, RECREATION, CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Recognising individuals or groups who give of their time to support and to participate in sport and other recreation activities. Sports and Recreation are important in our everyday lives and this award will recognise individuals or groups for their contribution in this area.

- Ballinasloe GAA Club
- Ballinasloe Rugby Football Club U15 Girl Team
- Ballinasloe Town AFC
- Barry O'Connor
- Creagh Training Centre Special Olympics Club
- Declan Quinn
- Itosu-Kay Karatedo Ireland (IKKI), Ballinasloe Karate
- Johnny Riddell
- Peter Claffey, Conor Kenny, Jack Codyre (Irish U18 Rugby)
- Running Against Cancer (RAC)
- Seán Riddell

### SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

This category recognises individuals and groups that have made a special contribution to life in Ballinasloe through the works they have undertaken which may be deemed to go above and beyond the normal call of duty. It may be in respect of ongoing work, work with target groups, specific projects or from any of the categories above. It may recognise individuals who have achieved excellence and represented our community at the highest level.

- Ballinasloe Library Staff
- Ballinasloe Mock Wedding Organising Committee
- Carmel Greally
- Declan Murphy
- Galway East Life Support (GELS)
- Jacqueline & Michael Daly
- Joe Sammon
- Ken Kelly
- Pauline Treacy (RIP)
- Peter Claffey & Jack Codyre (Irish U18 Rugby Team)
- Running Against Cancer (RAC)
- Seamus Duffy
- Seán Riddell
- Tom Horkan

### ARTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE & ENVIRONMENT

Recognising the contribution of individuals, schools and groups to the continuing development of the Arts, Culture, Heritage and Environment in Ballinasloe. It covers a range of issues contributing to enhancement of the quality of life.

- Ballinasloe Musical Society
- Ballinasloe Town Theatre Ltd
- Colm Croffy
- Creagh Comm. Dev. Council (Creagh Restoration Project)
- John Slattery
- Mary O'Connell

# Aughrim Active Retirement

By Kevin O'Connor

The Aughrim Active Retirement Group is a busy and dynamic group and their latest project is the publication of their first book *Echoes of the Past*, a collection of stories and memories from locals, which preserves the rich oral heritage of Aughrim.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery celebrated the publication of this book in March in Áras Moyola, NUI Galway. Adeline Cooney, Head of School, said: "I enjoyed reading this book. It makes an important contribution to our understanding of our recent past. We are delighted to be able to host and facilitate the launch of the book."

Siobhán Smyth, the PRO for the group, is a Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. She, along with Helen Mannion, the current Chairperson, founded the group over six years ago. "It is fantastic to see the book in print. It is a treasure trove of local memories and a legacy to future generations," she said.

To prepare for this project the Project Committee and other members of the Aughrim Active Retirement Group completed a programme on Oral Heritage Research techniques delivered at NUIG. They also took a six-week practical oral recording workshop organised by the Galway Rural Development and Galway County Council. The group began by collecting stories firstly from their own members, then from people from the locality and finally they tracked down people who were either born in or connected to the Parish but are living in other parts of Ireland, the UK and America. People had incredible stories to tell and these are gathered in this unique book.

The book is available from Salmon's in Ballinasloe for €10, of which €2 goes to Galway Hospice. To date, the group has raised and presented Galway Hospice with a cheque for €1000 from the sale of the book.



Back Row (L-R): Margaret Cullinan, Terry Reynolds, Louisa Campbell, Bridget Dillion, Teresa Loughrey, Mary Quirke, Carmel Murray, Nell Coughlan, Maureen Kenny, Bridie Fahy, Michael Callinan. Front (L-R): Angela Dwyer, Chrissie Headd, Packie Flanglan, Maj Quaid, Siobhán Smyth, Helen Mannion, Imelda Black, Massie Manning, Adeline Cooney.

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# Out and About in Ballinasloe



**María Corcoran, Creagh. Winner of Roscommon Fleadh Button Accordion 15-18yrs and member of Ballinasloe Comháltas**



**Running against cancer Ballinasloe had 15 runners in action at the 2014 Connemarathon with 7 taking part in the half marathon 4 runners in the full and 4 runners completing the 39.3 miles of the Ultra Marathon.**



**East Galway Library Trail 2014 Artists (L-R): Fiona Cawley, Lily Kelly, Tomás Finn & Ness Kelly, Jackie Eastwood, Heather Rafter.**



**U10 Community Games Girls Swimming Freestyle L-R: 2nd Caoimhe Ni Thuairisig, 1st Ava McKeon, 3rd Emma McGreal**



**Scoil uí Cheithearnaigh recently held a Pyjama Day fundraiser for the Children's ward in Portiuncula Hospital, with €1000.00 raised on the day. The Children from the Naíonra, Scoil uí Cheithearnaigh are pictured in their Pyjama's on the day and Presentation of the cheque to staff from the Children's ward from Valerie Lyons and Ita Creaven also in the photo are Moya Lyons, Jack Creaven, Orlaith Creaven.**



**Soroptimist Members: Jane Enright Moony, Eileen Darcy, Margaret Mullane, Mary Courtney, Mary Magee, Dor Scannell, Marie Staunton at Áras an Uachtarán**



**U12 Community Games Boys Swimming Freestyle L-R: 2nd James Mooney, 1st Adam McGreal, 3rd Fionnan Darcy**

# The Fair Features in *Canadian Cowboy Country Magazine*



**CANADIAN COUNTRY COWBOY** is the leading Outdoors specialist journal with an on and offline readership in excess of 100,000 in Canada. They sent their Travel Feature Reporter Elaine Kenny to the Fair last year and dedicated a three page colour special on the event! We print the piece in full.

## By Elaine Kenny

Ballinasloe sits on the banks of the River Suck, a tributary of the Shannon, on County Galway's eastern side. Its history goes back to ancient times and because of its strategic location on the river, the clansmen of local tribes would meet there at "The Gathering of the Hostings." Today, quaint and scenic Ballinasloe is a town with colourful store fronts, welcoming pubs featuring traditional Irish music, verdant city parks, churches with soaring steeples and warm and friendly townspeople.

Ballinasloe is also home to one of Europe's oldest fairs, the annual Ballinasloe Fair & Festival. Rich in history and tradition, the fair had its beginnings in the 1700s when it was mostly an agricultural sale of sheep and cattle. In the early 1900s it evolved into a fair that sold only horses. There's a saying about Ballinasloe Fair, "If you're looking for a horse, pony or donkey and you can't find it at Ballinasloe, there isn't one bred."

The sale of horses takes place on the last weekend of September and the first Saturday of October along with equestrian events such as lunging competitions and mare and foal halter classes. Family entertainment over the 10-day fair includes pig races, dog shows, fireworks, tug-o-war, a food and craft fair and singing competitions in local pubs.

The horse sale on the first Saturday of October is billed as "Country Fair Day" and it is when many local rural residents attend. It also attracts "travellers" and veteran horse traders from other counties in Ireland. One veteran trader, Miley Cash, from County Kildare, is a fourth generation horse trader who

has been buying and selling horses for over 55 years. A point of interest: Miley is related to the late singer, Johnny Cash.

I joined Mr. Cash in his pony cart at the Ballinasloe Fair Green as he scanned the grounds for prospects. It turned out the prospects came to him. Cash is widely known in the horse trading business in Ireland and those with horses for sale knew he was there to buy. To appraise the horse before a purchase, Cash watched the animal trot a few metres, asked the seller some strategic questions and had a look at the horse's teeth.

It took only minutes for Cash to decide to purchase and once he did, the process associated with sealing the deal was intriguing to observe. Nothing like some good old-fashioned haggling to start with, then a slap of the buyer's and seller's hands indicated an agreement had been reached. Payment was in cold, hard cash.

No cheques, no visa and no tax for the taxman. A red half-circle drawn on the horse's hind quarter completed the transaction. Cash was looking mostly for Connemara ponies, Irish Cobs and some Irish hunters for clients in Belgium, France and Holland. Ireland's economic downturn has created a buyer's market for horses. And for someone like Mr. Cash, who has an experienced eye, money in his pocket and international buyers wanting his handpicked, quality horses, he is indeed in a favourable position. 🐾

The 2014 Ballinasloe Fair & Festival takes place this year on from Saturday 4th to Saturday 11th October. For more details please visit [www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com](http://www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com)



# New President for Soroptimists

By Kevin O'Connor

Ballinasloe's Soroptimists will be well known to many people around town for the work they do helping women and children. A voluntary organisation, Soroptimists is a global volunteer network with 80,000 members in 129 countries. "I joined this Branch when it was founded in 1995 because I liked the ethos, volunteering to transform the lives of women and children," said new President Maria Finnegan.

While Maria is from Galway, her mother Bridie Madden originally came from Ballinasloe. Maria moved to Ballinasloe in 1981 and lives on Sarsfield Road. Maria is the Practice Manager at the Marina Centre, where her husband Annraoi is a GP. The local club will celebrate 20 years early in 2015 and the twentieth year will fall under Maria's Presidency. This year's focus will be to Educate, Empower and Enable women and girls. "We have 28 members in Ballinasloe, but always welcome new members, anyone and everyone is welcome and we'd be delighted to hear from any woman who wanted to join," she said.

The local clubs make up the membership of the National Association of Ireland, which makes up part of the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, one of four global Federations. "These Federations are Europe, America, Asia and Great Britain and Ireland, which actually includes places like Barbados, Trinidad



Maria Finnegan receives the Soroptimist Presidents chain from Margaret Mullane.

and other places connected with Great Britain," said Maria. Soroptimists are a Non Government Organisation (NGO) with the UN and have consultative status on the council, which means that the group influence global policy at the highest level.

At a local level, the club are also very involved in helping the community and have big plans for the year ahead. "We hope to do something in the line of a bursary, perhaps for further education for girls who may not have this opportunity. We have also discussed working with women who may have suffered from domestic violence and have been made homeless as a result. We would work with other organisations already in this field," Maria said.

Soroptimists also have the wider needs of the town in mind. "The core of the town needs development. We can't become a 'Doughnut Town,' with all development happening on the outskirts and the centre becoming derelict," she said. "We'll be lobbying for rate reductions in the centre,

tax breaks for businesses struggling in the town centre." The key issue for the club is the retention of the Maternity Services in Portiuncula. "We intend as women to fight tooth and nail to retain this service. The services there are some of the best in the country. Women from Galway, Roscommon and all around have their children here. Working in the health sector, I know we can't trust what the HSE tells us. We are ready to fight on this one."

Since its foundation by the late Septa Connolly in 1995, the club has raised almost €100,000 for local services, last year focusing on the Social Services, St. Vincent de Paul, Simon Community and Plan Ireland. "Our National Project was Suicide Prevention and Positive Mental Health which has run over two years and raised awareness and promoted positive mental health, with a particular focus on women and children and reducing stigma associated with suicidal behaviours and emotional distress. We produced a youth information card that was taken up by the HSE and distributed throughout the country," Maria said. Internationally, the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland raised £100,000 for "Birthing in the Gambia", where one woman in every 49 dies in childbirth.

Anyone who would like to get involved can contact any of the members, or email Maria at [finneganmaria@eircom.net](mailto:finneganmaria@eircom.net) or visit the Soroptimists website [www.soroptimist-int-roi.com](http://www.soroptimist-int-roi.com)

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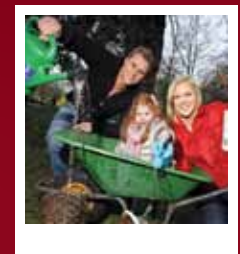
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# Australian Missionary and Ballinasloe Native



By Declan Kelly

Creagh Community Council's recent uncovering of a headstone in the cemetery to one Elizabeth Rigney, who died aged 86 in 1873, calls to mind the story of one of Ballinasloe's virtually forgotten missionaries, Archdeacon Rigney of Paramatta.

John Rigney was born in a small cottage, now long gone, in Brackernagh on 18th January 1814. The best description we have of the area in which he was reared comes from John O'Donovan's field notes for the Ordnance Survey of 1838 in which he describes Brackernagh as "a long and neat range of houses which are in good repair." We know little of his early life but Fr Rigney would recall in 1872 that one of his childhood friends was John Derry.

Derry's father Michael ran a small grocery and public house on Dunlo Street opposite Brutin's coach-building yard (now the site of the Presbytery) and young John would go on to become Bishop of Clonfert and attend the First Vatican Council. Rigney matriculated into Maynooth for Kilmacduagh diocese in September 1834 and like many of his time took the bold step of transferring to a distant diocese, emboldened by the image of carrying the Gospel message to foreign shores.

He was obviously a bright student as his course was completed in three years, two days prior to his ordination, on 28th December 1837, he and 7 of his fellows were feted in the dining hall of Maynooth by 500 other students as they prepared for the arduous journey to Australia. He arrived in Sydney on the migrant ship *Cecilia* in July of the following year with two of his sisters, Mary Ann and Elizabeth and nearly four months after setting sail. In the same year of 1838 he established a missionary district in Illawarra, a coastal region, south of Sydney. One of the young priests who had sailed with him was Fr Francis Murphy who became the first bishop of Adelaide.

The Church in Australasia was in its infancy at the time with just three bishops and 21 clergy. The terrain was often arid and unforgiving and Fr Rigney's yearly journey on horseback was in excess of 3,000 miles. His sister Mary Ann observed that the intense heat there almost made it "Hard to live." Mary Ann and Elizabeth were to be his faithful housekeepers to the end of their days. By 1868, Fr Rigney had risen to the position of Archdeacon and had been involved in supervising the beginning of the building of St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney. After 30 years in Australia, however, he received a message from his mother to return one brief time and help to "Close her dying eyes." Having spent his resources on his missionary endeavours, the archbishop and his fellow clergy financed the two month journey home and he spent almost two years ministering in Ballinasloe. Prior to his departure for Australia, a banquet was held in his honour in Gill's Hotel with Dr Patrick Duggan, Bishop of Clonfert and the leading local lay and clerical lights present. When his mother died the year after he returned, he ensured that a suitable memorial was erected over her resting place.

Aged 75, he voluntarily relinquished the large parish of Paramatta for the less strenuous duties of Prospect. Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran (a native of Co Carlow) would later pay tribute to him as "One of the Colonial priests who had watched the wonderful progress of the infant church in Australia (and) had with his own hands laboured year after year, both in laying the foundation the foundation and in building up the church which was now their pride and joy. "Despite his diminishing physical strength, Monsignor Rigney continued to carry out his pastoral duties until his death, at 89, on 9th May 1903.



*The grave of Elizabeth Rigney, Mother of Archdeacon Rigney, recently discovered in Creagh Cemetery, Ballinasloe.*

**Senator**  
**MICHAEL MULLINS**  
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**FINE GAEL**

# Overcoming Your Fear of Water

By Majella Flanagan

I was raised and lived most of my life right beside the river Shannon, but I was consistently warned by my parents about the dangers of the water. The rules were to keep a distance from the river. The youngest of eight children, I was nevertheless the first of my family to teach myself how to swim. I am not a confident swimmer and to this day I dislike putting my face in the water. I had a very real fear of being on water, especially in a vessel I had no clue how to operate. My very first time kayaking was a day I approached with many emotions; reluctance, fear and the excitement of trying something new.

When I took to the water for the first time, I was extremely nervous. I had tears in my eyes. Eoin pulled up alongside me and asked me if I was ok. I told him how I felt and he calmly reminded me to breath, something I didn't realize I had stopped doing because I was so nervous.

Eoin's approach was to create an environment of fun and laughter, while at the same time acknowledging emotions or discomfort. He talked me through what I needed to do and put me at ease. After the first 20 minutes I started to really enjoy the experience of being on the water, breathing fresh air surrounded by the beautiful green countryside of Ballinasloe. We had such a laugh on our journey that day. It was my maiden voyage and I promised myself it was something I would try again because I really enjoyed it, even though it terrified me at the same time.


I went back to give kayaking a go at the beginning of last summer, after my daughter Laoise completed one of the "Kayaktivity Camps". Hearing her stories of the river and adventures pushed me to give it a go again. Eoin was once again an attentive and trustworthy instructor. I was back on the water, a place where I felt I belonged this time and I started completing some lovely trips. The 'Three Bridges' Trip is one of my favourites, where you go under the Bunowen bridge, the 'Railway Bridge' and finishing under the Town bridge. I have even completed a few trips to the rapids. I go kayaking as often as I can and even though I still have a great deal to learn about the sport, it's something that I love doing.

Kayaking has helped me believe in my own ability to do something new even in the face of fear, kayaking has taught me even though you can be afraid of something, with the proper help and encouragement you can challenge those fears. The sense of achievement and confidence that stems from these challenges can result in life changing experiences. Kayaking

is a wonderful way to get in touch with nature. You never know what's around the next river bend. Fish rising to catch a fly, a mother swan sitting on her impeccably constructed giant sized nest ensuring the safe arrival of her new family. A father swan making sure none of us get too close. Swallows swooping on the water, feeling the sun or (sometimes) rain on your face.

The sight of clouds reflecting on still water to the exploding sound of fast rushing water, rushing over the rocks perfectly placed by nature. Enjoying the feeling of wet and mucky hands and feet is another wonderful earthy prospect. There is always, of course, the exciting possibility of mooring on a little island for a picnic to enjoy something to eat or drink, while having a rest from paddling, but still enjoying the great outdoors. Viewing the town from a different angle is another advantage. The skyline of buildings and churches are a sight to behold and the limestone workmanship that can be seen on the many bridges that can be paddled under is breathtaking. Listening to Eoin's great knowledge of the history of stretches of water and the river banks is always very interesting.

Kayaking is a wonderful way of improving fitness. It has improved my cardiovascular health while also strengthening upper and lower body muscle groups and doesn't put unnecessary strain on my joints and muscles. So whether I want a gentle workout or a more vigorous fitness challenge, it's possible to do either or both while kayaking.

Irrespective of sunshine or rainfall kayaking is something that can be enjoyed by adults and children alike. If you haven't tried it, give it a go! You might get hooked (I certainly did.) Hand on heart, I cannot recommend it enough. 



**This years Kayaktivity Camps**

**19 – 23 JULY**

**26 – 30 JULY**

**16 – 20 AUGUST**



# Summer's Riverside Activities

By Kevin O'Connor

The River Suck was only made navigable to Ballinasloe in 2001, thanks to a huge OPW capital investment project and this May say the inauguration of a new pleasure craft cruise on dedicated days on the Suck to Shannonbridge cut.

The River Queen whose home berth is Banagher and has been over 2 decades on the Shannon Navigation system, can carry 49 passengers safely in cruising comfort on the meandering stretches of the lower Suck.

The one way trip takes about two hours. The guide on board is Micheál Breathnach from the Oat Gallery Bookstore in town. Former Town Councillor and boating enthusiast. Micheal has a great knowledge of the Shannon and its network, travelling the Suck more times than he cares to remember. Skipper for the trip is Liam another man with great knowledge of the river and all things boating. Liam is joined by his First Mate John who knows everything, water is in his bones.

The first voyage on took place in May and broadly follows the sailing schedule where pre booked passengers are taken from the Ballinasloe Marina by bus to Shannonbridge @ 10am. The 2pm trip will be from the town centre Marina to Shannon Bridge and passengers will return to town by bus.


The trip and riverbus craft are ideal for families, with the youngest passenger last May an infant. There are toilet facilities and a refreshment bar on board! The June sailing days are confirmed for Saturday 14th and 21st, with more dates planned for July. For any more information on hire of the craft or schedule sailing times and bookings please contact The Oat Gallery on Tel: 087 278 8402.

Meanwhile The Development Company and local business interests have announced that they have secured the final weekend of the *South Shannon Navigation Rally* to spend their last weekend in the Ballinasloe Marina for the August Bank Holiday weekend (August 4th).



With a theme of *Saints and Scholars*, Athlone based Commodore of the Fleet, Kevin Clabbey and some 90 vessels will spend the Saturday and Sunday of the weekend in the town, after a Friday evening stop in Shannonbridge. It is the first time in a number of seasons that the town has hosted this prestigious event for the largest flotilla of craft and cruising enthusiasts on the longest navigable waterway in Europe.

While talent shows and a formal end of Rally Dinner await all the crews in the Shearwater Hotel, a host of live entertainment is being laid on by the local hostelryes and a special open air Jazz Session is planned for the Sunday. Commenting on the event Commodore Kevin Clabbey stated "How they were all looking very much forward to cruising up the Suck to the western most navigable point on the system and enjoying a well earned celebratory weekend after the exertions of the week. It will be nice to show so many of the boating fraternity the waterway and what it is that makes the town such a hidden gem."

All locals are encouraged to visit the fleet when it's at anchor at the weekend. Most vessels will depart on the Monday afternoon or join the Derg Run on the following Tuesday. 

## Ballinasloe Livestock Mart

**WEDNESDAY Cattle Sale from 11am**

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**THURSDAY Sheep Sale from 5.30pm**

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**SATURDAY Suckler  
Cows and Weanlings  
Sale from 11am**



# Stapleton's Mighty Haul of Glory

By Kevin O'Connor

Since its founding at Ballinasloe Fair and Festival, Stapleton's Tug-of-War Team has pulled in a mighty haul of glory for itself and under the tutelage of Michael Stapleton, has become a force to be reckoned with in the world of Tug-of-War.

"In our first year in 2008, we won the Street Pulling competition at Ballinasloe Fair," said Mike. "A number of men got interested in it and we decided to affiliate the club to the National Association in 2009." Since becoming members, they have won nine All-Ireland Titles in several categories, like Field and Indoor pulling. "We win all the Rope Pulls in the Midlands on a regular basis, including the Ballinasloe Fair and Festival Pull, which is considered a big one and not just for bragging rights for the local lads!"

"I did some pulling myself when I was younger and in 2008 the Dolan brothers, Kevin and Aidan, asked me would I coach a team, we've been pulling constantly ever since!" said Mike. The team has travelled all over Ireland to compete and went to Mayo in February to pull in the World Championships. "We pulled against over 20 teams. We didn't get on too well against the big National Teams like Japan or Canada, but at least we were there," he said. "Those teams would have lads who have been involved for 15 to 20 years, whereas we'd only have two or three years experience at most.



Eoin Finneran, Niall Keane, Stephen Howard, Ger O'Brien, Adrian and Karl Kenny

There's a large turnover of pullers, with peoples commitments getting in the way, or lads moving away for work."

"The three most important things you need for Tug-of-War is dedication, a good temperament and not being afraid of hard work. A good grip helps too and it really develops your hands, because gloves aren't allowed," said Mike. "There's a big difference between pulling on a field and indoors and it requires a different technique for each type. There are always eight pullers and one substitute on each team, but the way you have to pull is different."

The team meets every Tuesday and Thursday night at half past eight and train for about one hour. "If you train hard for the hour, you won't be able for any more," said Mike. They train in Stapletons

Farm Supplies yard in a custom built shed. There are two ropes with large weights attached to a pulley, a ladder embedded in the ground and removable mats that can go over it. "I provided the materials and the lads built it themselves. We built it in 2010, because before we had to train outside, which was difficult to do because of the weather," said Mike. Stapletons will be hosting the National Finals on Clontuskert pitch on the 29th June. Between 30 and 40 teams will be there, including Boley from Wexford, who hold several world titles and Lake Hill, from Mayo, the current 700 kilo World Champions.

Anyone who wants to join the club can contact Mike at 086 258 4776, or talk to any of the club members. Alternatively, people are welcome to call to Stapletons during training if they want to join. 🐣

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# Vintage Club: 4th Classic Sprint

By Shane Burns

Ballinasloe & District Vintage Club run its fourth successful Classic Sprint at Tynagh International Kart Track. Under the stewardship of Clerk of The Course Shane Burns and the brainchild of active club member and Mini enthusiast Michael Hyland, the day was a great success.

Michael's vision was to promote an event which would allow the owners of classic cars and sports cars demonstrate their vehicles performance and handling in a controlled and safe environment. On the day 47 cars registered ensuring that marshals and organisers would have a busy day, with each participant getting 3 runs of 3 laps on the 1500m smooth tarmac race circuit.

Interspersed amongst the road going classics were some very well turned out historic rally cars. The *Blue Oval* was well represented with a healthy entry of both Mk1 and Mk2 models putting on a fine tail happy display. Other rally bred marques were also well represented with a couple of well driven Vauxhall Chevette HSR's, Vauxhall Novas, Peugeot 205's and a well driven Chrysler Avenger all adding to the mix of what was a real throw back to the heady days of stage rallying in the late 70's, 80's and 90's.

Not to be out shone on the day, the hill climb and circuit racing fraternity were also present with some fine machinery. The still crisp April air around Tynagh was shattered with the echo of Pádraig



Forde's V8 Special Scott Climber. The raucous note from the Rover 3.9L's exhaust was something else as many an eyebrow was raised as it left the start line. Add to this a beautifully prepared Reynard single seater, a collection of well driven historic Formula Vee's, a pair of rare three door Sierra Cosworths and a very special Formula Ford car reputed to have been once driven by the late great Ayton Sienna and you had a collection of sights, sounds and smells that brought back many a fond memory for any classic motorsport enthusiast.

If the collection of motorsport machinery was varied, the road going section was even more so with some very rare machines on display. A common sight as the day wore on was a very sideways Austin Healy 3000 driven enthusiastically as ever to great effect and really adding to the spirit of the event. The Jaguar and MG marques were also out in force with a rare E Type, MGA and MGB respectively all taking to the tarmac. Volkswagen

Golf's of various tune, some Japanese classics like: Toyota Corolla, Celica, Mr2 and Subaru Legacy all makes and models once a common sight on Irish roads in the early nineties, were a sight to behold as on the international karting circuit.

The feedback from the drivers was excellent with everyone commenting on the informal yet efficient way in which the day was run. Even though everyone was eager to get out on track, drivers and organisers alike seemed to have plenty of time to catch up with old friends and chat about their pride and joy. After all it is not only the cars that make the event but the characters too.

It is envisaged that the club will run a similar event in the months ahead and we are always interested to hear from anyone willing to take part, help out or just tag along to see what its all about. Keep up to date with all the clubs events on our facebook page. Enquiries will also be taken at 087 977 6386.

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# Rugby Awards

By Liam Courtney

No matter what way you look at it, this season was a rewarding and successful one, both on and off the field, for Ballinasloe Rugby Club. The Awards night held in May recently celebrated many achievements of the club and its members.

First up for their medals was the ladies U15 squad who, in their first season of action, captured both provincial league and cup trophies. The boys U13 squad also took the provincial league and cup double. Awards were also given to Pádraig Flanagan and Robert Shiels for Most Improved Player. The U14's Most Improved Player award went to Jack Dempsey and Oisín Carrig won Player of the Year. The U15s had a very competitive season and only lost out in the league after a semi-final replay defeat to eventual winners, Galwegians. Ryan Keighrey emerged as their Most Improved Player while Jack Canning was chosen as Player of the Year.

The U17s had a long season, battling right to the end, only losing out in the league semi-final to Galwegians and narrowly losing the Cup Final. Ciarán Cogavin was their Most Improved Player and Geoffrey Conway took Player of the Year honours. Peter Claffey (U18) and Marc Kelly (U19) won special awards for donning the Irish shirt. Alan Wade took Player of the Year

in the Development Squad, while the First Team's Player of the Year Award was presented to Niall Staunton.

Three important Awards were given to members who have contributed massively to the club over the years. Geraldine Kelly received an award for her many years of dedicated work for the club, Seán Brennan received one for his representation of the club as Senior Rep at the Connacht Branch. The third presentation went to John Hayes, who chosen as the Connacht Junior Club Player of the Year for the 2013-14 season and captaining the province against Leinster and Munster.

There was plenty of positivity off the pitch as well. Spain Funeral Directors came on board as main sponsors. The clubhouse expansion is near completion and these new dressing rooms and shower pavilion bears testimony to the increasing number of teams at the club. Conal Gormley, Conor and Aidan Loughrey, Kevin Gavin, Andy O'Hara and John Hayes who was chosen for the Connacht Junior Interprovincial squad with John captaining Connacht against Leinster and Munster, also being chosen as Connacht's Junior Club Player of the Year.



Squad members of the Ballinasloe RFC Junior team

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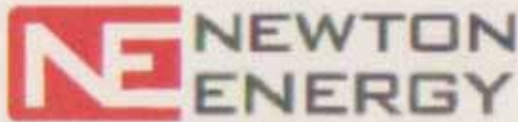
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## New Choir: The Trouble Clefs

The Trouble Clefs is a new local based choir under the musical direction of Sarah Corcoran and Triona Waters. There are two choirs, a Youth choir (Age 5-15) and Senior (15+). There are 78 children in the youth choir at the moment of all ages and abilities. The senior choir consists of over thirty adults, from students to adults of all ages. They are seeking to recruit more members. The choirs meet for rehearsal in the Regency Room in Haydens Hotel every Friday evening. Juniors: 5-6pm. Seniors: 7-8pm. Further updates if you are interested in joining either choir, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah at 0851178405, or Triona at 085 1661380.



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# Town AFC Making More History

By Kevin O'Connor

Following last years' success, the Senior team beat Castlebar in penalties after 110 minutes of hard fought football to bring the Connacht Cup back to Ballinasloe. With Des Hope winning Man of the Match, The club won the competition for the third time and is one of only five teams to win the competition back-to-back. The Seniors trophy shelf recently became a little more full, as they completed that three-in-a-row in the Roscommon Challenge Cup. "We'll be hoping to win the three-in-a-row with the Connacht Cup as well next year, something that's never been done.

The youth club also did the town proud this season, with the U16 team winning the both the League and the Cup. The U13 team were unlucky not to do the same, winning their league but unfortunately losing out in the final. The girls were well represented this year too, with Heather Payne playing for Ireland in the Bob



Doherty Tournament against England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, narrowly losing in the final to England. Just because the season is over, doesn't mean that the club will have a quiet summer, by any means. There will be a seven-a-side Street League in Curragh Park and the club will run their 'Let the Fun Begin' Summer Camp again this year. Applications for which can be found in Topshop on Harbour Road, Colcannons on Society Street, Noel Mannions Sports Shop on the New Road and of course the Curragh grounds where the camp will

run itself. Forms are accepted up to the very day it starts on and those interested can call either Barry O'Connor on 086 842 7576, Ciarán Keighrey at 087 625 4100 or Kevin McMorro on 086 865 5754 to book.

**The Club will be advertising these events and also calling for new players, both in the schools and through their Facebook page over the coming weeks. In the meantime, please contact Jayson Fallon at 087 176 1749 for more information on how you can get involved.**

## Ballinasloe Golf Club News

Ballinasloe Golf Club recently ran a successful 400 Club limited Fundraising Draw raising nearly €30,000 for a new Rough Mower. Winners of the March and April Draws were Johnny Farrell and Kiltormer GAA winning the top prize of €1,000. The Ladies Club held an inaugural Vera O'Grady Memorial Trophy Open Day in May sponsored by Shane O'Grady, PGA, Vera's son and coach to Maguire twins, Lisa and Leona, two of Ireland's top lady golfers. He also organised a golf clinic for with the twins that evening. Thanks to the new mower, the voluntary work of course staff under Damien McLaverty, the course is in great shape.



*Below: Lady Captain Noreen Kenny, Vice Captain Teresa Coughlan, Shane O'Grady PGA, Lisa and Leona Maguire and members of Ballinasloe Golf Club at the Golf Clinic given, by the Maguire twins.*

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## Tennis Club Temporarily Homeless

Ballinasloe Tennis Club faces uncertain times, but hopes to see some important developments in the months ahead. With the rugby club's expansion, the Tennis Club are finalising a new home with the Town Council. Coach Robert Johnson, of the Inter-pro Connacht Tennis Team, says. "We don't have facilities like other provinces. It's amazing we do so well and it proves the level of talent here." Tom Cafferkey is on the Connacht U10's and has been asked to try out for the U12s. Robert plans an East Galway League, which, with better facilities, would help tennis in the locality. Anyone wishing to join can call Robert at 086 839 8776.



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# GAA Gear Up For August Cycle

By Donal Fenton

Society is a widely used term whose meaning remains vague; it is often used to tie many different people together through shared commonalities. There is, however, no denying the centrality of Ballinasloe GAA within our community. Every couple of years, there is an event in our society that helps galvanise us. With the GAA club's upcoming charity cycle, there is no denying it will be a talking point for many years to come.

Suicide is a topic that is often hard to talk about. It is a preventable and catastrophic waste of life. Galway East Life Support does so much for our locality and we felt they deserve a portion of the funds raised. With our help in raising vital funds for this worthy cause we hope to make a difference. Through their tireless work and dedication they have done so much to raise awareness and provide a support for those who need their help. We all know of someone who has been affected by suicide and, as Superintendent Gerry Roche, Chairman of GELS, said: "People don't like to talk about suicide and you don't want to force it on them, but we need to raise awareness of the dangers and more importantly raise awareness of the help that is out there. We have to fight to reclaim our young people and all our people. We need to work to get people back from the brink." GELS will also run their own Sponsored Cycle, which takes place in mid-July. For further details on Galway East Life Support's Sponsored Cycle contact 085 123 7878 or email eastgalwaylife@gmail.com

Ballinasloe GAA Club has over 30 teams training every week and we need to

develop the facilities in Brackernagh due to that high volume of activity. With grant aid from the Town Council, we are getting closer to the Club we are trying to build. These developments include an all-weather pitch, a ballwall and an extension of our Clubhouse. Such developments are not cheap and fundraising is essential.

Since the Cycle's launch with Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh, a buzz has been generated, young and old are getting involved. Teams range from 16 to 70 years of age. The cycle is in four stages, Croke Park to Kilcock (32.7km), Kilcock to Kinnegad (32.4km), Kinnegad to Moate (47.3km) and finally Moate to Ballinasloe Clubhouse (42km). You can take on the whole thing, a challenge that many are looking forward to, or you can do one stage. The teams are made up of four and each member of the team is asked to raise €250, a total of €1000 per team. With many competitive people, the race to raise the most is well underway.

Former Pro Cyclist and Journalist Paul Kimmage is also taking part in the cycle. Paul was contacted by Mark McKeigue



from Turas Bikes and is known for having competed in the Tour de France and Giro d'Italia and being voted one of the most influential sports writers in 2012.

With Barry Taylor's, Turas and Clarkes all participants in the Bike to Work Scheme, getting your hands on a bike has never been easier. All you need is a bicycle between four to complete the cycle, which can be swapped at each stage, so there are no plausible excuses. Dillon Tyres, along with all of the sponsors names and/or logos will be on the free cycling jersey that all participants will receive if they reach their target of €250.

For further information on participating in the cycle please contact Ronan on 0872369665, Mairéad on 0877549713 or email [pro.ballinasloe.galway@gaa.ie](mailto:pro.ballinasloe.galway@gaa.ie).

Congrats to the kids who represented our club in the final of Scór na bPáistí. Céilí: Alanna Cunningham, Aisling Clifford, Katie Galvin, Ellen Curran, Chloe Johnston, Abbey Cunningham, Clodagh Powell, Orla Madden. Sean Nós Dancing: Sarah Jane Ruane, Clíona Ó'hAnluain. Trad Music: Brian Feeney, Chloe Johnston, Mark Gallagher, Clodagh Powell, Colm Sheeran, Cathal Ó hAnluain and Grace Byrne. Solo Singing: David Ward.



At Ballinasloe GAA Sponsored Launch in Gullane's Hotel, (L-R): Kathryn Gibbons (Ladies Football), Conor Ryan (Secretary Ballinasloe GAA), Garda Superintendent Gerry Roche (GELS), Seamus Duffy (Football Committee Chairman), Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Pat O'Sullivan (Ballinasloe GAA Chairman), Brendan Kelly (Hurling Committee Chairman), Therese Dillon (Main Sponsor Dillon Tyres), Noel Dillon, Mairead Mitchell (Treasurer Ballinasloe GAA).

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## Féile Péil for Ladies' Footballers

U14 Féile Péil, which will be played throughout Connacht in June, is the largest gathering of players, of any code, in the country this year. Ballinasloe will be in the thick of this international competition, which will see hundreds of teams from all over Ireland, England, Scotland and America and the thousands of families and supporters that will travel with them. The Ballinasloe U14 Girls team will host Clánn Éireann (Armagh). Details of which can be found in our Events Guide, promises to be a hectic, busy weekend and the girls' team, under the tutelage of Seamus Duffy, Vincent Parsons and Miriam Grealy look ready to do the town proud.



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# The Church on the Hill

*The Tomb of the Earls of Clancarty in the Grounds of St. John's Church.*

By Barry Lally

In the old Creagh Cemetery, adjacent to the Athlone Road, are the austere remains of an ecclesiastical building. This unprepossessing ruin was once a church that in its time served the religious needs of the local Church of Ireland community up to the early decades of the nineteenth century. Built on the site of a medieval place of worship, it was a humble predecessor of one of Ballinasloe's architectural gems: St. John's Church.

Occupying as it does the crest of Church Hill, St. John's dominates the surrounding countryside and invariably figures in every silhouette of the Ballinasloe skyline. It's not, though, the only imposing structure to have been located here. Formerly known as Knockadoon (fort hill), Church Hill was conjecturally the site of a motte and bailey. This seems a reasonable supposition, because in the thirteenth century the area around Ballinasloe was held by the Anglo-Normans under Sir Richard de Rupella, who would likely have favoured such a construction at this location.

The motte and bailey was a type of fortification dear to the hearts of those mail-coated warriors. Its purpose was twofold: to house a garrison and overawe the conquered territory. Erected in a commanding position, the motte consisted in an earthen mound surmounted by a wooden tower serving as a look-out post. The structure was linked to an enclosure (the bailey) surrounded by a bank topped by a palisade of pointed stakes and containing buildings for the accommodation of soldiers. These primitive castles had the dual advantage of being both quickly and inexpensively constructed.

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars the original church on the site was built to plans drawn up by John Hampton, a Ballinasloe-born architect with offices in Main Street. Described as having a Doric portico, it was destroyed by fire in the early 1840s. Its spire was salvaged from the ruins and re-erected as an obelisk in the grounds of Garbally House.

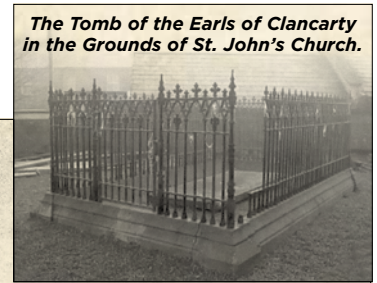
Soon after the conflagration a new church featuring the Gothic Revival style of the mid-nineteenth century was built to replace the old St. John's. Designed by Joseph Welland, a Cork architect who was responsible for the plans of over a 100 churches in the course of his career, this building had north and south transepts as well as lancet windows. According to a contemporary account, it opened for worship in the autumn of 1844. A battlemented turret incorporating a four-faced clock was added in 1879, the cost being borne by Lord Clancarty.

The building was gutted in a major fire in 1899. It was said that the clock continued to chime until its works melted in the heat. An exquisite stone pulpit carved by James Beegan, a local sculptor, was badly damaged, as was a memorial to the Third Earl of Clancarty. The church, however, was repaired and later expended.

An interior wall of St. John's displays a framed roll of honour listing 48 parishioners who fought in the First World War, 9 of whom were among the fallen. In the church grounds there is the tomb of the Earls of Clancarty. A portrait of the controversial Archdeacon Charles Trench, who was the first rector in the old St. John's, hangs in the vestibule. The present incumbent is the Rev. George Flynn who has in addition the pastoral care of several neighbouring parishes.



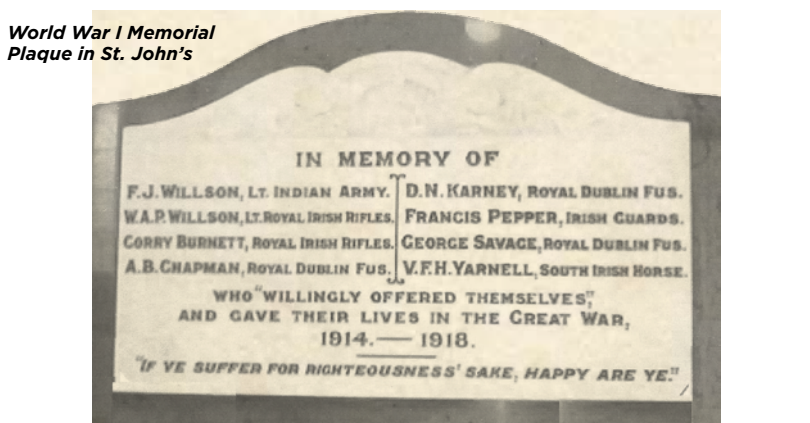
*St. John's Church*



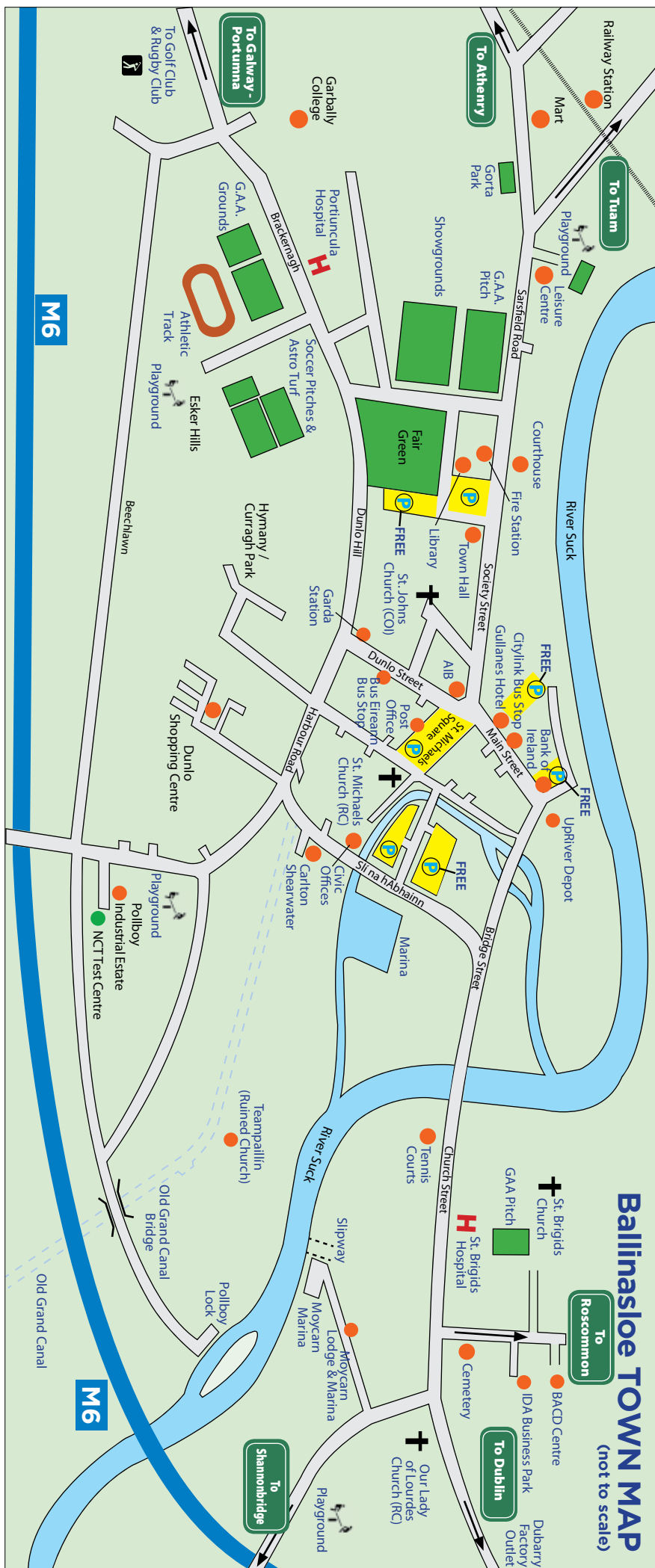
*Artists impression of Motte and Bailey*



*Ballinasloe in the 1830s: St. John's in the Background.*



*World War I Memorial Plaque in St. John's*



## Ballinasloe History Walk

**1** – Start at the statue known as *The Man with the Horse*, where Main Street joins St. Michael's Square. From the crossing near the statue, continue by turning right onto Main Street. The prosperity of Ballinasloe in Georgian times can be seen in the scale and classical style of the buildings here. A fine group of four frontages stand across from the statue of The Man with the Horse. With shops and pubs on the ground floor for the most part, these Main Street premises have several floors above.

**2** – Walking along Main Street, lift your eyes above the shop frontages for one of the town's characteristic sights. There are the Diocletian windows that grace several facades. They are from the years after 1805 when the 2nd Earl was in charge. A window of this sort is formed under a semi-circular arch with two upright divisions so that the whole opening is divided into three parts.

**3** – As you stand at the meeting point of Bridge Street and Main Street, you will see the Victorian frontage of a commercial premises, originally the Masonic Hall. Next to it stands a classical looking, beautifully-crafted, early 19th century stone house, currently a guest house. Beside these is a tall, fine stone-fronted classical mansion, which is now the Bank of Ireland. It was originally the town mansion of the Lord of all of Ballinasloe, the Earl of Clancarty. A friend of king George IV, the Earl was one of the architects of the resistance to the emperor Napoleon. It could be said that he was the person to whom most credit is due for the layout, growth and architectural character of Ballinasloe as we see it today.

**4** – At the end of Main Street, head along Bridge Street, then turn to the right to the pathway which runs to the riverscape where you can see channels flowing through the several arches of the long stone bridge over the river Suck, one of the town's most precious monuments. The Bridge has been in continuous use since the 16th century and its extension in 1754 prepared it structurally to carry even the heaviest juggernauts of today.

**5** – Walk through to the far end of the park; you will approach St Michael's Church (1852-58) that stands in a commanding position over the Square. Its architect was J.J. McCarthy, a follower of Augustus Pugin (famed for other Neo-Gothic churches in Ireland) – and the design is said to have been revised by Pugin himself. Inside are many fine stained glass window. Of particular quality are those of St. Patrick and St. Rose of Lima, of 1925, by the renowned Dublin Stained glass artist, Harry Clarke and The Raising of the daughter of Jairus by Patrick Pollen, inserted in 1958.

**6** – From St. Michael's Church now walk up St. Michael's Square back towards the Man with the Horse Statue. Take a left into Dunlo Street, an important street in the history of the town, which contains, together with other buildings of about the same date, the late-Georgian Garda Station. The Station is towards the far end of the street, on the right hand side. Also on this street, over Dolan's Electrical Shop, you can see another fine example of Diocletian windows.

**7** – Halfway up Dunlo Street, turn right up Duggan Street, which will take you to St. John's Church (Church of Ireland, 1843). It dominates the vast Fair Green which becomes a hive of activity during one week every year when up to 100,000 people throng to the October fair. Look out over the Fair Green and admire one of the grandest freestanding classical monuments in the region. Dedicated to Charles Le Poer Trench, it was designed in the Neo-Greek style by the English architect George Papworth (1781-1855). A mile past this monument on the Main Galway road, South West of the town, the Earl of Clancarty's former country house is situated, where imposing gates mark the entrance to Garbally Court. It has been a school since 1923.

Walk down Church Hill onto Society Street and turn left, arriving at the Courthouse on the right. Society Street, like Main Street, was the 19th century location for the professional classes. As well as The Courthouse, it contains the former Bridewell (or gaol) from the 1840s. Further along this street, Ballinasloe Railway Station is a must. Constructed in 1851, it is a Neo-Gothic limestone tour-de-force and a fine example of the quality of rural Irish railway architecture in the mid-19th century.

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