

BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 9 Issue 6: Feb' '20 - Mar' '20



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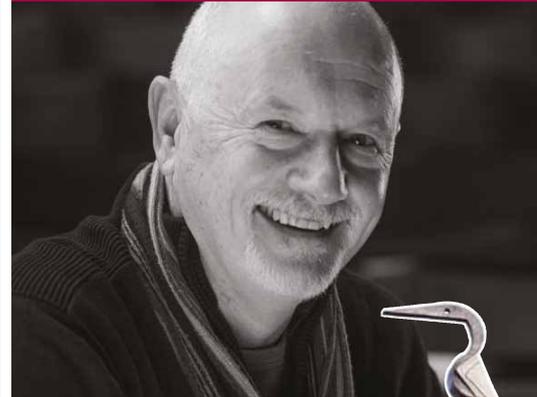
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REAMHRA

Welcome to Volume 9 issue six

Welcome to the spring edition. No one likes doing funerals, one of the less enjoyable aspects of editing this journal is having to find language and words to sum up a lifetime of being a critical cog in our community within the confines of a few paragraphs. The December past and this edition have been hard work in that respect. "A mild winder fills the plots quicker" so the sage saying goes. As we go to print another torrent of funerals has been visited up on us.

It's hard to write about the traditional sense of renewal, vigour, hope that La Le Bhríde and the Springtime should be bringing to lives and hearts when most of us have spent too many nights and mornings comforting the bereaved of the past 8 weeks.

Looking at all the comments and appreciation notes left under the online posts of passings, one can't help noticing all the organisations, interests, hobbies, causes, faith communities, clubs, societies outside of their immediate family that these noble citizens fostered.

If you ever want hard evidence of what makes the DNA of true community spirit - take a tear stained read of some of the heartfelt appreciations of so many unsung heroes who have very recently left us. In the world of fleeting celebrity their cult and imprint is so very real.

Contrast their lifetime of effort and giving, with the way we have glowered recently at radio, screen and newsprint over the election coverage with the self-serving stories and reports of

Heading into year 10, I believe it is no harm to reiterate what Ballinasloe Life is all about. We have many groups and organisations working away independently in the catchment area getting their message out there about all the good work they do, but it is to a limited audience.

That is where Ballinasloe LIFE can get the positive news to the greater population and add another important strand to their public relations agenda.

All these Associations are a part of the Ballinasloe LIFE team and are an integral part of its success as are the Business Community who have been incredibly supportive financially to make sure we can cover our costs annually.

Similarly the Town Team was formed approx. 5 years ago and again, while it has ran several events in its own right such as the People of the Year awards, Zombie Walk, Christmas Lighting, 2 Town Benchmarking reports (available online) etc., it has been there to support other organisations run their various events.

The ultimate Vision is to revitalise the Town and its hinterland, enabling it to achieve its true potential, by creating awareness of all the positive assets we currently have and identifying new initiatives that will enhance and expand on what is already here.

the expenses fraud, fobgate, vote gate, lump sum collection, pension kick ingate and apparent callous indifference of not all but some in privileged public office.

It's important every citizen votes. I care not too much what will be visited upon us from the Government, ratified eventually by a majority of the 158 TDs elected with a popular mandate freely given but we should care that in their actions and words they would aspire to earn the types of appreciations from their peers that so many locals who have gone to their rest in the past recent months have received.

"Anois teach an Earraigh, beidh an Lá dúl chun shineadh, Is tar eis na féil Bríde ardóigh mé mo sheol. Go Coillte Mach rachad ní stopfaidh me choiche Go seasfaidh mé síos i lár Chonndae Mhaigh Eo"

May the words of Raftery the poet, in his Springtime ode, fortify us for horsetrading over the mercs and half mercs, the rollouts and the digouts and help us keep our local sail, hoisted and focused for the new months of light hopefully ahead.

Le Gach De Ghui,
COLM CROFFY,
Editor.



Articles and Photos Welcome

NEXT ISSUE
Deadline 12th March

For submission of articles, please email:
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To advertise your events contact:
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As you will read in this edition of our Magazine you will see we are revitalising the Team and are open to new members who feel they can contribute. Information sessions have been organised and I encourage you to drop in for a chat.

You will also read in this edition how employment has grown locally in the last 10 years and on top of that we are finding that many families are moving back.

We wish all Election 2020 Candidates the best of luck to be a TD and look forward to a continued strong working relationship with all our elected representatives. All candidates have been given equal coverage in the Magazine and the opportunity was offered to all for a paid advertisement or insert which some have availed of.

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Grass cutting will continue on 11 private estates in the locality despite calls from the Council Executive to discontinue it. Once again the annual Grass cutting row over and back between elected representatives and the officials continued with gusto at the January Municipal District Area meeting.

This service covers the regular cutting, strimming and weed control of identified grass areas in the town for the upcoming year. Due to the acute reduction in Council outdoor staff crew and hours it has been out serviced to private contractors for the past three years.

The Council Executive brought forward tender reports that showed the cost of the service for a full 10 months – nearly 30% higher than previous shorter terms and were adamant that as in all other Private Estates in the County the residents or their associations should pay the cost, despite each house paying the new house tax for Council services since 2014.

Acting Chair of the meeting, Cllr Aisling Dolan, wanted to see if more Solas Training Schemes or Tus Operatives or indeed Tidy Towns' volunteers could be involved in solving the problem but a host of insurance and health and safety issues were referenced by officials to halt this approach.

Enda Mulryan, Senior Executive Engineer, one of the people in objection to this, stated that it costs 17% of the total budget for the maintenance of parks and open spaces and that this resource could be better spent around the community, rather than private estates. A fee of €22,500 for an annualized service had been obtained.

The Executive were reminded by Cllr Dermot Connolly that on the amalgamation of the Town Council with the County this was one of the undertakings agreed as there are a number of Council owned houses within some estates and a great deal of the open spaces within these estates doubled up as recreational and amenity zones in the absence of other directly provided ones by Council.

Some strange voting occurred with an amendment to Cllr Dermot Connolly's original proposal from Cllr Aisling Dolan to allow more time for Tidy Towns and Solas, Tus discussions and making a decision in February being defeated before the main motion to contract the service and pay for it from Council Budget was unanimously carried.

Last year the service was paid from Councilors own notice of motion monies but this year they wish to see the contract paid from the sub heading of Parks and Recreational Spaces.

Cllr Michael Connolly was adamant that going forward for this new Council that Notice of Motion monies were to be used only for once off capital, commemorative or emergency costs, not for recurring maintenance issues and was clear that as a serving member of the last council – the notice of motion monies were only to be used last year as a once off for this issue.

Grass cutting will be continued for the rest of the year and will in turn be reviewed at the end of the year.



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20 YEARS SINCE AT CROSS CLOSURE - JOBS COUNT IN TOWN TOUCHES 3,600

BY COLM CROFFY

An Post	35
Aptar	160
Conneely Construction	50
Corrib Service Station	25
Creches / Pre Schools	45
Creggstone	50
Department of Education	285
Department of Justice	62
Department of Agriculture	10
Dolans Service Station	60
Dubarry	90
ESB/ Electric Ireland	24
Easy Fix	40
Enterprise and Technology Centre	165
Financual Services / Banking	90
Galway County Council	26
Gullanes Hotel	57
HSE Health Centre	55
Keller Group	33
KPW	38
Large Multiples	160
Library Innovation Centre	4
Liffey Meats	40
Moycarn Hotel	12
NCT	20
Nursing Homes/ Care Centres	75
Portiuncula Hospital	796
Pubs	32
Rackzone	10
Retailers - Non Grocery	200
Roscommon- Galway Mental Health Services	70
Service Providers	320
Surmodics	155
Takeaways / Restaurants	40
The Mart	20
The Shearwater Hotel	170
Truir Construction	40
Ward Western Automation	35
Western Post Form	60
Total :	3659

Some 20 Februarys since the grim news of the shut down of AT Cross, followed in 2003 with the bigger loss of 360 jobs in Square D - the community has in many ways bounced back with number of jobs offered not just by manufacturing which now surpasses 730 but close on 3,600 in total!

Again these figures don't include the amount of residents of our community and hinterland who commute for jobs to Athlone, Tullamore, Galway and even Dublin!



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FLOOD RELIEF WORKS SCHEDULED FOR FINISH IN 2025

After receiving €8.59 million from the Government in May of 2018 for major flood relief works, it now transpires that the town is facing four more winter seasons of danger before the works are scheduled to be completed.

The town's progress has been slow moving in comparisons to similar schemes that happened in both Clonmel and Fermoy, which took less than 36 months on first phase from Ministerial announcement to completion.

At a Municipal District Council meeting before Christmas Councillors were given a very detailed report from Project Engineer Brendan Dolan, who was only appointed in August 2019.

In essence there have been nine meetings of the Steering Group since the 19th of Sept 2018 between the State Agency responsible – OPW and Galway County Council. The Engineering Consultants to the whole scheme ARUP were appointed by the OPW in October 2019. Their inception meeting with the Council and OPW was on the 5th and they agreed to go to tender on the Environmental Consultants at the end of November.

From the report given the Engineering Consultants will be taking 15 months to come up with the "Identification and Development of A Preferred Scheme" which will bring the calendar to the summer of 2021. Then the Environmental Consultants will prepare the environmental impact assessment of what engineering works is proposed. The whole project will then have to complete all environmental and planning statutory regulations in an area of complex biodiversity, in a river flood plain.

The intention of these relief works is to change the course of the river so the town doesn't get continuously flooded as devastatingly in 2009 and again with storm Desmond in 2015. Many of the proposed solutions are new flood defences, including 530m of walls and 5km of flood defence embankments, along with a demountable flood gate. Two new flood alleviation arch culverts, each 6m wide, will also be installed at Ballinasloe East bridge,

Two Lock Gates will be introduced across the Canal and a sluice gate across the channel flowing into the marina from the canal, upgrading to the existing Kilclooney Road Bridge will be completed on the

River Deerpark, along with work on the riverbed around the bridge and maintenance of the east and west channels to ensure they're at maximum efficiency in the event of a flood.

This means that the State allocated the funds in 2018, nine years after the disaster but it will take nearly 7 years to plan and construct the project!

For many householders and business premises owners in the town centre with no insurance – (as they are liable to flooding) they are at the mercy of the weather for another five years at least; even with some of the temporary flood barriers and pumps that have been acquired by the authorities in latter years.

Councillors Dermot and Michael Connolly were outraged at the report on the basis that lot of the testing, scoping and detailed surveying undertaken with landowners and building owners in CFRAMM report appeared to be all consulting agan.

Cllr. Michael Connolly was adamant that in the recommendations to the CFRAM report they had given three ranked preferred options and could not understand why the project was not busy implementing them without doing additional consultancy studies.

Councillor Aisling Dolan wanted full written reports to the District Municipal Councillors not the main County Council, every three months to provide proper oversight to this huge investment for the future of the town.

Cllr. Dermot Connolly wanted the OPW to explain why they would not follow the solutions outlined in the CFRAM report that they paid for!



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DAWNA'S BREATHEASY COUNSELLING SERVICE

Dawna Concannon is a woman of many talents and they are all just pieces of the puzzle that go to make her career. Starting in the Department of Justice she went on to work for Supt O'Grady here in town.

Many will know her from the time she 'did the books' for some of the oldest business names locally – including McKeowns, Benny Grehan, Harneys Locksmiths and Declan Bannerton and she was with the Chamber of Commerce when talk first began about town enhancement.



Around the millennium, Dawna joined Galway Rural Development where her work brought her into contact with the long-term unemployed but it was the recession that called for a major change in her focus. "I met so many older men who had lost their jobs in construction – small farmers who depended on off-farm work to supplement their income – especially those who were too old to emigrate, broken by the emigration of their own children and left with a loss

of self-esteem and no hope for their own future," states Dawna.

Dawna could offer them a listening ear but her belief that she needed more professional skills led her to study for a degree in Adult Guidance and Counselling from NUI Maynooth which she completed on a part-time basis. In 2017 she took her degree in psychotherapy and now began for her a new career or, one could say, she had found her true calling as she is now a full-time psychotherapist with her own practice called - Breatheasy Counselling.

While Dawna works with all age groups she has a particular affinity with young people as those she worked with in a voluntary role in Clontuskert's Faith and Fun club will attest. 'Cool' is how they describe her. She even found time to do a course in youth ministry with the Redemptorists which she says gave her 'a deeper insight into the diverse talents and needs of young people.'

Her time with Youth Work Ireland also took her on some foreign projects in Europe and she has worked with her counterparts in Finland, Switzerland, Greece, and Sweden, where she recalls being 'eaten alive' by mosquitoes while refereeing a hurling match!

Dawna also works in schools, mainly with Transition Year and she has recently engaged with groups within Comhairle na nÓg. She works out of Galway Community Counselling, Ballybane and The Dancing Soul in Athlone as well as at Ballinasloe and Portumna. While a lot of her work takes her into the saddest parts of the human experience Dawna herself is positive, optimistic and full of empathy and good humour.

To spend time with her and listen to her stories and reminiscences is in itself a tonic. Contact Dawna at Breatheasy Counselling 087 4198195/liosnasioga29@gmail.com

BY LIAM COSGROVE



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CHRISTMAS LIGHTS THE NEXT CHAPTER IN A NEW LOOK TOWN

Since 2015 the town centre has struggled with the erection and maintenance of the annual festive lights.

For most of the noughties, the Town Council did the heavy lifting of between €10,000 and €15,000 depending on the estimate pressures and the town centre retailers collected the difference, with the Chamber of Commerce project managing erection, insurance, certification and storage.

The twin whammy of the loss of the Town Council in 2014 and Chamber in 2015 lead to a perfect storm with no lights at all for 2014 and citizens trying to dress a tree in St. Michael's Square.

The Town Team was formed in 2015 and a new Rural Economic Development Zone Scheme (REDZ) underwritten by Government saw the Team apply for a new Green Tree, features and new strands. The business community agreed to maintain their contribution and Galway County Council contributing €6k from the rates.

As a part of the drawing down of the Grant Aid – the community had to have an independent fundraising element to the project so Fashion Shows, Raffles at the People of the Year Awards and a Zombie Walk were organised and ran to come up with the co financing amount – in the order of another €10k.

The maintenance and project management of the Xmas lights was transferred from Chamber to the Town Team with the Development Company (BACD Ltd) the underwriter for all regulation and contracts.

Looking at the five year table lighting the town centre cost €120,333 over five years, €70,000 was raised between business, community and county council whose grant in the past three years has been in the region of €1,500 – ie 10% of 2012 figure!!

The shortfall of €50,000 has been born by BACD. Some €30,000 was REDZ capital money. The Zombie Walk had its second night cancelled last year which wiped out any injection of funds, but in fairness to the business firms of town they all contributed and raised as much for Christmas 2019 as they did for previous years even while the Town Enhancement programme was happening.



The new festoon strings of lights on the new look Dunlo St cost €3,000 and really there is no guarantee that that type of lighting can or will be used on the other streets for next year.

So the Board of BACD, the Town Team and the Businesses are having a serious review of how to a) Invest in a new set of lighting that can be used on the new streets and town centre areas, b) erect, insure, store and power on annual basis the €12,000 plus costs of such a set and c) light or decorate other locations in the precincts of the town.

There is a strong view, that in common with other towns the community need to provide more annual fundraising towards improving the lights on annual basis with collection boxes at shop counters, Santa Walks, duck races or other such fundraising means.

The new Town Team have decided that a strategy must be in place before the end of March to plan and resource the next five years of lighting the new townscape.

Any ideas or suggestions welcome to Town Team members or Board Members (or directly contact 0909646516 /ballinasloetownteam@gmail.com).

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CHRISTMAS LIGHTS BUDGET OUTURN**Expenditure**

	Xmas 2015	Xmas 2016	Xmas 2017	Xmas 2018	Xmas 2019	Total
Erection & Purchase of Xmas Lights	€13,597.50	€17,820.70	€12,180.16	€15,016.02	€7,068.06	€65,682.44
Admin/Insurance	€1,522.49	€710.00	€700.00	€626.14	€819.70	€4,378.33
Festival	€1,928.44	€1,429.40	€2,096.94	€1,635.12	€0.00	€7,089.90
Tree/Construction	€17,081.84	€7,094.57	€3,314.39	€4,603.58	€4,250.00	€36,344.38
Esb	€803.73	€2,095.16	€1,150.99	€1,899.43	€890.55	€6,839.86
Total Expenditure	€34,934.00	€29,149.83	€19,442.48	€23,780.24	€13,028.31	€120,334.91

Income

Description						
Business Contributions	€11,045.60	€12,075.00	€12,305.00	€9,900.00	€9,960.00	€55,285.60
Galway Co. Co. CSS Scheme	€4,750.00	€3,500.00	€3,500.00	€1,500.00	€1,500.00	€14,750.00
Total Income	€15,795.60	€15,575.00	€15,805.00	€11,400.00	€11,460.00	€70,035.60

Surplus/Deficit	€(19,138.40)	€(13,574.83)	€(3,637.48)	€(12,380.24)	€(1,568.31)	€(50,299.31)
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CONTRIBUTORS

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ANITA KILLEEN NEW TOWN TEAM FACILITATOR



Jacinta Divilly (after five years of commitment) has stood down as facilitator of the Town Team. She did a wonderful job taking the team from a mere concept to a fully functioning and hugely positive group. The Team, a standing committee of the B.A.C.D., will now regroup and refocus for the key challenges and issues of the 2020 – 2025 period.

A Young busy Radiographer in Portiuncula Hospital,- Anita Killeen ,married to Cormac and raising a family of three - Anna 18 studying accountancy and their two boys Danny 14, and Charlie 12 both in Junior Cycle in Garbally; has accepted the role.

Anita who originally hails from Coose, Woodford arrived to Ballinasloe in 1995 taking up a permanent post in the Radiology department. The plan was to stay one year. Work and life was so good she stayed the second year and bumped into a Meelick man, Cormac, at the "Planet Night Club" and within a few short years they were married and setting up home in The Pines.

Like a lot of young couples new to the area she got involved in community affairs first through the Residents Association, The Parents Association of Creagh NS, helped out with the underage GAA, and was always committed to the Sports & Social club in Portiuncula Hospital.

She believes that the LIFE Magazine was her recruiting sergeant "As soon as the magazine pops through the letterbox there is a queue to read it in our house ! I was, and still am amazed at the range and depth of incredible work going on in our community. I have to keep reminding myself that this is all our local people and their good news stories. There is an abundant number of positive, proactive people in our community doing really good things; I was impressed with this ethos and wanted to be part of it all", states Anita.

She found herself at a meeting in 2018 and has not looked back

since. "This is a great group, we don't get bogged down in too many meetings, there is an extremely positive vibe, it is NOT a complaints forum, no idea is too big or too small to merit discussion" she explains .

For Anita one of the highlights of the past Town Teams five year tenure was the last People of the Year Awards and standing at the top of the Shearwater Ballroom full of over 450 people. "Just to see the numbers of decent volunteers who are giving of their talents and time – these are the real champions of our community; in essence everyone in that Ballroom and their organisations is part of the Town Team. The Steering / Project Group I will be facilitating for the next few seasons wants to reach out to all these volunteers, link them together and combine all their volunteering force to develop our community enabling it to reach its potential", explains Anita.

"I genuinely want to build on the great work that Jacinta and the first Town Team did by getting everyone to re-connect, our neighbours, residents associations, sports clubs, societies, work places. I want to foster a strong community spirit that is not just here for the dark days but to encourage ourselves to do this throughout the calendar" continues Anita.

She is adamant that we have to stop lamenting the 20th Century and embrace the 21st. "The past should be a place of reference not a place of residence; we have to articulate, agree and share a vision of how our community will grow for the next decade. Success for the new Team will be when we are all bursting with pride for our new town centre, our new vision for our community and understanding that we are all connected".

We have no mandate from Board or local authority so this Spring, in building our consensus for our new five year plan, we want to engage with people who may have an idea or a project they believe might be of benefit to our community. We understand people might not want, or have the time to attend meetings but would like to share/develop their ideas. We will be hosting a series of pop-up Listening Clinics (See Advert page 15) and are encouraging everyone to drop in and share ideas. We will then distil everything into a draft plan which we will workshop at larger seeding meeting, engage some fresh helpers and belt on", enthuses Anita.

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June's
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Contact: **June McCafferty**
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MAIREAD DIVILLY SHORTLISTED FOR IRISH WOMEN'S AWARDS

Mairead Divilly, daughter of the late Willie and Anne Divilly of Dunlo St has been shortlisted for the 2ND Irish Women's Awards 2020, in the Services to Accounting & Finance category.

Her parents set up business in the late fifties, with a rented grocery store, prior to purchasing the current building and in turn opened the first town's supermarket which has been in business for over 60 years.

After attending St Joseph's NS and Scoil Mhuire Secondary School, she had originally wanted to pursue a career in Music and Mathematics so she applied to UCD to undertake a B Mus degree but changed to a B Comm degree. Following this, she joined PWC under a three-year training contract to pursue a qualification as a Chartered Accountant.

Since then she has been a partner in Mazars International accounting firm, which has over 500 staff in Ireland and operates in over 90 countries globally. She is specifically responsible for the Outsourcing and Compliance Division and expanded the services last year to Galway and Limerick.

Some of her favorite memories growing up in the area were marching in both the St Patrick's Day and the October Fair parades as part of Mrs Gilligan's band, playing the accordion. She also enjoyed being taught the clarinet first by John Gilligan and then Noel Madden in the Town Band. Her mother was very involved with the Salesians and for their annual dinner dance one year, she needed a band. She formed a band called Ceathra Rua. It consisted of herself, her brother, Seamus Feerick and Pat Geraghty who quickly got together to meet the demand.

Mairead has been a director of Skillnet Ireland for many years as a nominee of the Small Firms Association. Skillnet Ireland is a business support agency dedicated to workforce development and has been

in existence for 20 years and it was a very special moment for her when she received a Special Contribution Award at their annual conference dinner last September.

Ballinasloe is still very close to her heart and she tries to get back to visit regularly as the family business is in the town. She believes the town has changed over the years, losing significant employers such as AT Cross, Square D and St Brigid's. She believes that by attracting more investment into the town to improve employment opportunities will help sustain the local community. She also welcomes the new look of the town streets but there are many premises which need to be incentivised to re-open and /or upgrade to put vibrancy back into life in the town centre.

Her advice to leaving cert students is that the workplace is ever changing due to technological advances, globalisation, new ways of working, changing consumer demands and an array of competitive forces which are combining to disrupt the workplace to an extent that is unprecedented.

"They're different technologies performing ever more complex tasks that were once thought to be the sole domain of humans. Some jobs are disappearing entirely, but new technologies are also unlocking immense pent-up potential within businesses, bringing with it new jobs, many of which never existed previously. The very nature of employment itself is being redefined, with the rise of the gig economy, portfolio careers, virtual and remote working, and extended working lives" explains Mairead.



BY LIAM COSGROVE

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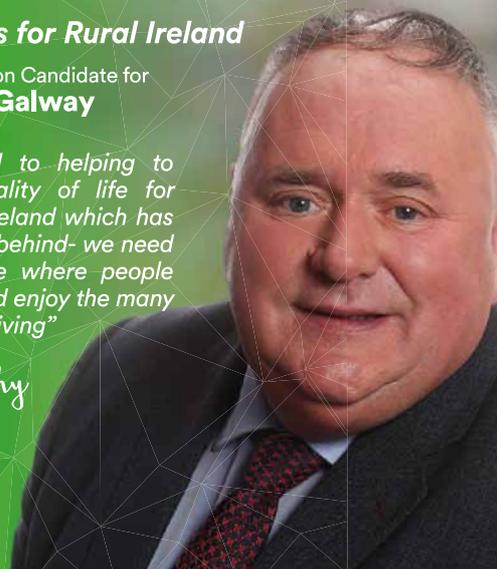
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"I am committed to helping to improve the quality of life for people in rural Ireland which has largely been left behind- we need to build a future where people can live, work and enjoy the many benefits of rural living"

Eugene Murphy



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THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Please continue your preference for Orla Leyden



Colleen Baxter

JCI Galway announced their recently elected council for 2020, which includes President, Colleen Baxter, granddaughter of Tommy Sheridan, a prominent businessman and past President of the Chamber of Commerce in Ballinasloe.

JCI can be summed up in one sentence for Colleen: "JCI train the young adults of today to make them the leaders of tomorrow."

She added "It is a great honour to be elected as JCI Galway President, especially with all that is going on in 2020."

Colleen was not only referring to Galway as the European Capital of Culture for 2020 but also the JCI European Conference that will be hosted in Dublin this May.

JCI has over 150,000 members globally in over 100 countries and a large delegation is expected to attend the conference to experience first-hand the 'Céad Míle Fáilte' that the Irish are renowned for.

JCI Ireland is a voluntary, world-wide, independent, personal-development organisation for young professionals and entrepreneurs aged between 18 and 40.

Colleen has very passionate views on the future of the town. "I feel smaller Galway towns are the backbone of Galway city and county, if they fail then the county will inevitably fail. I believe Ballinasloe is a great town with a wonderful business community" states Colleen.

When comparing business in Ballinasloe and Galway, she deemed work/life balance is very important. "My grandparents ran a successful business for years and always reminded me with the phrase 'if you look after your customers then the tills will look after themselves'" said Colleen.

VOTE NO 1

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INDEPENDENT TD

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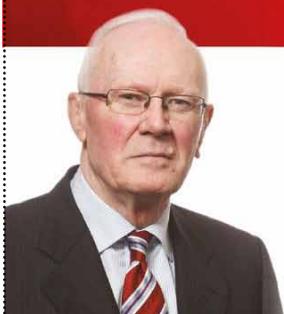
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PULSE PLAN FIRST SIX MONTHS

BY LIAM COSGROVE

Following a hectic and invigorating inaugural 12 months since formal inception - the Pulse Clubs held its first meeting of 2020 in Gullanes Hotel, and they have set out its outline plan for the next six months.

Following a hectic and invigorating inaugural 12 months since formal inception - the Pulse Clubs held its first meeting of 2020 in Gullanes Hotel, and they have set out its outline plan for the next six months.

The Pulse Clubs mission is to provide a networking platform for both new entrepreneurs and developing businesses; in the locale and also to provide members a mentoring and support service via monthly presentations by seasoned executives as well as subsidised in-depth courses on key topics.

On Wednesday February the 4th, Pulse members will either pitch or present to the other fellow members. Both AV Electrics (Raj Lyon Chohan) and Marie Lyons (Sky Blue Counselling) will get this opportunity on the night. This meeting will be held in Gullanes Hotel at 6.30pm.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 4th. The event will be in conjunction with Galway LEO as part of Enterprise Week. There will be a number of guest speakers on the night. There will also be networking and a one on one mentoring session with LEO. This meeting will also be held in Gullanes from 6pm to 8pm.

The April meeting will be held on Tuesday the 7th. This will be a networking event for all members. The time and venue will be confirmed closer to the time.

On Tuesday May the 5th, there will be interviews held for all members. Discussions will also be had on the night. Some new Pulse members will get the chance to present their new business, if they have not done so already, and what their learnings and challenges have been so far. The time and venue are yet to be confirmed.

For the June meeting on Tuesday the 2nd, there will be a fireside chat with a successful entrepreneur which will be available for members to attend.

There will be a networking Summer barbeque for all members in July.



Full details about these meetings will be available on www.thepulseclub.com and all social media or by contacting the Enterprise Centre on 090 964 6516.



Some Pulse members and local exhibitors at the Horizon 2020 event in The Shearwater Hotel before Christmas



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JUNE HOLISTIC THERAPY STARTS

Caltra native June McCafferty, owner of Junes Holistic Therapy, has a passion for holistic health and she believes whole heartedly in its healing ability. She has opened a new Holistic Centre adjacent to her house in Pallas, Caltra, Ballinasloe.

She is a qualified reflexologist and has a keen focus on women's health through holistic care. Her family originates from the Ballinasloe area and she comes from a long line of psychiatric and general nurses. Married to Daniel, they have two children.

June is a qualified Montessori Teacher and she has worked with adults with an intellectual disability for the last 26 years. In 2006, she qualified as a reflexologist from the An Tan school of Reflexology in Meath. She has furthered her training at Obus School of Healing Therapies in Leixlip, by undertaking a number of courses.

On the road to becoming qualified, she has gained lots of experience, in various therapies, the services she offers are holistic care to all with a main focus on women's health. The treatments she offers are in reflexology, holistic massage, Indian head massage and Hopi ear candling.

You can book by appointment only. She continues to train and update her skills on a regular basis as to give the best treatment possible. She is currently undertaking an Aromatherapy course.

Reflexology aims to stimulate the body's own healing processes

to keep it in homeostasis and maintain health and well-being. It reduces stress and induces deep relaxation and also helps regulate bodily functions such as digestive, endocrine, respiratory and excretory systems. It also aids in increasing energy levels. It assists in the elimination of toxins and balances the whole system. Reflexology instills a feeling of well-being and contentment. June's vision is always to offer a unique tailored package where one can experience total relaxation and stimulate one's own wellbeing.



June from June Holistic Therapy in Therapy Room

As a member of IRI (Irish Reflexology Institute) and Archti (Association of Registered Complementary Therapists of Ireland), her clients have the reassurance of knowing their therapist is a member of associations which pride themselves on their code of ethics and high standards of qualifications of their members.

On the clients first visit, she normally would conduct a full personal consultation. This takes into consideration your past and present health and lifestyle. The consultation enables the treatment to be tailored to your specific needs. Client information is strictly confidential and all therapies are carried out in a soothing therapeutic setting.

Her opening hours are Tuesday to Friday, from 9.30am to 8pm and Saturdays from 9.30am to 1pm. Her Holistic Centre is adjacent to her house in Pallas, Caltra.

If you wish to make an appointment contact June at 086 408 8003 or message her on Facebook at June McCafferty @ Junes Holistic Therapies. Vouchers are also available on request.

BY LIAM COSGROVE

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OPPOSITION LEADS TO REFUSAL OF LICENCE

BY LIAM COSGROVE

The local community is celebrating this January after welcoming the news that the permit to operate a waste transfer station has been refused by the Environment section at Galway County Council, which performed a thorough review of the application as well as objections from community, schools, clubs, businesses including a joint objection from the majority of councillors in the East Galway/Ballinasloe Municipal District.

Galway County Council refused the permit on the basis of insufficient evidence to show no adverse impact on the environment. Massive people power harnessed by the community action group 'Ballinasloe Says No' culminated in thousands of objections being lodged.

Led by Cllr Aisling Dolan and Dr Vincent Parsons, Chairperson Ballinasloe Says No Committee, a major environmental campaign garnered robust support from an energetic and engaged community. Serious concerns about the environment, road safety, health and future economic development were voiced so effectively that Galway County Council listened. Potential environmental damage caused by such a facility proximate to the floodplains of the River Suck affecting Galway and Roscommon were of extreme concern.

It all began two years ago on the 10th Jan 2018 in the Shearwater Hotel where local Area Councillors and the Minister for Climate Change, Communications & the Environment knew nothing about this facility or the impact to future development for our town. Opposition to the project was voiceless. However 2,239 families and households used their voice in Sept 2019 when they submitted objections to the permit and the reasons why this development



Group outside proposed site

would have an impact on their health & safety. Thanks to the campaign team and supporters and to everyone who put their names on the line for the successful legal challenge to the High Court in Nov 2018 – the facility will not be going ahead.

“We also take this opportunity to thank all of our supporters from Ballinasloe, East Galway, Roscommon and beyond; our legal team, all who have worked diligently; those who donated to our campaign, fundraised for our campaign and helped raise awareness of our campaign both locally and nationally” stated Dr Vincent Parsons.

The Group are now confident that the future is bright for Ballinasloe, East Galway and Roscommon. The location of the town in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands will in the future reap the benefits of tourism development and job investment, with the fantastic natural resources - the River Suck Blueway, Beara-Breifne and Hymany, Suckvalley Walkways. The announcement of €4.5m Greenway funding will further help the town prosper.

The Waste facility operator has a couple of weeks to lodge a legal challenge to overturn the decision of Galway County Council.

Revitalisation of Ballinasloe Town Team

BALLINASLOE TOWN TEAM: A progressive active committee promoting the development of Ballinasloe and its hinterlands to reach its potential.

We are currently revitalizing the team and want to engage with our community. We believe in fostering a greater community spirit and build on the fantastic community work already going on.

- Would you like to be part of our Town Team?
- Have you any ideas, big or small, you would like to develop to enhance our community?

If so please come and meet some of our members at our pop-up clinics. Drop it for a chat, share your ideas and discover how you can play a part in making our town an even better place to work and live.

POP UP CLINICS

LOCATION	DATE	TIMES
Credit Union	Thursday 6 th Feb	4 - 5.30 pm
Library	Tuesday 11 th Feb	4 - 6 pm
Brewery Lane	Thursday 13 th Feb	6 - 8pm
Shearwater	Sunday 16 th Feb	7 - 9 pm



BEC

Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre
An initiative of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd.

For further details contact Anita Kileen at ballinasloetownteam@gmail.com or 0909646516

MEET THE CANDIDATES IN CONSTITUENCY



DOLAN Aisling (Fine Gael)

Aisling Dolan is a native of Poolboy, Ballinasloe, daughter of Tony and Teresa. She comes from a farm by the River Suck and in Moore, Roscommon. Educated in Scoil Mhuire and NUI Galway she has a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Languages for Business. Aisling works in Project Management at NUI Galway in Health Innovation Hub Ireland and prior to that with Enterprise Ireland.

Aisling is a member of Galway Co. Council and set up "Ballinasloe Says NO" action group, protecting our environment and River Suck Callows SPA, winning a High Court case based on the EU Habitats Directive. She rallied support for over 2,000 submissions objecting to the permit for a major Waste facility in the town.

As a Fine Gael TD, Aisling will represent Ballinasloe at the highest level

in government, ensuring we get our fair share of investment. The absence of a government TD has been disastrous for this area.

Aisling is fighting hard for: • Advanced Technology Centre in Creagh. • High Speed Broadband and Internet Hubs • Health care and Portiuncula Hospital • Businesses and Jobs - halted a proposed 9% rates hike. • Protecting the Environment –winning a High Court battle • Fighting for Farmers and Farm income • Fighting for a new school for Scoil An Chroí Naofa

Aisling's priorities include Health and Portiuncula Hospital, and was instrumental in securing a meeting with the Health of Minister, for the funding the 50 bed unit at the hospital.

"It's been 66 years since we last had a TD in Ballinasloe. Now we have a great chance to elect a TD in Ballinasloe, fighting for Portiuncula, Investment, Jobs and our Environment. It is an honour and a privilege to have this unique opportunity to represent the people of this historic town.

Vote No.1 Aisling Dolan.



FITZMAURICE Michael (Indp.)

I want to thank the people of the Roscommon-Galway constituency for giving me the honour of representing you for the past few years. I want to thank you for your support and I must also pay tribute to my wife, Maria, our two daughters and son for their continued help. I also thank a great campaign team and office staff for their dedication.

I am very proud of my roots on a small farm in parish of Glinsk/Creggs on the Roscommon-Galway border and I am fully acquainted with the difficulties and problems faced by families living in the Roscommon/Galway area.

I have been involved in many community groups including the TCCA, Board of Management of our local school and have been actively involved in the GAA and I will always support all sporting organisations as they provide facilities to enable our youth to participate in all types of sports for their

mental, physical, social and character development.

Since you first gave me the opportunity to represent you in Dáil Éireann I have succeeded in putting the spotlight on Rural Ireland.

I managed to get politicians and others to focus on the lives of people west of the Shannon. I will always highlight the major contribution being made by our farmers and everybody living in our rural areas.

Rural Ireland has a future and I hope that this will be the generation that can stem the tide of decline on our farms and in our towns and villages.

Businesses can be established or relocated to rural towns and villages if the proper incentives and policies are put in place. The families who choose to live in Rural areas or in Rural towns and villages must be supported and their choice respected.

"Ní neart go cur le chéile"

Together we can build a new future,
Together we can succeed!



HANLEY Paul (National Party)

Paul Hanley is standing in the Roscommon/Galway constituency as he has witnessed first-hand the collusion between government ministries and private individuals affiliated with the government in opening Direct Provision centres throughout rural Ireland. This corruption must stop now and forever, the National Party will put an end to Direct

Provision in Ireland.

Paul's background is in business. He comes from a well-known Rooskey family who were involved in the meat business. Paul has experience on the boards of private companies; experience in forestry, alternative energy, and environmental issues. Paul says "I was a Fianna Fáil supporter until quite recently and have long had an interest in Irish politics and Irish affairs. Having seen the hamfisted handling of the Direct Provision system and the devastating effects of mass-immigration in general I felt it was necessary

for me to become involved with the National Party."

The Roscommon-Galway constituency needs someone who will represent the interests of the Irish people and who will not toe the party line or engage in corrupt bargaining to support whatever ineffectual government is cobbled together post-election. Paul Hanley is a new alternative who is unafraid to speak out on the issues other politicians are terrified to discuss such as the ravaging effects of mass-immigration on rural Ireland. Paul is the only candidate in the Roscommon-Galway constituency who can offer a truly nationalist voice to the people of Roscommon-Galway.

There are 10 National Party candidates contesting the general election across the country. Paul Hanley is just one of these candidates. The National Party is offering voters a professional, cogent and patriotic choice in this election – to rise above the tennis-ball politics of FF/FG or the rotten cabal of the left. A vote for Paul Hanley is a vote to put Ireland's interests first.



HOPE James (Aontu)

James Hope is from a small farm near Ballaghadereen, and went to school at St. Nathy's College. He studied Science at NUI Galway, before transferring to Economics, Law, Political Science, and Archaeology. He campaigned for better disability access, better environmental policies, and better pay and conditions for Nurses.

He was President of NUI Galway Students' Union, and Chair of the board of directors of various campus businesses, as well as being a self employed security contractor. He currently works as a language teacher in Ballaghadereen, as well as farming, and plays music in his spare time.

James and Aontú want to revitalise rural communities in the west of Ireland and end the overheating of Dublin by creating a technology and industrial corridor along the western part of the N5 towards Knock Airport and between the Sligo-Dublin and Galway-Dublin rail routes, thereby

building the infrastructure needed to move 21st century industry into Connaught. He wants to support farming families by breaking the cartels that force farmers to sell below cost.

Furthermore, James wants to provide financial and logistical supports for parents to raise their children in a safe environment without fear of poverty or eviction. The closure of vital supports like Cuisle, with the loss of 40 jobs, and other vital services proves that the current Fianna Fail/Fine Gael cartel has no interest in supporting rural communities like Roscommon, Galway or anywhere else west of the Shannon.

The Fianna Fail/Fine Gael vision for Connaught seems to be a deserted economic wasteland of Sitka Spruce trees, whose only purpose is to offset the carbon emissions of the capital. Aontú want to open the government's eyes to the Ireland outside the M50. And show them that the people of rural Ireland can no longer be ignored! That is why I am standing for Aontú.



KERRANE Claire (Sinn Féin)

Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil's record of delivery for Ballinasloe speaks for itself. They have created and stood over the greatest crises in our health service and housing. Rents have soared, the trolley crisis at Portiuncula is worse than ever, commercial rates have increased, insurance prices are crippling small businesses and motorists, carers cannot access respite, farmers are on their knees, childcare costs are putting parents to the pin of their collar, local council funding has been cut and there has been a lack of investment in jobs.

For the next 30 years, the banks you bailed out will not pay a cent in tax while they make billions in profits. You will pay increased carbon tax, property tax (for nothing in return), motor tax to drive on bad roads and wait until you are 68 to receive a pension.

While candidates have been tripping over each other to take credit for the 50 bed unit in Portiuncula, if Fine Gael do not lift the embargo on recruitment of nurses, these beds will lie empty. Their decision to dismantle the 22-bed unit at St. Brigid's Hospital has had lasting consequences.

Sinn Féin will give workers and families a break. We will cut the cost of living for you and your family. We will introduce a Living Wage to pay workers properly, cut the USC for low-paid workers, freeze and reduce rents, deliver the greatest public housing building programme in the history of the state, recruit nurses as well as open beds.

I am asking you to consider what has been delivered for you and your community. Fine Gael now tell us that they have all the answers, but where have they been for Ballinasloe the past 9 years?

Ballinasloe cannot wait any longer. Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have had their day.



LEYDEN Orla (Fianna Fail)

I am contesting the 2020 General Election for Fianna Fáil as I want to see a fairer Ireland, an Ireland for all. I have a strong proven track record as a public representative serving on Roscommon Co. Council for over 15 years (Cathaoirleach, 2017-2018). I bring experience, commitment and determination and a great understanding of

politics and community development, working with individuals, families and communities in Roscommon and Galway. If elected to Dáil Éireann, I will be a strong voice for Roscommon-Galway.

I have worked on a number of tourism projects with the Suck Valley Development Co-operative and Suck Valley Angling Hub in Roscommon-Galway. I also served on GRETB and I currently serve on the Western Regional Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce.

Orla Leyden said "We need a change of government to bring about the

following: - Increase Affordable, Social, Private Housing; - Better Healthcare & Homecare and Home Help, - Improved Disability & Respite Services, Increased support for Mental Health and Wellness and campaign for new facility at Cuisle, - Increased support for Family Carers, - Increased investment in Childcare sector, - A new 50 Bed ward Block at Portiuncula, - Support Agriculture and Farmers in our region, - Develop Innovation & Enterprise Centres: - Roscommon Town & Ballinasloe, Re-establish 4th Western Brigade, Custume Barracks, Athlone; - Support Revitalisation of St. Brigid's Campus in Ballinasloe, - More Rail and Local Transport Initiatives, Develop Tourism: Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, - Action on Climate Change, - Tackle Crime - More Gardaí, new CCTV funding, rural crime taskforce."

Married to Paolo Roberto, Orla lives in Castlecoote (close to the River Suck on the Galway Border with Creggs) with their daughter Donata, who is a 6th class pupil in Fuerty NS. "I am a graduate of NUI, Galway with a BA in Sociology and Politics and Italian, Masters in Sociology and Politics and Diploma in Community Development Practice."



MURPHY Eugene (Fianna Fail)

I have been honoured to represent the people of Roscommon/Galway in Dáil Éireann over the past number of years and I thank you for your ongoing goodwill and support. I am calling on you all to continue your support for me and I promise I will continue to work hard to improve the quality of life for people in rural Ireland and I will continue

to represent your views in the most effective way possible in Dáil Éireann.

I remain committed to helping to improve the quality of life for people in rural Ireland which has largely been left behind- we need to build a future where people can live, work and enjoy the many benefits of rural living.

Ballinasloe's potential is not being met. It's an ideal distance to commute to Galway city, but the government has not invested the necessary infrastructure to make it feasible. It has also neglected the area in terms

of IDA site visits and promotion. Fianna Fáil wants to see more balanced regional development - the last 7 years have seen a massive investment drive in the Greater Dublin area to the detriment of western and midlands counties. This trend needs to be addressed.

As the Party's Spokesperson on the OPW and Flood Relief I have worked hard on the many challenges in this brief but also tackling issues which affect everyday life for people. My priorities for the Roscommon/Galway constituency include: Healthcare- reducing hospital waiting lists, delivery of projects such as the 50 bed unit for Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe and the Sacred Heart Hospital in Roscommon, provision of high speed broadband, services for people with disabilities, mental health, focus on farming and agriculture, balanced regional development, job creation, climate change, revitalisation of rural towns, ASD services for children and affordable childcare.



NAUGHTEN Denis (Independent)

My biggest priority during my term in Government was to secure investment for the new 50 bed ward block at Portiuncula Hospital Ballinasloe. I ensured the Government committed to a delivery date of 2022 and after working on this for the previous two years I secured a commitment to proceed with the project from Minister Simon Harris last year.

This was one of the few major hospital building projects that got the green light to proceed in 2019.

It is expected that once the ground works have been completed construction on the new building can commence to have the project completed by 2022.

I also focused on progressing the redevelopment of the St. Brigid's Hospital site as a key driver of job creation in South Roscommon & East Galway. Two

years ago - with the support of BACD - I ran a workshop 'Reimagining St. Brigid's' and produced a report on potential uses for the campus, which built a very clear consensus around the future vision for St. Brigid's.

In the coming months the final steps will be taken to relocate services from the St Brigid's campus and I have already had interesting approaches from investors who are willing to use the 'Reimagining St. Brigid's' Report as the template for development of the site. To find out more visit www.DenisNaughten.ie

My priorities for Ballinasloe & the wider area include: - Deliver broadband to every home - Complete construction of the new 50 bed ward block at Portiuncula & explore possibility of using St. Joseph's ward to provide 20 additional beds - Make Ballinasloe and surrounding communities a key part of developing the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands tourism strategy - Progress the redevelopment of St. Brigid's Hospital to drive local job creation - Secure funding to complete the Ballinasloe flood relief works.

Continued overleaf...



O'DONOGHUE Julie (Green Party)

Julie is a secondary school teacher and mother of two young children living in Roscommon Town. She has volunteered with organisations at both local and national level. As a founding member of "Plastic Free Roscommon" and other community groups, she has organised events on sustainability, climate action and plastic waste reduction. She served on the National Committee of the charity "Friends of Breastfeeding" for two years and organises a local peer support group for parents and children. She campaigned with "Together for Yes" on the repeal of the 8th Amendment and on reproductive rights. She joined the Green Party for their environmental policies and progressive values.

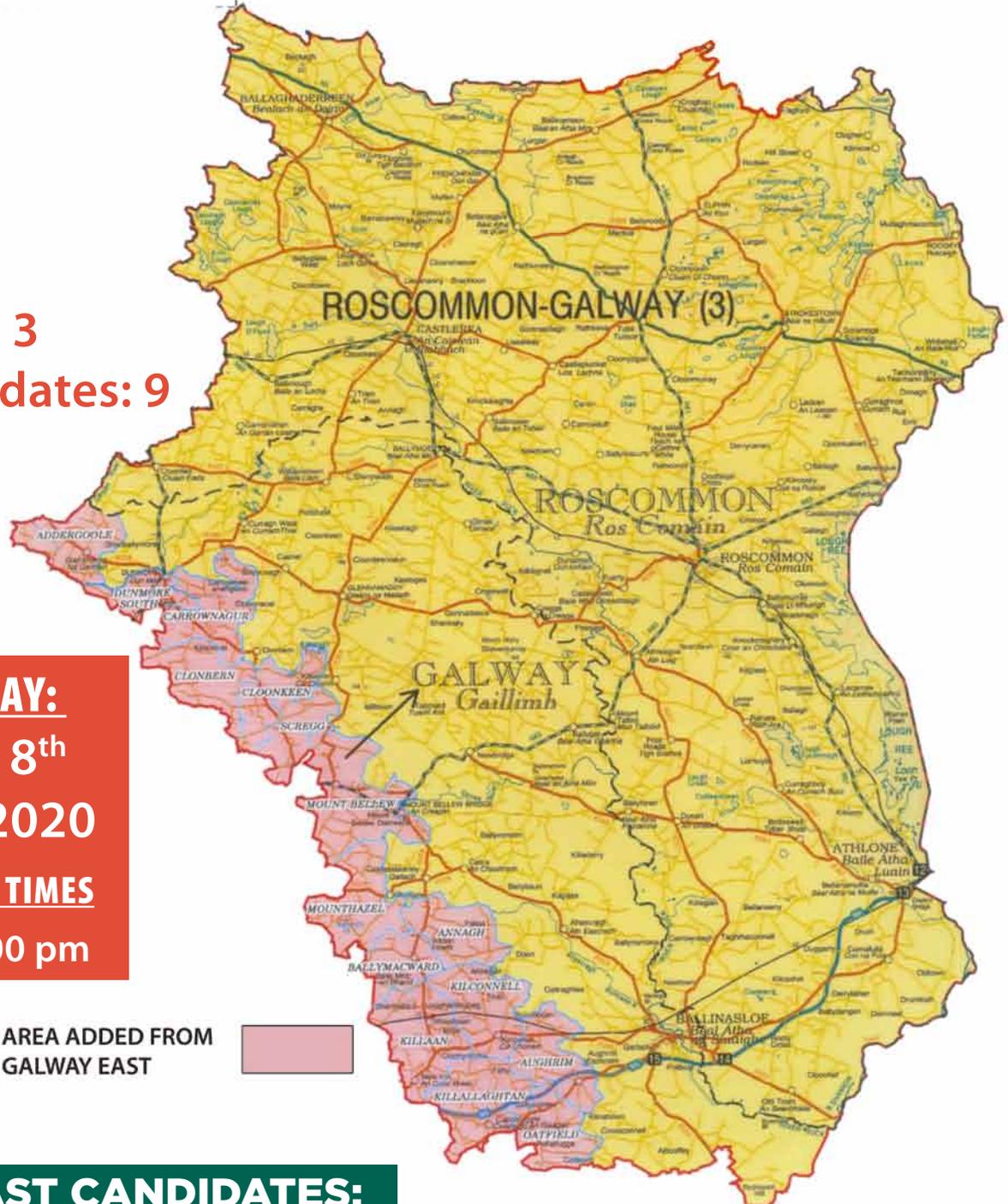
Julie believes that transitioning to a greener economy must be done in a way that is fair to everyone. She will prioritise investment in climate actions that will lower emissions and benefit communities in Roscommon-

Galway while protecting the environment for our children and grandchildren. She wants to focus on more balanced development between rural and urban areas by investing in public transport, ecotourism, greenways, remote working opportunities, resilient agriculture, retrofitting programmes and community-led renewable energy. She plans to support the renewal of all communities in this region by establishing local Just Transition Commissions that will bring together individuals, community groups, local authorities and state agencies to collaborate on community-led, long term plans that will focus on community regeneration and development.

Julie believes that our economy needs to be people-centred to ensure improved services in areas such as health and housing and that economic success should be measured by people's quality of life. She wants to offer real change from business-as-usual politics to a socially progressive platform that prioritises people, our environment and our communities.

No. of Seats: 3

No. of Candidates: 9



POLLING DAY:
Saturday 8th
February 2020
POLLING BOOTH TIMES
7.00 am - 10.00 pm

AREA ADDED FROM GALWAY EAST

GALWAY EAST CANDIDATES:

No. of Seats: 3 • No. of Candidates: 12

- CANNEY Sean (Independent)
- CANNON Ciaran (Fine Gael)
- EGAN Eoin (Green Party)
- KILLILEA Donagh (Fianna Fail)

- McCANN Declan (Renua)
- O'HARA Louis (Sinn Fein)
- O'REILLY David (Independent)
- RABBITTE Anne (Fianna Fail)

- REID Peter (Social Democrats)
- ROCHE Peter (Fine Gael)
- SPELLMAN Marian (Labour)
- WARD Martin (Aontu)

THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER...

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

GERRY FITZGERALD is Captain of the Millennium Golf Society this year. Tony Dolphin is President, Leo Mulvaney is Hon. Sec. (087 4159858) and Pat Harney remains the Treasurer. Their first outing is in March.

AUGHRIM celebrated the arrival of 2020 with a fireworks display, a champagne and mulled wine party while the kids were feted with crisps minerals etc. The entire village was lit up with over 12,000 lights for the festive season.

THE LATE SEAMUS GRENNAN of Shannonbridge was a former president and captain of the Ballinasloe Golf Club. A former employee of the ESB Power station in his village, he was a well-known low handicap golfer who competed at venues throughout the country.

GERRY RYNNE, who passed away at his home in Poolboy, Ballinasloe, was a native of Inagh, Co. Clare. He was a former Chief Nursing Officer in St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe prior to his retirement.

KILLALAGHTON Drama Group celebrated their 80th year by staging Jimmy Keary's three-act play "Mother Knows Best" in the local hall for three nights to packed houses. The play was produced by Micheal Kearns and Sean Dolan and had a cast of ten.

BALLINASLOE CHOIRS raised over €10,800 on Christmas Eve for local charities with a session of carol singing. This was the 16th year for the combined choirs to perform and have now raised over €84,000 for worthy causes. The money raised this year will be divided between the Ballinasloe Social Services and the Galway Hospice.

JOE HEALY'S presidency of the IFA will be remembered with a "night out" in the Lough Rea Hotel on Saturday, 8th February. Proceeds of the night will go to Cancer Care West, of which Galway's first IFA National President, John Donnelly, is a founder.

CHELTENHAM TIPSTERS TO VISIT

Kiltormer GAA club are gearing up for this year's Cheltenham festival with a preview night in Gullane's Hotel on Saturday 29th February at 8pm Sharp.

To date, two huge names in the racing world have been confirmed with Racing Manager for the renowned Gigginstown House Stud, Eddie O'Leary and the country's leading Amateur Jockey, Derek O'Connor in attendance. More high profile guests will also be announced. MC on the night is John McIntyre, Sports Editor with the Connacht Tribune.

There is a cover charge of €20 to attend with proceeds going to the Ballinasloe based East Galway & Midland Cancer Support & Kiltormer GAA Floodlight Project. See the Kiltormer Facebook page for further details and information or contact Stephen Cormican on 087 2864145



Eddie O'Leary



Derek O'Connor

KPW invests in its 5th Digital Printing Machine

KPW is the largest digital printers in the West of Ireland. In December KPW installed the latest digital printing machine that cost in the region of €220,000. While KPW has contracts with Ireland's biggest Hotel chains servicing Ireland and the UK, it is providing the local business that has built the company to what it is today. KPW offers a 24 hour Digital print service and if necessary a same day print turnaround. Elections are a great boost for KPW who have been printing literature, signs and posters for the upcoming elections since last Sept. No sign, banner or poster is too big or too small for KPW, given the amount of equipment at its disposal.

Servicing the local market is still vital to KPW, making customers feel at home while placing orders is important and KPW places great emphasis on customer care. Walk in business keeps increasing at KPW for such items as: Wedding Stationery, Memorial Cards, Flyers, Posters Signs etc.

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HARVEY DUTHIE'S NEW UNIVERSITY ROLE

Recently appointed Vice-president and Head of Development and the Foundation at the University of Limerick, Harvey Duthie of Cleaghmore has had a very varied and international career to date. Growing up in Ballinasloe, Harvey (son of William and Muriel) had many different hobbies including fishing and swimming. He lived within walking distance from the pool, where he would spend hours upon hours of his childhood swimming.

Working with Manager Dougie Rafter was one of his favourite jobs during university. He fondly remembers the large bang due to the roof collapsing and quickly following it, the letter the council sent him letting him go from the job.

He believes that the newly renovated pool is a great asset to the town. He also completed the Frances Thornton memorial swim, an 11km swim across Galway Bay. He also spent a summer working for Liam Keller in France. He told his parents to get him a job 'front of house' and has followed that advice to this day.

While choosing his College course, his neighbour and teacher Mrs. Maureen O'Malley, played a big role and suggested to him that he should study Finance in Maynooth. He enjoyed this degree and qualification has served him well professionally since then, even though it took him a year longer than it should have!

"I don't think anybody sets out with fundraising as their career goal but I have found it fascinating. Working for the UN in Rome, I sat in on a session where Prime Minister Berlusconi warmly welcomed Colonel Gaddafi to Italy, have heard Bill Gates talking about innovations in global health, followed by site visits to see his organisation's work first-hand in Africa and worked on a campaign for UNHCR at the height of the recent refugee crisis. More recently I have

seen how philanthropy is transforming the educational landscape in places like Oxford University and Singapore Management University. I hope I draw on this experience in my new role in Limerick" states Harvey.

More recently, he has seen how philanthropy is transforming the educational landscape in places like Oxford University and Singapore Management University. He hopes that his experiences will help him in his new role with the University of Limerick.

Having a US-style approach to fundraising was almost frowned upon when he started. However, this model, refined for Ireland, forms the basis of the best practice seen in the largest and most successful campaigns here. Irish campaigns are getting bigger, more ambitious, supported by a nation that is among the most generous in the world – both in how they support financially but also in how they give out their time.

"The University of Limerick has recently launched its new strategic plan, UL@50. It's too early to discuss the different priorities of the projects that they'll



An advertisement for Venezia Ristorante Italiano. The central focus is a circular logo with a brown background, featuring a black silhouette of a gondolier in a gondola against a yellow sun. Below the logo, the word "VENEZIA" is written in large, gold, serif capital letters, and "RISTORANTE ITALIANO" is written in smaller, gold, serif capital letters below it. Surrounding the logo are images of the restaurant's interior, including tables with red chairs and a checkered floor, and various Italian dishes such as a plate of pasta, a pizza, and a plate of meat and vegetables.

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Harvey and Family on Hols in Connemara

undertake, but UL's President, Dr. Des Fitzgerald has a vision to ensure UL remains a regional, national and global force. As CEO of UL's Foundation, I hope to play an important part in that growth", explains Harvey.

He comes back to town quite regularly, with many school friends still living here. "Ballinasloe, like many towns of its size in Ireland, saw tough times in recent years. However, over the last 12 months he has noticed a renewed vibrancy and I look forward to being



Harvey with Mali's Minister of Health, Minister Samba Sow at the meeting of African Ministers during the World Health Organisation's annual meeting in Dakar, Senegal in 2019.

here much more often now that I'm back in Ireland. Coming from London, where every inch of space is at a premium, I'm very curious to see what will happen to the site at Brigid's Hospital. It looks like there is a groundswell of support to use it. With Ballinasloe's access to other towns and cities, it would be a shame not to utilise this area better" states Harvey.

His advice to many Leaving Cert students is to choose something they are interested in or passionate about. "The long hours in 'the real world' that follow will hurt less if you enjoy what you are doing" he believes.

He would like to acknowledge a lot of people but especially the unwavering support of his Dad (William), Mum (Muriel) and Sister (Mia). "They have always backed my decisions, whatever or wherever they may be. (Although Mum is less enthusiastic about his interest in cycling since a car left him needing twelve stitches in my face" jokes the new Vice-president of one of the largest Universities in Ireland.

BY CLOM CROFFY

Copy Edition Deadlines

BALLINASLOE LIFE

March 12	Edition 1	April/May
May 13	Edition 2	June/July
July 13	Edition 3	August/September
September 11	Edition 4	October/November
November 11	Edition 5	December/January
January 13	Edition 6	February/March

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LIAM KELLY (1933-2020)

An Appreciation

BY COLM CROFFY

Again the town was deeply shocked to learn of the passing of Liam Kelly, founder Member and Former Director of Ballinasloe Credit Union, on Jan 11th this year.

Liam enjoyed his eighth decade in the shadow of Our Lady of Lourdes Spire and that of the Cupola of St. Brigid's Hospital, in his ancestral home where his father also was a nurse in the hospital.

His family had a long record of service to St Brigid's Hospital and its patients. After finishing his Psychiatric Nursing training, he worked (like so many others at the time) for a number of years in Castlereagh Hospital. Upon returning in 1965, he engaged in all manner of community and worker orientated social and cultural activities.

He married the love of his life Mary Doyle and they had a family of five boys and one girl - Liam, Oliver, Michael, Declan, Alan and Emer.

Having a rich baritone voice and being a dapper mover, he found himself a regular principal cast member for some of the great Musical Society shows from 1947 until 1973 - alongside Dermot Connolly, The Cullens, Maureen O'Donoghue and Johnny Furey. Johnny Furey was also Best Man at Liam's wedding.

He was a member of the Patrician Society connected with the Church in the mid-1960s when Dermot Connolly delivered one of their fortnightly lectures on the radical new financial and community-owned movement - The Credit Union. A group of men doing some ground renovation in Creagh Church under Fr. Dunne's supervision a few weeks later decided that they would establish one and Liam became the principal driver.

Liam's association with the Credit Union in Ballinasloe goes back to its inception in 1967 and he held the unique position of being the Credit Union's very first member. He served as a Board Director from 1967 to 2017. Ballinasloe owes Liam a heartfelt 'thank you' for his lifetime of credit union advocacy and volunteerism which benefited thousands of our members.

The growth of Ballinasloe Credit Union would not have been

possible without the voice of reason he always brought to every meeting. He was one of the best known and respected figures in the movement, both nationally and internationally.

Liam travelled the highway and byways of the country in the late 60s, 70s and 80s, promoting and empowering communities and indeed labour forces to manage their own savings and loan book.

During the early years of the movement he befriended another prominent pioneer of the movement, the Chair of the Derry Credit Union, John Hume. They became life-long friends and assisted with the long term development of the Irish League of Credit Unions, which now has some 260 plus Members.

Internationally he visited many parts of the developing world, addressed conferences and provided leadership to many struggling people and places - motivated only by a keen sense of Christian community generosity. Still, for Liam, life revolved around the locale and in particular the joys of seeing his family and his grandchildren all grow up.

He was instrumental in making Ballinasloe Credit Union one of only the second in the country that created a Social Investment Fund to create social economy and enterprise in the community.

He was very much moved by the respect afforded to him and his wife Mary by the Credit Union Chapter when they formally marked their Golden Anniversary in 2017 and was also very pleased to have been presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for service to the community in the People of the Year Awards in 2017.

All our condolences are offered to his wife Mary, Liam, Oliver, Michael, Declan, Alan and Emer, his relatives, friends, neighbours and many Credit Union Colleagues

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dilis.



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THIRD CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY SUCCESS

BY LIAM COSGROVE

Over 1,000 Christmas Day Jumpers were worn locally on Friday 13th of December by a variety of employees, students, teachers and indeed business owners, managers in an effort to drum up much needed support for the East Galway & Midlands Cancer Support Centre, based in Brackernagh.

With close to €10,000 collected thus far there are still a few places yet to finalise their jumper sums and the organisers have urged anyone who hasn't lodged their monies yet or would still like to donate contact bsloechristmasjumperday@gmail.com for further details.

The official handover photo with final cheque amount will be published in the next edition of Ballinasloe Life.



Dubarry Staff dressed up

8TH CHRINNIU RAISES OVER €3,000

BY LIAM COSGROVE



The 8th Annual An Chrinniú-Charity 12 Pubs of Ballinasloe, took place over the Christmas period. The event is believed to have been attended by over 1,000 people travelling from far and wide. In common with most other emigration afflicted towns – the diaspora pick a charity and evening on the lead up the family events of Christmas where they

can catch up with old school pals, team mates and neighbours.

The event is organised with the purpose of raising funds for the Special Care Baby Unit in Portiuncula Hospital. Funds are raised via a raffle on the night. Many of the prizes are funded by local businesses around the area. The total raised last year was €3,027 and the committee are determined to beat this total with one or two remaining corporate donations to arrive (full total to be announced in the next edition).

The organisers would like to pay a special thanks to the businesses of Ballinasloe who kindly donated raffle prizes, corporate donations,



Members of the committee: Céiteach Mac Stiofán, Emily Hughes, John Mulvihill along with Cllr. Aisling Dolan who donated to the event on the night. (Missing from photo: committee members, Alan Harney and Niall Holohan, Paddy Finn and Keith Hession)

hosted the patrons on the night and helped greatly with the smooth running of the event.

Some of the businesses involved in the event were The Emerald Bar, Brewery Lane, Maud Millars, The Cellar Bar, Grenhams's Bar, An Táin, Gullanes Hotel, The Auld Sod, Rumour's Nightclub, The Dunlo Tavern, Joe's Bar, Ryan's Bar, The Pillar House, Downey's Bar, Coral Leisure, James Stephens Financial Services, Cllr Aisling Dolan, Electricity Exchange.



Two charities received €4,500 each from the proceeds of the Christmas Eve Carol Singing in Ballinasloe. The beneficiaries were the Galway Hospice and Ballinasloe Social Services.

PORTIUNCULA HEART FAILURE PROJECT

BY LIAM COSGROVE

The Heart Failure Service provided by Portiuncula University Hospital and Galway Primary Care is one of the most successful projects to benefit from the €20m Sláintecare Integration Fund announced by Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD.

The expanded Heart Failure Service will build on the joint services currently being delivered by Portiuncula University Hospital (PUH) and Galway Primary Care, in line with the Sláintecare goals of moving care to the community, reducing waiting lists and improving experiences for patients.

The enhanced service will support the early diagnosis of heart failure by providing new clinics in Primary Care Centres where patients can access echocardiograms within 2 weeks of referral. This means that new weekly heart failure virtual clinics will enable GPs to discuss cases with the consultant cardiologist. This will improve access to cardiology and heart failure expertise from advanced nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists in the community and in the hospital for GPs to help them triage and manage the care of patients with new diagnoses of heart failure.

Dr Aidan Flynn, Consultant Cardiologist and project lead at PUH said, "We are delighted to secure €330k in funding from the Sláintecare Integration Fund to further develop this service. Heart failure is the most common reason for older people to need a hospital stay and these patients often require a lengthy stay in hospital.

"When GPs are able to refer their patients for echocardiograms in Primary Care Centres close to their patients' homes, they are able to reduce the number of patients who need to be referred to the hospital to see a consultant for diagnosis. Our vision is to enable the right care to be delivered in the right place at the right time for patients with heart failure. We want to be able to provide the same level of hospital clinic care in the community, with follow up in the hospital as required for any patients whose condition changes."

James Keane, General Manager of Portiuncula University Hospital added, "Over 2,600 people in the catchment area of the hospital have a diagnosis of heart failure and an additional 5,000 people are asymptomatic and at risk of developing heart failure. Currently the majority of these patients have to be seen in the hospital to get a diagnosis and follow up care. The proposed Heart Failure Service will integrate the care from the hospital with the care from the community and this will mean faster diagnosis and a better experience for patients by providing services closer to their home."

Seamus Beirne, General Manager of Galway Primary Care commented, "We are excited at the opportunity to expand the work of the Community Heart Failure Management Programme which has been working with University Hospital Galway and Portiuncula University Hospital for over ten years."



From left: Grace Gannon, Clinical Nurse Manager 2, Cardiology Services; Dr Chris McBrearty, Senior Registrar in Medicine; Catherine Nolan, Clinical Nurse Specialist for Community Cardiovascular/Heart Failure; Dr Aidan Flynn, Consultant Cardiologist; Marita Fogarty, Director of Nursing; James Keane, General Manager; and Siobhan Woods, Development Officer Primary Care.

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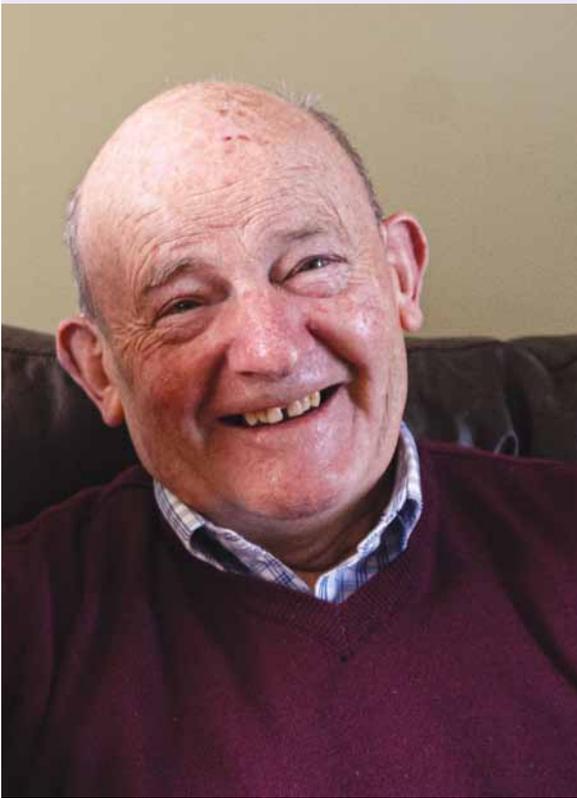
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FRANK KENNY - CRAFTSMAN WHO SPOKE IN WOOD



The death of master carpenter Frank Kenny of Harbour Road just before Christmas shocked and saddened a multitude. Notwithstanding that Frank has been ill since late Spring, he had returned home and was making steady progress before he died in Portiuncula, surrounded by his loved ones.

The phrase "he never had a bad word said against him" is often overused. But it seems particularly apt when applied to Frank. He was fond of everyone that he had dealings with – and everyone was fond of him. He was always accommodating and nothing was ever too much trouble. Whenever you asked him to do anything his answer was always "no problem, whatsoever".

Frank's father Paddy died when he was only five. He and his twin brother Martin were raised by their mother May on their holding in Laurencetown. Typical schooling and then on to the Vocational School and apprenticeship meant that within a few years he had a full-time job with Kenny's Workshop in Ballinasloe as a carpenter.

His life changed forever when he met a young nurse, Cora O'Boyle, in the Emerald Ballroom. He was devoted to Cora throughout all of their fifty years of marriage. Frank was always happy for the real Boss to do the talking for both of them.

Frank was most proud of his four children: three sons Aiden, Declan, Ian, and one daughter, Claire, who was the apple of his eye. He had ten grandchildren and he adored each of them: Ethan, Laoise, Ashling, Teagan, Matilda, Ralph, Penelope, Patrick, Henry, and Mina.

Frank was a gifted carpenter and a master tradesman. He loved working with wood, and could make anything that he set his mind too. Frank has left a

physical legacy that pervades our locality – written in wood. That legacy lives on within people's private homes and in public spaces like his work for St Brigid's Hospital, Portiuncula and Bullaun Churches, and of course Ballinasloe Golf Club.

Although Frank was a late convert to the game of golf, he then played for nearly thirty years. He had two long-standing weekly golf appointments that were important to him. The Seniors 4-Ball every Wednesday and another 4-Ball every Sunday morning. The companionship he found on the golf course was the social highlight of his week. He also contributed to the Golf Club in his own quiet way. Often leaving the house early in the morning to do grounds-keeping maintenance on the course or repair work in the club house, and still be home in time for his breakfast with Cora.

Frank was the epitome of a grand quiet man.

BY LIAM COSGROVE

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ALL ABOARD! LET'S GO! NO BARKING PLEASE! BY KEN KELLY

Twenty one abandoned Greyhounds/Lurchers got a surprise Christmas gift when they were brought to new homes in Italy by the Killimor branch of the Galway SPCA and Limerick Animal Welfare Group. The dogs had been rescued and taken care of by these two groups for months before making the long trip.



In the presence of Diane Dolan, Ballinasloe and Anita Broadmore, Lawrencetown (Galway SPCA volunteers), who accompanied them to Italy, the trip is very reassuring for all dogs, because these volunteers help them live the journey as a beautiful adventure they do together with people they trust.

Diane explained "The journey began at 3pm leaving Limerick for Rosslare. Boarding for the ferry was 8pm and we were last to get on as the Greyhounds/Lurchers are classed as livestock. The ferry crossing took 19 hours. At 10am the following morning we got 20 mins to unload, walk and feed all of the 21 dogs, which doesn't give us much time to get this all done.

"On arrival in Cherbourg, we gave all the dogs a walk on the beach and a small amount of food. Once the dogs are all back safely in their crates the next part of the trip took us on a 13 hour drive through France to Milan.

There we were greeted by the Pet Levrieri team, who for the second time met these lucky animals as a few months previously Pet Levrieri travelled to Ireland to meet and photograph these dogs so they could start the adoption process for their arrival).

"Once approval is given from the Vet the dogs were driven to a location that has been chosen for them to meet their new owners. All dogs from here go into their forever homes. This is an amazing thing to see as each owner is called forward to meet the newest member of his or her family. A life of racing and abuse is now over" said Diane. She also added even though the journey took 3 full days it was very gratifying to see these dogs go into safe homes knowing that we have helped give them a new lease of life.



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Katelyn Culleton from Clontuskert speaks live on RTE at the National Youth Assembly on Climate

Assembly during the opening session, on behalf of the environment group.

Katelyn said about the event: "On the 14th of November I went to Dáil Éireann to practice my Environment Opening Speech. In order to make it available to every young person across Ireland, the Dáil proceedings were broadcast live from Leinster House on RTÉ 2 and on News Now on Friday November 15. I had a chaperone for the day called Rachel. In the Opening Session, I gave my speech with four other delegates. It was a proud moment to take the seat of a TD at Dáil Éireann. After the opening speeches with the Ceann Comhairle, live on RTÉ, we debated the six proposals on the environment and gave suggestions and comments about them. We then had to vote which two proposals we thought were best. These are the two proposals the environment group decided on:

Katelyn Culleton, a 5th Class student in St. Augustine's National School in Clontuskert was chosen to represent Galway as a delegate at the RTÉ Youth Assembly on Climate in Dáil Éireann.

It was the first ever Youth Assembly on Climate which saw 157 young people (10 to 17 year olds) from all 26 counties come together to discuss and determine their proposals for climate action. The Youth Assembly was chaired by Ceann Comhairle, Seán Ó Fearghail and the 157 delegates worked in groups under the five themes of economics, education, environment, food and farming and power, to devise a Youth Assembly Proclamation on Climate.

Katelyn impressed the Assessors and the Final Judging Panel to be selected over almost 1,000 applicants. She was then chosen as one of five delegates to deliver an opening speech to the RTÉ Youth

1. Ireland to outlaw acts of ecocide – being the widespread and systematic loss of ecosystems, including climate and cultural damage.
2. To protect existing forests and make compulsory that at least 10% of all land owned for agricultural uses is dedicated to forestry.

After meeting Minister Richard Bruton to deliver the proposals, Katelyn was interviewed by RTÉ News to talk about what she enjoyed about the day and the confidence she gained by being in the Youth Assembly. Katelyn and her mother visited the RTÉ studios in Donnybrook for a Reception and met Marty Morrissey and Ryan Tubridy.

It is a great event to have a pupil of St Augustine's NS to be a part of.

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CAHALAN JEWELLERS WELCOMES THE NEW YEAR & NEW DECADE

Cahalan Jewellers wish all our Customers and Contacts a very happy 2020. We also thank those of you who supported us through the last year and indeed supported the Retailers in Ballinasloe Town. It gives all of us a great lift when the community shop local.

This new year has seen some positive changes at Cahalan Jewellers. We have taken on two more Goldsmiths to repair and remodel Jewellery for all our Customers. We try to be fair and reasonable with all BUT some times jobs take a little longer so hopefully we will be able to work on your repairs more swiftly.

We also restring pearls and beads as well as repairs to watches. We work continuously to satisfy and meet the needs of our customers. In mid-February we will have a lot of loose beads and pieces for the Craft Workers in our Community. Those will be very keenly priced.



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INTO PRESIDENT VISITS SCHOOLS

Fergal Brougham, president of the INTO (Irish National Teachers Organisation) was in Ballinasloe recently. He visited a number of local schools including Gaelscoil Uí Cheithearnaigh, Scoil an Chroí Naofa, Creagh NS and Kiltormer NS, meeting staffs and pupils.

Many items were up for discussion including the lack of funding for primary education by successive governments, psychological and occupational therapy services for schools and the upcoming election.



INTO President in Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh

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OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



The Hurleys are the Top Officers in the Golf Club.

A unique father & son combination John Hurley (Snr.) and John Hurley (Jnr.) have been elected President and Captain of Ballinasloe Golf Club for 2020. Anne Greene has been elected Lady Captain.



Caltra Drama Group which will stage 'Widows Paradise' by Sam Cree on February 21,22 and 23 in Caltra Community Centre. Front L-R: Sarah Noone, Niamh Raftery, Anne Marie Harney, Carmel Buchan, Carmel Murray. Back L-R: Sean O'Neill, Aiden Burke, John Finnerty, Liam Conway, Patrick Hannon, Sean Lally, Mike Tully.



Mary Discin, Acute Stroke QI project lead, James Keane, General Manager of Portiuncula Hospital, Consultant Niamh Hannon with fellow colleagues taking part in an innovative programme to improve care and save lives of patients with ischemic stroke.



Connemara Pony Breeders Christmas Show



Ballinasloe GAA Club

TOPIC: Discussing the Future of Ballinasloe GAA.








Monday 10th Feb 2020

7.30pm-9.00pm

Gullanes Hotel

ALL WELCOME

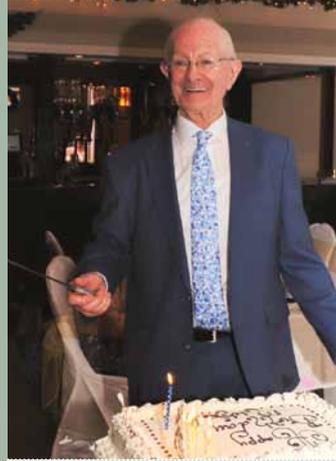
Have
your
say!

AGENDA: Open Meeting - Ballinasloe GAA Strategy Plan 2020-2025

OUT AND ABOUT IN BALLINASLOE



Dolans Supermacs Team Win All-Ireland Awards



Cutting his 80th Birthday cake on the occasion of a family and friend anniversary celebration in Gullanes Hotel was Michael McCullagh.



Celebrating 8 decades of happy living local Auctioneer, Church Organist and Society St. Businessman Michael McCullagh with his wife Anne. *Photo credit: Michelle Cahill*



Robyn Loughrey, with her new granddaughter at Nollaig na mBan



Soroptomists Annual Christmas Dinner



'inTENTse' design by Ellen Curran, Róisín Grealy and Clíodhna Ní Anluain(model). Their design is based on the growing problem of 'throw away culture' after major festivals are evacuated.



Cruella De Bale was composed by Aislínn Clifford (Model), Caragh Kelly and Sarah Lyons. All of the members of this group have come from farming backgrounds and they have each seen the impact on farm waste.



Newsflash by Anna Trappe (model), Molly Naessens and Sarah Russell. They decided to craft their outfit from paper so as to create something beautiful from something overlooked and discarded.



Renata Kohlmann and Avril Creaven-Connaughton with friends at the New Year Grow Remote Chapter Planning meeting in The Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe.

FEBRUARY EVENTS GUIDE

Saturday 1st		
Lisdonnvara Reu. John Molloy	Shearwater Hotel	3-5.30pm
Lisdonnvara Reun. Manning & Maria	Shearwater Hotel	8.30-10.30pm
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Lisdonnvara Reu. M. Collins	Shearwater Hotel	10.30-12.30am
John Molloy	Canal Bar	10pm
Lets dance	Brewery Lane	10pm
Bills Bills Bills	An Tain	10pm
Sum Craic (Charity Night)	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Greg Traynor Live (Elvis)	Downneys	10pm
Eamonn O'Neill	Canal Bar	10pm
Evoked	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Sunday 2nd		
Lisdonnvara Reu. Ger Long	Shearwater Hotel	2-3.30pm
Lisdonnvara Reu. S. Moyles	Shearwater Hotel	3.30-5pm
Lisdonnvara Reu. M. Collins	Shearwater Hotel	5-8pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live music	Brewery lane	7pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Liam's Country Roadshow	Auld Sod	9pm
Jimmy Buckley	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Monday 3rd		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 4th		
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 5th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Cards "Nines"	Downneys	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 6th		
Dance & Movement Workshop	B'sloe Library	2.30-4.30pm
B'Sloe Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 7th		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Late night menu	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
Toxic twins	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 8th		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Bimbo	Downey's Bar	10pm
DJ Jeff Collins	An Tain	10pm
Small Deal	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Adrian Rabbit	Canal Bar	10pm
Kings of Connaught	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Sunday 9th		
Brendan Magee	Shearwater Hotel	4.30-7.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Mike Denver support M. Regan	Shearwater Hotel	7pm
Hoppy Bar Stars	Brewery Lane	7pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Ken Solo	The Auld Sod	9pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm

Monday 10th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 11th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Active Retirement Book Club	B'sloe Library	4-5pm
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 12th		
Bumps & Babes Group	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Cards "nines"	Downneys Bar	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 13th		
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 14th		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Sean Keane in Concert	Shearwater Hotel	7pm
Valentines Menu	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Liams country roadshow	The Auld Sod	9.30pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
Martin Cunningham Live	Downey's Bar	10pm
The 2 Q's	Brewery Lane	10pm
Double Trouble	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Eamon O'Neill	Canal Bar	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 15th		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
loose Rooster	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ Colm Carroll	Downey's Bar	10pm
80's Night W/ DJ J. Finnerty	The Pillar House	10pm
Still Single	An Tain	10pm
Double up	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Bojangle	Canal Bar	10pm
3 Legged dog	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Sunday 16th		
Pat McKenna & Glenshane	Shearwater Hotel	4.30-7.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Thunder Slap duo	Brewery Lane	7pm
Sundat Sessions	Valerie's of Aughrim	7pm
Sing song	The Auld Sod	9pm
C. Rosney support S. Moyles	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Shane Moore	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Monday 17th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 18th		
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Dancing w/ Midnight Melodies	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 19th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Cards "nines"	Downey's Bar	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm

Thursday 20th		
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 21st		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Late food Menu	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
The Gringo Stars	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 22nd		
Hickory Wind	Brewery Lane	6pm
Aslan	Shearwater Hotel	7pm
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
DJ Crazy Chris	Downey's Bar	10pm
Back 2 Basics	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Na Riadoiri	An Tain	10pm
Red Tape	Brewery Lane	10pm
Deja Vu	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Ken	Canal Bar	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Sunday 23rd		
T-Bone Country	Shearwater Hotel	4.30-7.30pm
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	7pm
R. Mizzel support John Molloy	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Dave Mills	The Auld Sod	9pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Monday 24th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 25th		
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Dancing w/ Midnight Melodies	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 26th		
Bumps & Babes Group	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Cards "nines"	Downneys Bar	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 27th		
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 28th		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Late food Menu	Downneys	6-9pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
Acoustic ninjas	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 29th		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Lets dance	Brewery Lane	10pm
Happy Birthday Kate	An Tain	10pm
TBC (Pacifica)?	Downneys Bar	10pm
Des Egan	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Tounge & Groove	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Eamonn O'Neill	Canal Bar	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm

MARCH EVENTS GUIDE

Sunday 1st		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live music	Brewery lane	7pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Ken Solo	The Auld Sod	9pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Monday 2nd		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 3rd		
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 4th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Cards "nines"	Downeys Bar	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 5th		
B'Sloe Singers Circle	Dunlo Tavern	9pm
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 6th		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30am-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Late night Menu	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
Hoppy Bar Stars	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 7th		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Beggars velvet	Brewery Lane	10pm
Call me Wolf	An Tain	10pm
Paul Byrnes	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Steve Reilly	Canal Bar	10pm
Deja Vu	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Sunday 8th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Thunderslap duo	Brewery Lane	7pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
TBC	The Auld Sod	9pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Bimbo	Downeys Bar	10pm
Monday 9th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 10th		
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 11th		
Bumps & Babes Group	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Cards "Nines"	Downey's Bar	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 12th		
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm

Friday 13th		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Late night Menu	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Take it to the Limits	Shearwater Hotel	9pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
Toxic twins	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 14th		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Red Tape	Brewery Lane	10pm
Bimbo	Downey's Bar	10pm
Pink Shirt	An Tain	10pm
John Shannon	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Bojangle	Canal Bar	10pm
Kings of Connaught	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Sunday 15th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	7pm
TBC	The Auld Sod	9pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Shane Moore	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Monday 16th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Paddy's Day warm up	An Tain	10pm
Tuesday 17th		
St Patricks Day Parade	Town Centre	1.30pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	7pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Good Craic	An Tain	10pm
Bojangle	Canal Bar	10pm
Liams Country Roadshow	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Wednesday 18th		
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Cards "Nines"	Downey's Bar	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 19th		
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 20th		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
Late Night Steak Menu	Downey's Bar	6-9pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
Steve Reilly	Downey's Bar	10pm
The 2 Q's	Brewery Lane	10pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 21st		
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
Lets dance	Brewery Lane	10pm
DJ John Finnerty	Downey's Bar	10pm
Out The Gap	An Tain	10pm
Last Man Standing	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Bojangle	Canal Bar	10pm
Laker	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm

Sunday 22nd		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	7pm
Dave Mills	The Auld Sod	9pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Ken Solo	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Monday 23rd		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 24th		
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
Fiddler on the roof	B'Sloe Town Hall	8pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Dancing w/ Midnight Melodies	Gullanes Hotel	9pm
Wednesday 25th		
Bumps & Babes Group	B'sloe Library	9.45-11.45am
Knitting & Crochet Group	B'sloe Library	11-1pm
Unislim	Gullanes Hotel	5.30-7pm
Fiddler on the roof	B'Sloe Town Hall	8pm
Cards "Nines"	Doeneys Bar	9pm
Live Trad and Folk Music	An Tain	9.30pm
Thursday 26th		
Fiddler on the roof	B'Sloe Town Hall	8pm
Live acoustic session	Brewery Lane	10pm
Friday 27th		
Ballinasloe Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30-1.30pm
Friday Fun	B'sloe Library	3.30-4.30pm
J. P. Feeney, D. Ryan & M. English	Shearwater Hotel	7pm
Fiddler on the roof	B'Sloe Town Hall	8pm
Find The Joker	An Tain	9-11pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	10pm
Late Night Steak Menu	Downeys Bar	6-9pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Saturday 28th		
Fiddler on the roof	B'Sloe Town Hall	8pm
Bingo	Kilconnel Town Hall	8.30pm
J. P. Feeney, D. Ryan & M. English	Shearwater Hotel	7pm
Loose Rooster	Brewery Lane	10pm
Howya Kait!	An Tain	10pm
DJ John Carroll	Downeys Bar	10pm
Double Trouble	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Happy Bar Stars	Canal Bar	10pm
3 Legged Dog	The Auld Sod	10.30pm
Live Music	Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Sunday 29th		
Trad Session	The Pillar House	6pm
Live music	Brewery Lane	7pm
Live Music	An Tain	7pm
TBC	The Auld Sod	9pm
Small Deal	Joe Kellys Bar	10pm
Sessions Front Door	Valerie's of Aughrim	10pm
Monday 30th		
Line Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	8.30pm
Tuesday 31st		
Lego Club	B'Sloe Library	4.30-5.15pm
GAA Bingo	Emerald B'room	8pm
Social Dancing	Gullanes Hotel	9pm

To advertise your events here contact: ballinasloelife@hotmail.com or Call **090 964 5831** by March 12th

CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

Triumphant Pearses Annual Dinner Dance at The Shearwater Hotel



Pictured are the Padraig Pearses Senior Football Panel and mentors following presentation of their County Championship medals:

In the picture on extreme R & L are Michael Feehily Club Chairperson and Seamus Sweeney County Chairperson, Seated in the centre are R to L are Tara Flynn (Paul Flynn Construction Ltd Team Sponsor) and Jenny Downey (Physio)



Kerry legend Marc Ó Se presenting Ciaran McGreal (Club Treasurer) the award for Club Person of the Year for the amazing work he does in the club.



Kerry legend Marc Ó Se presenting Niall Daly with the Senior Footballer of the Year Award



Kerry legend Marc Ó Se presenting Leah Clogher with the Senior Ladies Footballer of the Year Award



Roscommon Hurling Board Chairperson Christy McDermott presenting Linda Murray with the Senior Camogie Player of the Year Award.



Roscommon Hurling Board Chairperson Christy McDermott presenting Eoghan Cogavin with the Senior Hurler of the Year Award.

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Just over fifty-two years ago, a young Ballinasloe-born garda sustained life-changing injuries while he was investigating a traffic accident outside Wicklow town. 27-year-old Garda Bernard Ryan was on duty in the early hours of Christmas morning 1967 and the horrific injuries he received ended his career in the force as a serving garda.

A few weeks ago Bernard eventually succumbed to his injuries, having spent periods of

hospitalisation in St. Columcille's, Loughlinstown; Rehab Institute, Dun Laoire; Mill Race Nursing Home, Ballinasloe and Portiuncula Hospital. And it was fitting that he was remembered by former colleagues, both from Wicklow and Ballinasloe, as well as some of his Templemore classmates who formed a guard of honour on his final journey.

Born in Duggan Avenue, Ballinasloe to Garda Pat and Ciss Ryan, Bernard worked in the Laboratory of Burnhouse Factory, Poolboy before embarking on a career in the gardai. Three of his brothers, Mick, Christy and Vincent had already joined up, so even though he had to battle to reach the regulation height, Bernard was accepted. Three other Ballinasloe men joined the force on the same day-Vincent Johnson, Liam Mitchell and Noel Scott. On his graduation he was assigned to Wicklow Garda Station where he became a popular member. He loved the locality, got engaged to a local girl and had plans to settle down in the Garden County but the Christmas morning accident shattered all his dreams and ambitions.

A full-back on the Ballinasloe minor football team that was beaten

in the county final in 1959, the future garda loved all sports. He was a competitive cueist in the Social Club in both billiards and snooker, played football in all the street leagues and was an interested spectator at other sports in the town.

Despite his year-long hospital treatment, Bernard treated his arrival back to Ballinasloe with great courage and determination. Though still suffering from his serious injuries his fighting spirit saw him walk around the town, join the swimming club as well as playing cards at different venues on his road to rehabilitation. He was admired for his positive outlook, his wit and knowledge of current affairs, where he was also regarded as a character who was determined to enjoy life despite his handicaps. He had made a number of visits to Lourdes as part of the Ballinasloe Wheelchair



Group-a group he was eternally grateful too.

Bernard Ryan was a dogged fighter, never giving up hope that one day he would enjoy a return to his youthful days. He accepted his injuries with true Christian belief and was an inspiration to others that were not as badly curtailed.

In 2007 the Ballinasloe man became the first West of Ireland garda to receive the Liddy Medal which is awarded to gardai who have been injured in the line of duty.

Mr. Ryan, who was predeceased by his parents, brothers Mick, Christy, P.B. and Vincent as well as sister Mary and a few weeks earlier by his sister Helen (Maguire), is survived by his brothers Sean and Noel, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces and many other relatives and friends.

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LAWRENCETOWN LOSES ITS PARISH PRIEST

BY KEN KELLY

The news on Christmas Day that Fr. Christy O'Byrne had passed away brought great sadness to the people of Lawrencetown and Kiltormer, where he had served as their Parish Priest for almost thirty years.

Born in Ballinasloe on 21st May 1939, the eldest of four boys, Fr. Christy's late father was a well-known Dentist. Following his education in St. Grellan's NS and Garbally College, Fr. Christy entered Maynooth College and was ordained a priest in June 1964. He joined the teaching staff of Garbally the same year, was president from 1988 to 1990 before being appointed Parish Priest of Lawrencetown and Kiltormer, where he succeeded the late Fr. Mattie Walsh.

In his homily at the funeral Mass, where the Bishop of Clonfert, Dr. Michael Duignan was the chief celebrant, the retired Bishop John Kirby, now PP of Cappataggle and Kilrickle, told the packed congregation "Christy and I were contemporaries as students in Garbally and in Maynooth, with only six months between us. We taught together in Garbally as priests where one of our duties in the early years was the creation of the annual teaching timetable. We did it originally with little bits of paper and later with movable coloured tabs on a magnetic board. Later, Christy developed a computer programme for the Garbally timetable and this was very effective.

"As a teacher, his subject was science up to Junior Certificate and chemistry at Leaving Cert level. He became vice-president and president of St. Joseph's College, Garbally in 1988. He worked very



well with the newly-appointed first lay principal, Michael Hyland, whose funeral mass was celebrated very recently. Both were long long-serving teachers in the school and both were members of the Dunlo Singers.

"In 1990, Christy was appointed Parish Priest of Lawrencetown and Kiltormer in succession to the late Fr. Mattie Walsh. It was a very important change for him. He believed intensely in the Church, in priesthood and in its importance in the life of the church. He regularly visited the two primary schools and was well known to the pupils. He was a great man of prayer and spent much time before the Blessed Sacrament.

"Outside of his official responsibilities, as a parish priest, Christy was hugely devoted to Emmanuel House of Providence. He was a regular confessor there, served on the board and got to know a large number of people who were interested in promoting the Word of God in one way or another. He had a particular devotion to Our Lady and made frequent trips to Medjugore. Indeed, it was in Medjugore that the seriousness of his illness became obvious. Since his return from the most recent trip, he has been in hospital and sadly his health continued to deteriorate until his death on Christmas evening" concluded Bishop Kirby.

Fr. Christy O'Byrne is survived by his brothers Bernard, James and Joe as well as sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces and many other relatives and mourned by the Bishop of Clonfert, his fellow priests in the Diocese of Clonfert and his many parishioners.

LIAM CUNNANE PASSES AWAY IN FLORIDA

BY KEN KELLY



Ballinasloe native Liam Cunnane, who passed away recently in Tampa, Florida, USA, was born in Perssepark in 1939 to John and Annie Cunnane, one of a family of six.

Following his education in St. Grellan's National School, Liam went on to Garbally College where he became an accomplished sportsman in athletics, rugby, football and hurling. Liam, alongside others such as Ray McLoughlin (later to become a Rugby International captain), P.B. Ryan, Sean Keeley and Davy Duignan, was a member of the Ballinasloe minor football team that won the county

championship in 1954 and the county minor hurling trophy a year later. He also won a Connacht championship half mile race in 1956.

Liam Cunnane emigrated to the USA in 1958, at the age of 19, where he worked for a while with Merrill Lynch Stockbrokers in New York before leaving to do his national service in the US Army for three years being stationed in Germany and Georgia. Afterwards he became a Certified Public Accountant and flourished in that industry until his retirement. He married Anna Messina and lived in Atlanta, Georgia for some time before moving to Tampa, Florida.

Liam, who is predeceased by his son Major Kevin Cunnane (who was a Marine Pilot in the 2003 invasion of Iraq), is survived by his wife Anna, daughter Shana and son Carl as well as his brothers Michael, Sligo; Sean, New York; Des, Perssepark; Kevin, Letterkenny and sister Maura, Ballinasloe.

As a Military Veteran, Liam was buried in the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida with full Military Honours.

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BALLINASLOE WOMAN SCALES THE HIMALAYAS BY KEN KELLY



A retired Ballinasloe nurse was among a party of nine Irish climbers who recently scaled the 6,189 metre high Island Peak mountain in the Himalayas. For Claire Dolphin from Tristane is was the dream of a lifetime, reaching the summit which is so close to Mount Everest.

Having taken up walking and trekking with the Rosway Walkers in Ballinasloe some years ago, Claire is no stranger to the hills and mountains here in Ireland. She has climbed Croagh Patrick "at least fifty times" and often scales it twice in the one day when preparing for longer treks. As well she has conquered all the major peaks in the British Isles and has not ruled out other adventure challenges throughout the world. Already on the resume are the Salkantay and Inca treks in Peru, incorporating the iconic Machu Picchu. She has also climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, which stands at 5,896 metres and is the highest free standing mountain in the world.

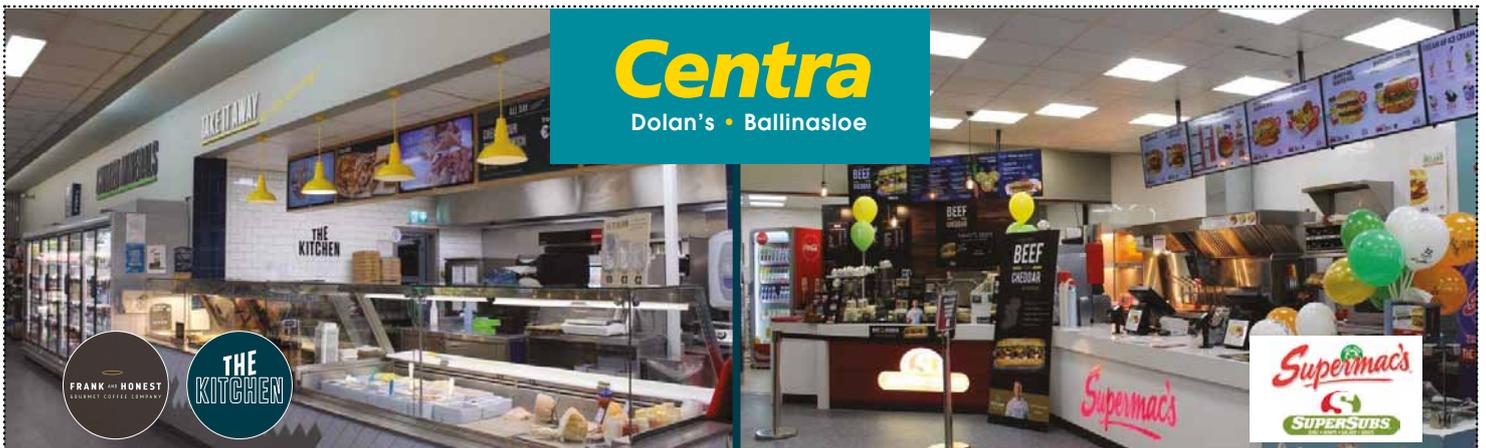
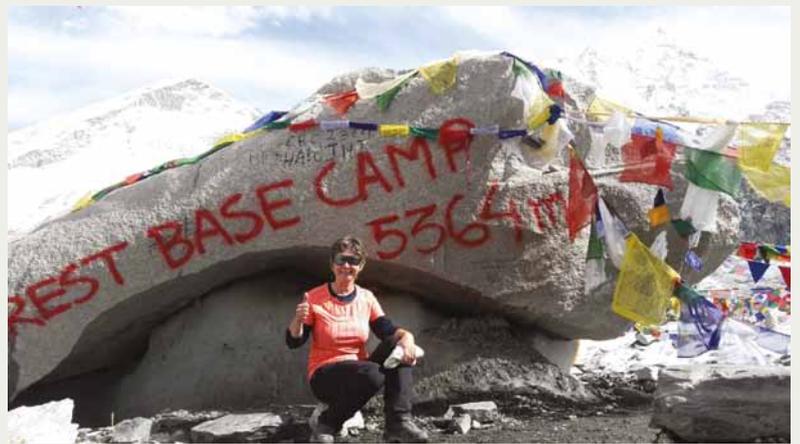
"When I retired from nursing two years ago I decided to travel and seek challenges. I love hiking and climbing so when the opportunity came for a three-week trip to Nepal, to trek to Everest Base Camp and go on to Island Peak, I knew this was a challenge I wanted to achieve. The scenery there is breath-taking with mixed forests, glaciers, rivers and spectacular mountainous panoramas. We passed through Sherpa villages, bazaars and visited Buddhist monasteries.

"After trekking to Everest Base Camp we were acclimatised to take on Island Peak. Like most peaks the crux of the climb

was summit day which was going to take 14 hours. Starting at 2 am, we ascended over mixed terrain, with some scrambling involved, before reaching 'Crampon Point.' From here the ground was compacted with snow and ice.

The last couple of hundred metres required us to use fixed ropes and jumars. It was a fairly tough climb but, as always, the views of the surrounding mountains at the top made all the hard work worthwhile" said Claire.

After arriving back in Katmandu the Irish group enjoyed a celebratory meal in one of the best restaurants, did some shopping and exchanged historic photographs before returning home, thankful there were no injuries sustained on the treacherous climb.



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RENOVATE YOUR HOME WITHOUT OVERHAULING YOUR BUDGET



Spring is almost upon us – and the change of season is one of the best and most popular times of year for home improvements. Home upgrading is a trend which has seen somewhat of a surge in popularity in recent years – and for good reason. A refurbishment can completely transform a home.

For many, it is also the only affordable option if they find they have outgrown their home and need more space for the family. Many households planning on renovating their home understandably would not have this spare cash to hand. For the cost-conscious home improver – a credit union loan is the best option, with some of the most competitive rates on the market. Indeed, a recent survey found that of those needing to borrow to fund their renovations, six in ten said they would use their local credit union.

Credit unions are owned by their members - (that's you by the way) – the people from the community. The level of customer experience at the credit union is unparalleled (they have won the Customer Experience Awards five years in a row, a global first). With some really attractive loan rates and short approval turn-around times, it's pretty much the best place to get loans – loans with no jargon, no complexity. Just plain, simple service

Grainne Murphy, CEO Ballinasloe Credit Union, explains why a credit union home improvement loan is a solid choice for those wanting to renovate their home without incurring unnecessary debt. "We offer

the loan at a great value apr rate of 6.72%**. Which means that if you borrow €20,000, you will end up paying back just €23,489.38 over 60 months. So, it's a very cost-effective option. Not only that, but our loans are typically approved in 1 day, so you can get started on those renovation plans right away. We are also happy to offer our loans to brand new members – so there is no requirement for you to have saved with us for a period of time before you can avail of the loan."The option to borrow up to €50,000 and extend the repayment period to 10 years is also available.

Other benefits to the home improvement loan include the willingness of the credit union to work with each individual borrower to structure repayments in a way that will suit their individual circumstances. There are no hidden fees or administration charges, free loan protection and Life Insurance. Borrowers are also free to repay the loan early, should they wish, without any penalties.

"So whether your plans include building on an extension, overhauling the kitchen, laying new carpets or floorboards, or just giving your home a new lick of paint, talk to us here at Ballinasloe Credit Union. You'll find we are happy to provide flexible loans of any size to suit your grand design plans!"

** For a €20,000, 5-year variable interest rate loan with 60 monthly repayments of €391.53, an interest Rate of 6.55%, a representative APR of 6.72%, the total amount payable by the member is €23,489.60. Information correct as at 17/01/2020.



Mary McEvoy, December prize draw winner receives the keys to her brand new car, supplied by Tom Raftery Car Sales
L-R: Mary McEvoy, Tom Raftery & Grainne Murphy CEO Ballinasloe CU

LIFE'S NEW REPORTER

20 year old Liam Cosgrove, a Corofin native in the north of Co. Clare, has been appointed the 18th official LIFE Reporter last month.

Liam is attending the University of Limerick and is currently in second year, studying a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Geography and Economics.

A distinguished past pupil of Corofin NS and Ennistymon CBS, during his school years. He was a keen football and basketball player and continues to play both with his local club as wing forward for the GAA and point guard on the basketball court.

His Dad's father who was stationed for years as a Garda in Lisdoonvarna hails from Mountbellew, as would his Grandmother – Bernie Lahey and many relatives and connections are still in the part of our hinterland.

When not fine tuning his jutes in the Gym for championship Banner football, he enjoys listening to Hip Hop and Grime and Pop and is looking forward to meeting and working with all the volunteers and groups connected with LIFE and the Development Company.

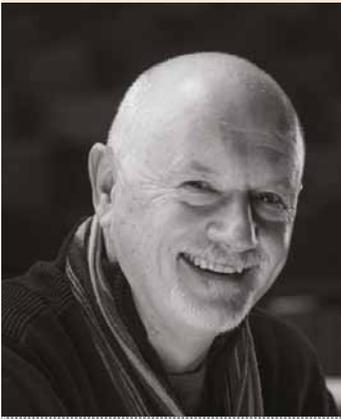
Liam takes over from Je Je Begraoui (who returns to her degree course in the GMIT). Je Je gave us a wonderful 6 months of her traineeship on the magazine and we thank her and wish her every success in her future career.

Liam will be working on the next four editions of the Magazine including the start of Volume 10 and developing the online content as reporter and principal videographer.



FIDDLER ON THE ROOF RETURNS

BY LIAM COSGROVE



Sean Feerick Lead

Ballinasloe Musical Society announced that their forthcoming 2020 show will be the evergreen "Fiddler on the Roof". Fiddler (as it is affectionately known) is set among the Jewish community in the Russian town of Anatevka, early in the twentieth century with the Tsarist Pogroms as a backdrop.

The musical focuses on the trials and tribulations of Tevye, his wife Golde, their five daughters and their interactions with their neighbours and how their lives are influenced by their beliefs. He must cope both with the strong-willed actions of his three older daughters, who wish to marry for love – each one's choice of a husband moves further away from the customs of their Jewish faith and heritage – and with the edict of the Tsar that evicts the Jews from their village.



Fiddler Chorus Rehearsals

There are some fantastic musical numbers in this show including "If I Were A Rich Man", "Tradition", "Sunrise Sunset", "Do you love me?", "Chava" and "Far From The Home I Love", to name a few.

This show was last produced by the Society some 39 years ago in 1981. Back then Tevye was played by the late great Austin Gaffney and Golde was played by the current Society President, Maureen Donoghue.

This year they're thrilled to welcome back the production team of Paul Norton as Director, Aoife McClafferty as Choreographer and Shane Farrell as Musical Director (he of RTE's Operation Transformation fame).

Following auditions, an exciting strong local cast has been assembled with (Tevye) Seamus Feerick, (Golde) Roisin Jackman Delaney, (Tzeitel) Emma Grealy, (Hodel) Ailbhe Lohan, (Chava) Jessica Madden, (Yente) Rachel Walker, (Motel) Enda McGrath, (Perchik) Ciaran Smyth, (Fyedka) Cian O'Ceallaigh, (Lazar Wolf) Mike O'Reilly, (Mordcha) Jonathon Hopper, (Rabbi) Brian Derrane, (Mendel) Fiachra Muldoon, (Avram) Gerard Sweeney, (Grandma Tzeitel) Lisa Whyte, (Constable) Paul Drysdale.

Added to the cast for the musical is a chorus of over 30 singers and dancers and there is all the ingredients for an entertaining night out and a great show.

Along with Maureen, others from the 1981 show still involved with the Society are the late lamented and loved Pat McGovern who played the Inn Keeper, Gerard Sweeney the Beggar, Nora Flaherty who was Grandma Tzeitel is represented by her daughter Fiona and her grandson Jack.



Chorus Cew Fiddler

The Society are always looking for new members to help out with Front of House, Make Up, Props, Sets and Scenery – if you can't do every night of the run !!

The show will be running nightly from Tuesday 24th to Saturday 28th March, from 8pm to 10:45pm.

Tickets will be on sale in March on www.ballinasloetownhall.com, or in Gerry Stronge Photography or by simply calling the ticket hotline: 087 366 3937.



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FLETCHER'S DECADE BEHIND MODERN MEDIA



Sean Fletcher and Clem Burke from Blondie

Whilst most readers are acquainted with Fletcher's of Society Street as suppliers of quality electrical goods, since Sean's late father John started the business, the firm has been quietly developing its proprietors' music knowledge and



Nancy and the Dolls

industry expertise for almost 10 years of the last six decades of trading.

Sean Fletcher and Modern Media (a subsidy firm) are celebrating 10 years of promoting concerts, managing "Coronation Street" stars and RTÉ 2FM broadcasters.

Many will remember the early days of the late great Larry Gogan and the 2 FM Roadcaster parked outside the store on Society St and broadcasting the golden hour or indeed Dave Fanning's Show, Lorcan Murray and other great 2 FM DJs.

When not managing gigs for the Roadcaster or indeed lining up Club or Shop openings for Corrie Stars, Sean took his interest and in-depth knowledge of the music world and Irish audience tastes and coupled them to create a niche Musical Entertainment Agency that

specialises in managing Rock and Classic Rock and Nostalgia Original and Tribute bands from the musical stars of the 70s, 80s and 90s.

He has produced and promoted successful, well acclaimed tours and gigs in Dublin, Belfast, London, Liverpool, and indeed Spain in recent years. Modern Media have many confirmed events happening in 2020: In July, Nancy and The Dolls will perform in the Concorde 2 Venue in Brighton, England. The Priscilla's will also be there as special guests on the night. They will be in London, during August. The Bootleg Blondies will be performing with the Split Squad with Blondies Clem Burke on drums. During October, Nancy and the Dolls will play modern media's first event in Valencia Spain.

In November, Nancy and the Dolls will be in London and they'll be performing "The Great Rock and Roll Swindle" at London's iconic 100 Club.

GALWAY 2020 KICKS OFF IN BALLINASLOE

Flames will blaze in towns throughout the county as the Galway 2020 Opening Ceremony travels ever closer to the city across the first week of February. Local themes and traditions will appear as never before in the week-long momentous event, which begins with a turf cutting ceremony on St. Brigid's Day.

There'll be fiery festivals erupting in towns across the county over seven consecutive nights from Sunday February 2nd. The free open-air celebration will feature fire, processions and music, with a cast drawn from local communities.

The Fire Tour brings together an energetic cast from each town to take part in a unique, intimate performance on each consecutive night. A passionate Ballinasloe Town cast (pictured on the front cover) will bathe St Michael's Square in firelight, during the Lighting Ceremony on Wednesday, 5th February.

Expect performance, music and processions from 6pm onwards at this free open-air celebration. As this event takes place outdoors appropriate footwear and clothing are advised. Traffic restrictions will be in place and will be advertised locally.

The opening ceremony then concludes with a spectacular finale in South Park at the Claddagh from 5pm - 7pm on Saturday 8th February, in Galway City.

A host of new exciting events are being finalised for the Town Library

with details being announced around St. Patrick's Day. Many POP Up events when concluded in the city will be staged in town.

Highlight of the summer will be The Druid Theatre returning to perform at the Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre from the 12 to the 13 of June. They'll be taking Ireland's greatest 20th century one-act plays to towns and villages across Galway county, as well as presenting Tom Murphy's adaptation of "The Cherry Orchard."

Tickets will be available at the Druid Theatre's official website For further updates checkout www.galway2020.ie

BY LIAM COSGROVE

What is the European Green Deal?

December 2019 #EUGreenDeal

The European Green Deal is about **improving the well-being of people**. Making Europe climate-neutral and protecting our natural habitat will be good for people, planet and economy. No one will be left behind.

The EU will:

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"The European Green Deal is our new growth strategy. It will help us cut emissions while creating jobs."
Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Europe Direct Information Centre, Ballinasloe Library
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Galway 2020 Gaillimh European Capital of Culture



SPRING EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR LIBRARY

BY LIAM COSGROVE

Nuala O'Connor recently launched her GRD booklet "Positive Mental Health" with members of the Ballinasloe Women's Group. She also treated the group to readings from her books and poems.

Nuala is a Dublin-born writer living in Galway with her husband and three children. Nuala's novel 'Miss Emily' has just lately been chosen as a Leaving Cert text and was previously voted an Amazon Canada Best Book of the Year. It was Nuala O'Connor's eighth volume of fiction. The novel gave a glimpse of Dickinson's life and personality through the eyes of an Irish servant girl, Ada Concannon. The story is told in two voices, the poet's and the kitchenmaid's in alternating chapters.

In association with Galway Rural Development (GRD) and GRETB -Ballinasloe Library host a weekly "Women's Group" where women can get together to chat and share experiences. Free workshops planned for 2020 include art, creative writing, cooking and nutrition and boxercise. The contact for the Ballinasloe Women's Group is Mairead Carney, Galway Rural Development and she can be contacted on mcarney@grd.ie. The group meets every Thursday at 11am.

As well as all the regular activities of book lending, periodical ordering, audio books and dvd sets swapping as well as children's study activities afterschool and use of the old church for exhibitions and displays the library also runs classes.

Dance and movement classes with dancer, Bernadette Divilly are being held in association with Galway County Arts Office and Galway Arts Festival. The classes will explore movement meditation and



List of attendees (from left - right): Sue Clarke (GRD), Zita Mahmood (GRD), Una Kelly Ballinasloe Library, Mairead Carney (GRD), Nuala O'Connor (Author), Islammiyah Saudique, Mary Hanley, Dawna Concannon, Brid Reilly, Patience Dube, Felicity Hannon (GRD), Marie Finnerty (GRD), Anne Mallaghan, Aoinheann McCann (SICAP manager GRD), Lama Altlassan, Fatima Sawan, Mhmead Altlassan (little boy in the front).

the natural wisdom of your own body, with only a few free classes remaining. It's a chance to nap, to play and relax. To find out more please call 091 565886 or email maeve@galwayartscentre.com.

Bumps and Babes Ballinasloe or Cuidiu Breastfeeding Group is a breastfeeding friendly group of mothers and expectant mothers from the local area who meet twice a month in the library. It is open to all mothers and mothers to be and has a trainee breastfeeding Counsellor in attendance.

There is no charge for the group and all mothers, or expectant mothers are welcome along with babies and toddlers. Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month (9.45 - 11.45). Call into the library or call 090 964 3464 for more information.

Over the February and March months there will also be quite some material popping up from the Galway City 2020 programme.

EUROPE SOAPBOX COMPETITION WINNER

The topic this year for the Europe Direct Soapbox competition was 'Climate Change is not my problem'. The Ballinasloe winner of the under 18 category, Johanna Lane a student of the Presentation College in Tuam, also won the national final.

She received her prize from Minister Sean Canney and Gerry Kiely, Head of the European Commission Representation in Ireland, which was a trip to Brussels and €1000 spending money.



Una Kelly (Librarian), Stobhan, Rebecca and Johanna Lane, Sean Canney Minister for State

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THE PARSONS' FAMILY AND TOWN

BY JULIE PARSONS



Julie Parsons

A passenger boat called the "Joyita" left Samoa in the South Pacific for the Tokelau Islands, three days away. Among the twenty-five passengers was Dr Andy Parsons, whose family owned Parsons' shoe shop (where Jordan's Photography was) in Main Street, Ballinasloe.

It was October 1955 and the "Joyita" never arrived at its destination; it went missing and when it was found, five weeks later, everyone on board had disappeared. There was never an explanation for what had happened. None of the passengers were ever seen again.

Andy Parsons was my father. I can remember, as a four-year-old, waving goodbye to him at the pier when he left Samoa for Tokelau. He and my mother and my sister, Gay, had emigrated to New Zealand in 1947 after the Second World War, in which he had been awarded the Military Cross for bravery during the battle of El Alamein. My mother, Elizabeth, was from a Church of Ireland clergy family, the Chamberlains, who lived in Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin. My parents settled in New Zealand where I and my two brothers were born.

The mystery of his disappearance meant that Elizabeth had to wait for seven years until my father could legally be declared dead. When the time was up she brought us all back to Ireland. By then my grandfather, George Parsons, was dead. My uncle Des, my father's older brother inherited the business which was the four shops, in Athlone, Ballinasloe and Mullingar. I don't remember ever visiting the shops or knowing much about them.

After many years as a radio and television producer with RTE, I began to write. I have written seven novels; the latest, "The Therapy House" won the Crime Fiction Book of the Year Award in 2017. I have now begun to write about my extended family. It is a story of disappearances: the disappearance of my father in the South Pacific in 1955 and the disappearance of so many of the Church of Ireland families with whom my mother and father grew up, in the years before the Second World War.

I am therefore looking for information about the Parsons' family. Do any of the readers of "Ballinasloe Life" have any memories of the Parsons' shop, any of the people who worked there, or John Parsons, my great grandfather, and George Parsons, my grandfather who established the business and sold shoes to the people of the Midlands for so long?

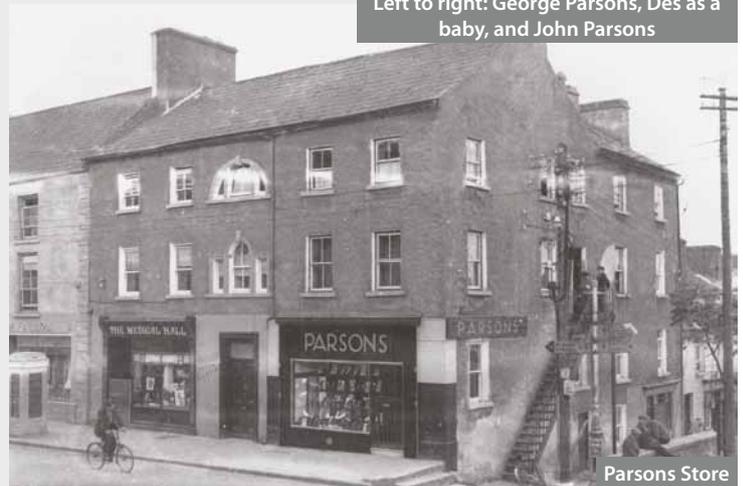
It would be extremely interesting for me to find out more about the family from which I have come. They are, to me, mysterious figures and it would be wonderful to be able to bring them back to life. My email address is julie.parsons16@gmail.com



My father in 1951 in New Zealand. I am the baby on his knee with my brother Simon and sister Gay



Left to right: George Parsons, Des as a baby, and John Parsons



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LOCAL AUTHOR'S BOOK LAUNCH

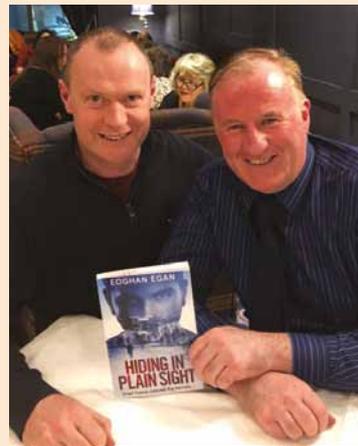
BY LIAM COSGROVE

Readers and writers gathered at the Shearwater Hotel, for the launch of "Hiding in Plain Sight" by local writer Eoghan Egan.

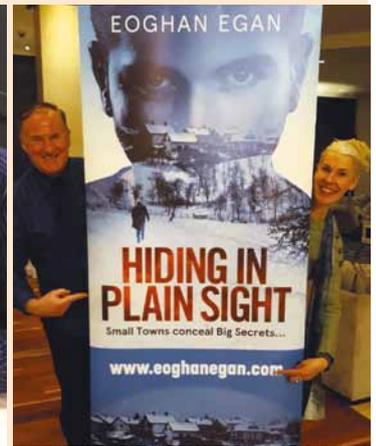
The first in a trilogy, word had already spread about this crime novel set in the Irish Midlands, and fans from as far away as Wicklow, Meath, Co Dublin, Kildare, Strokestown and Tullamore arrived early to soak up this literary atmosphere.

Author Mia Gallagher, Eoghan's writing mentor since 2012, opened proceedings, and was followed by an introduction to the novel and a reading by Eoghan. Writer and artist Emily Rainsford has narrated the audio version of the novel, and she read the opening pages of Hiding in Plain Sight.

"Hiding in Plain Sight" is available on Amazon. It's also available as an ebook for €6.99 or free on Kindle Unlimited. It's also available in paperback for €13.99 and the audio version is available for €17.99.



Sean Rockett, Naas with writer Eoghan Egan at the book launch



Eoghan and his mentor Mia Gallagher, reveal the cover of the book

GABLES ART GROUP FETED AT ARAS

2020 for the Gables Art Group started with a trip to Aras an Uachtarain in Dublin. Unfortunately, President Michael Higgins was not at home but nonetheless members enjoyed a very interesting tour of the house and gardens including a very informative exhibition on the history of Presidents in Ireland. After the visit, the group went on to view the Hugh Lane Gallery incorporating Francis Bacon's studio.

They have a very busy New Year and spring time of classes, meetings and workshops are also looking for new members who have a fondness for Art. For more information about joining Gables Art Group please contact Jackie on 087 2341535 or Maura on 086 1657491.



Back row: Olive O'Beirne, Carmel Kelly, Marie Glynn, Margaret McDonnell, Rose Hillary, Miriam Comerford, Niamh Cavanagh, Ethna Smyth, Betty Kelly, Anne Duffy, Bernadette Blessing, Jeanne Naughton, Ann Breen, Mary Carey, Ena Dillon, Mary Brewer, Marirose Cullinane, Eleanor Shanley, Mary Frances Ahern. Front row: Gemma Cox, Jackie Eastwood, Geraldine Kelly (Chairperson of the Gables Art Group), Maura Warde, Margaret Dooley Burnell

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TOWN BAND SERENADES ARRIVAL OF NEW YEAR

The final action by the Town Band for 2019 was to welcome in the New Year 2020 with an outdoor performance in St Michael's Square – which was attended by a good crowd and the combined forces of the Town Band and the audience gave a brilliant rendition of "Auld Lang Syne" to say goodbye to the old year and welcome to the new year.



Almost 70 performers took the stage last night for "Snow Fun!" It was the first time that they've combined beginner, junior, and senior bands at a recital in Gullanes Hotel.

This performance completed a run of 15 outings for the band during the last quarter of 2019. Indeed one would wonder what the town did without the band during its inactive period.

A memorable event during this period was the Town Band's participation in the Christmas tree ceremony at the Babies graveyard in Tuam. This hallowed ground, which of recent years gave up its secrets, was remembered by relatives and friends of the victims by the lighting up of a Christmas tree this year. The Ballinasloe Band provided fitting music for the occasion which will resonate for many years in the memory of those who attended.

Having had an exhausting three months with 15 recitals the Band welcomed a visiting band from the USA in early January to the Shearwater Hotel. This 82 member ensemble, from Sacred Heart University Band Connecticut, joined with the Junior Band for a joint concert which was enjoyed by a large and appreciative audience. The Town Band will host visits from other USA bands during the year and also a band from Germany.

The Town Band's fund raising campaign continues with contributions received from the Flower and Garden Club and the ICA and other private donations. The aim is to raise €180,000 for the purchase and renovation of the Town Band Hall.

Renovations have begun early this January and work will be ongoing for some months. At its recent monthly meeting the Chair, Damien O Neachtain, thanked all the supporters. A fundraising clothes collection is ongoing presently to be concluded in the first week of Feb.

The Band has received a donation of over 60 uniforms in the band colours from McCamey High School, Texas! This donation sets up the band up for a bright and colourful future, members are looking forward to marching through the new streetscapes of town in seasons to come! Chair Damien thanked Mccamey High School, their band director Sarah Steele Hill, and their friend Keith Bearden for making the connection in the first place!

An appeal for your support is ongoing. The Town Band requires the long-term commitment of individuals, businesses and supporters to maintain and develop the band in the years ahead.

To become a supporter or to find out about joining or participating contact 087 9710496, see their fbook Ballinasloe Band or check our website www.ballinasloe.ie



Members of our Junior Band with Sacred Heart University Band Connecticut, musicians at the joint concert and workshops in the Shearwater Hotel

BY LIAM COSGROVE



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NOLLAIG NA MBAN RAISES OVER €2,000

Nollaig na mBan was celebrated in great style by the ladies who gathered in Gullane's Hotel and Conference Centre. The youngest guest was a mere four months while the oldest was in her mid-nineties and they all succeeded in raising much needed funds for third world education.

As well as a lovely selection of treats and teas, the ladies were entertained by musicians, dancers and storytellers and there was time to chat and talk and catch up on all the news about the Christmas holidays. One of the features of the annual event is the huge raffle with prizes ranging from wonderful paintings by local artists to lovely silken cushions from Singapore.

The event, which has been run annually by Girls4Girls Education and hosted by Thomas and Caroline Gullane, with goodies from Crumbs and Cream, raised €2,266 and this year Sr. Annette Farrell was present to receive the funds in person. Sr. Annette thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the very enjoyable afternoon. She outlined her work in Dar-Es-Salaam where her order caters for children of all ages and now includes a special centre for children with special needs.

'For the past 20 years, Holy Union has assisted local communities in Maji Matitu, Churwi and Saku to access their right to education by helping them, through our donors, to start primary schools thus supporting the efforts of local government in these fast-growing

suburbs of Dar-Es-Salaam. The schools together now educate 13,000 children.'

Sr. Annette acknowledged the steadfast support of Creagh, Eyrecourt and Kilconnell national schools adding, "You are the ones who carried us through this year. Thank you so much." She also paid a special tribute to Éilis Treacy, Agnes Hurley and Helen O'Connell who travelled to Tanzania bringing with them their expertise in computers, libraries and special needs education. She also thanked the organisers of the event, the musicians and the hosts Thomas and Caroline Gullane.

Sr. Annette returns to Tanzania at the end of this month bringing with her the good wishes and financial help of a growing number of supporters in Ballinasloe and its hinterland.



Nollaig na mBan Musicians



Cathy Keogh and Ann McCullagh at Nollaig na mBan

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE PLANS

The 2020 Parade will assemble at the Fairgreen car park, at 1.30p.m on Tuesday 17th March and will begin at 2pm sharp. The parade will go via Harris road, Dunlo Hill, Dunlo Street, Main Street, Sli na hAbhainn and will then finish in St Michael's Square.

Participants may choose from five categories which include education, culture, sporting, voluntary and commercial. There are valuable cash prizes to be won in each

category with the Tony Colohan Perpetual Trophy as the overall prize.

The local schools, sports clubs, dancing schools, voluntary organisations and businesses are encouraged to take part in the parade as it will give everyone a chance to showcase all of the positive aspects that the town and surrounding areas have to offer. **For inquiries and entry forms please contact: Carmel: 087 620 7477, Damien: 086 170 4241, Johnny: 087 997 3008.**



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BARRY O'CONNOR STEPS DOWN FROM CHAIR

BY LIAM COSGROVE

Whilst Barry O'Connor has had many accolades throughout his life, being Chairman of the Social Club Billiards & Snooker for 22 years, being the Club Captain and lifting the Cup on behalf of the Club Team in Inter-club Competition hold special memories for a man synonymous with the sport.

Last December he stood down from a role in the Club that he has given so much of his time and effort to. He grew up in St. Michael's Place with parents Thomas and Ann, brother James and sister Sarah. He now lives with partner Darina with their two children – Kerryann (4 years old) and Thomas (6 months old). As a child, he was always out playing sport - tennis, soccer, hurling, football. During his childhood, he'd always be down in St. Michael's Place with his friends pretending they were the next big sports stars of the time.

He attended St. Grellan's NS, St. Michael's Vocational School and then attended NUIG for third level study where he received a diploma in Community Development. He has worked in many businesses around the community, including Square D for nine years until it closed in 2003. He then began working in APW in Oranmore where he worked for six years until its closure in 2008, followed by working in the local Tesco part time. He now works as a caretaker in Garbally College.

His interest in snooker started at a young age as his father was involved in the Ballinasloe Social Club for as long as he can remember and when he started in the Boys' Club he got the chance to play Snooker every Friday with his friends which was one of his fondest memories growing up. It was here that he caught the Snooker bug and he fell in love with the game.

He was taught by many senior members such as Mickey Murray, Jo Jo Keighery, Joey Walsh and the late Johnny Riddell and Johnny Ward, who guided him along, and taught him the more technical aspects of the game. He also spent many hours practising and perfecting his craft, bringing some great success in his teenage years. Whilst there are many Snooker and Billiards Competitions held locally, the big annual competition is the William Divilly Memorial Cup, which Barry won when he was only 15.

He enjoyed being a Club Member and wanted to get involved in the running of the Club - just to see how it operated day-to-day. Becoming chairman for 22 years, was one of his proudest achievements to date in the club. When he took over the club wasn't doing very well, it was at risk of closing down. Over the next few years, he oversaw the improvement of the Club Facilities by securing funding through Grants and Fundraising - spending over €50K for improvements and refurbishments in his 22 years as chairman.



Snooker Committee Last Season with Barry as Chair - Back Row L-R: Alf Walsh, Paul Keighery, Adam O'Connor & Joey Walsh
Front Row L-R: Joby Kelly, Barry O'Connor, Thomas O'Connor & Dara Jordan

There are currently 50 members, ranging from 12 to 70 plus years old. He hopes the club will continue to grow and more young people will get involved to ensure the future of the club as they are currently the only club left in the County!

"I wish to strongly commend and thank all committee members I have worked with in the club over the years - there were quite a few different faces over the 22 years, but in particular Joey Walsh, Joby Kelly & David Gallagher" states Barry.

He also warmly acknowledged all the sponsors down through the years but in particular the Divilly Family, Joe's Bar & David Keighery Painting & Decorator.

"Lucy Lloyd-Keighery & Ciaran Coyne gave me and the club huge assistance over the years and I especially want to wish Paul Keighery all the best as the new Club Chairman" he concluded.

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BALLINASLOE GAA RE FOCUS ON

Ballinasloe GAA Club will host a Games & Coaching Development Workshop to discuss the future of the club in Gullane's Hotel on Monday February 10 at 7.30pm. The evening will be in a workshop format where small groups will be able to offer their views, feedback from which will towards the creation of the Club's new Strategy Plan 2020 – 2025.

As the sun rose on a new year and a new decade, the club can look back and be justifiably proud of its achievements in the last 15 years. After the formation of the club officially in 2005, it has developed strongly both structurally and as a vibrant active organisation in the community.

They are now fielding 26 teams in football, hurling & ladies football, starting from U6 to adult teams in all codes. There have been some spectacular successes, most notably the All-Ireland Junior Final in 2013. There have been many county under-age titles in both mens & ladies football and hurling through the years but as with many other clubs, player retention can be difficult and there is a strong impetus in the club to keep all those young players involved to adult level and beyond.

Many players in both hurling and football have donned the maroon & white. Shane Jennings, a superb natural hurler, who in 2018 won an All-Ireland minor hurling medal as well as being man of the match in that final, prove

that junior clubs can indeed produce players of the highest calibre.

A full-sized pitch with state of the art flood lights can now be used year round, two flood lit training pitches, a ball wall with astro turf and a comprehensive clubhouse are the result of dedication and hard work by a large number of club members. Each of these volunteers brought their own area of expertise to their given projects.

The Lotto and Bingo are the steady sources of income for the club and they have been augmented by some major fundraisers which became massive community events. It is held every Tuesday night in The Emerald Ballroom at 8pm.

Behind the scenes at this time of the year there are numerous meetings preparing for the season ahead, training will begin in February and from then on it becomes clear what grass roots GAA is all about – Monday evenings from 6pm sees over 150 girls and boys, Under-6, Under-8 & Under-10 training in football skills,



Congratulations to Nicole Ward, Emma Mitchell, Ashling Brannelly, Rachel Mannion who received their Galway County Player of The Year Award in their division. A great achievement for each of the ladies. The ladies are pictured below with Padraig Fahy, Ladies Committee chairman, John Mitchell, Team manager and Paul Madden, GAA Club Chairman

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Tony Broderick,
Club President



Mark Ward,
Club Treasurer

Saturday morning brings out all the young hurlers. During the rest of the week there is training and games in every other age group across the three codes.

There is also a very active Gaelic for Mothers & Others team in the Club. It is non-competitive and encourages involvement in football for social and fitness levels. The ladies play games against other clubs and also compete in a number of friendly blitzes throughout the year.



Gerry Seale,
Club Secretary



Paul Madden,
Club Chairman

The Club is led by an Executive Committee with sub-committees. These groups together with the coaches and mentors for 26 teams give an indication of just how many volunteers are involved in putting teams on the pitch.

All of the coaches involved at Under-Age levels have completed coaching courses, child protection course and are Garda vetted. The GAA Club welcomes children from as young as five to attend its nursery training. Of course if you have an interest in becoming involved with any aspect of the club you will be very welcome.

Membership of the Ballinasloe GAA is open to everyone. Membership fees are €40 for a juvenile or full-time student, €60 for an adult and €120 for family membership which can be done at www.ballinasloegee.ie.

It is now time to look forward and the Club looks forward to seeing players, parents, supporters, coaches and administrators in Gullane's Hotel on Monday 10th February at 7.30pm for the Games, Development & Coaching Workshop – Now is the time to have your say in the future of your Club!

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DUAL WORLD CHAMPION McDONAGH HONOURED BY KEN KELLY



A 22-year-old Ballinasloe man, who is a two time World Champion, is now targeting another two in the sport of Powerlifting. With gold medals already achieved in Ireland and Russia, Tristan McDonagh from Hymany Park hopes to win another National Title and qualifying event next April and then travel to Lithuania to capture the WPC world championship.

In the space of three years, the lightly-built sportsman has won two World titles, one European and one National title as well as holding eleven Irish national records across multiple weight categories in the minority sport of Powerlifting. The strength pastime consists of three attempts of maximum weight on three types of lifts: Squat, Benchpress and Deadlift.

Three years ago Tristan joined the Shearwater Gym and got interested in weight-training. A few months later he was hooked on Powerlifting, went to a Charity event in Limerick and won the 67.5kg class. A dedicated and self-trained athlete, Tristan won his first national title in 2017 and from there on he took several titles in his stride.

Training for two-hourly sessions, four days each week in the Coral Leisure Centre, the Ballinasloe man says it is important to maintain fitness, regulate your weight and continue to train hard if you want to succeed. "I am fully conscious that any kind of injuries can have a major impact and that is why continuous training is so important. While we don't have a club in Ballinasloe, I notice many young lads have taken up the sport here in the Coral Centre and that is encouraging. I am lucky that a trainer of high-level Powerlifters, Eamon Harford from Drogheda, has taken an interest in me and is now coaching me" said Tristan.

Last December, McDonagh was one of the 15-strong Irish team that travelled to Moscow to compete in the World RAW Powerlifting Federation championship and where he won his second world title. "Once you keep fit it is never too old to compete and I know of an 84-year-old Canadian still active in the sport" he added.

In a family of two brothers and one sister, Tristan is delighted to see his brother, Dylan, follow him in the sport where last year Dylan won an Irish title in the 125kg class. "A lot of people have helped me along the way, especially the Ballinasloe Credit Union and the Coral Leisure Centre for sponsoring my trip to Russia, the Ballinasloe Training Workshop, for their support and understanding as well as family, friends and supporters" he added.

Orla McCaffrey, Co-ordinator of the Training Workshop, said "Tristan is a role model for other students, is a fantastic ambassador for his sport and community, with a hugely positive and committed attitude. He deserves every support in his quest to reach his goals."

Now Tristan becomes the first ever Powerlifting athlete to be honoured by the Medtronic Galway Sports Stars Awards in its 50 years history. Selected by a panel of sports journalists, he received his accolade at a function in the Galway Bay Hotel at the end of January.



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UNDER 14 FLYERS TEAM TOP

BY LIAM COSGROVE

In a very competitive top of the table clash, our club's under 14/15 team (Ballinasloe Flyers) came out on top recently after a great battle with Temple Villa FC on a 6-4 score line.

Goals from Alan Jennings with a hat trick (three goals), Darrell Sweeney with two and Caysan Walsh (one goal) secured the victory for the Town and this leaves the Ballinasloe Flyers top of the league with five wins from five games. The club are very grateful to both Tom Fox Tyres and Michael Monaghan for their recent generous sponsorship.



Ballinasloe soccer club members, Santa Claus and Portiuncula Hospital staff pictured during the club's visit to the children's ward on Xmas eve. Pictured with Portiuncula Hospital staff during the presentation of Xmas presents by Ballinasloe Town A. F. C. Were left to right club members Trevor Kelly, Santa, Katie Ó'Connor, John Kelly and Darragh Braithwaite

Over the Christmas period the club organised a Christmas party/disco in the Shearwater Hotel for the club's youth players and their families. A very enjoyable evening was had by over 100 club youth members, who were treated to presents by the guest of honour, Santa Claus himself.

On Christmas Eve, club members accompanied again by Santa Claus, visited the children's ward at Portiuncula Hospital where presents were distributed to all the children.



Pictured at the recent sponsorship of a new away kit for the Ballinasloe Town AFC (Soccer Club) under 14/15 teams by Mike Monaghan (Local Agent for Avonmore Milk), were back row left to right: Noel Lyons (Coach), Jamie Coyne, Oisín Kindregan, Danny Killeen, Conor Dowd, Alan Jennings, Mark Kilkenny, John Ward. Front row left to right: Mickey Walsh (Manager), Mike Monaghan (Sponsor), Michael Keary, and Caysan Walsh. Missing from photo on the day were Barry McGowan and Liam Sullivan.

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RUGBY ROUNDUP

BY LIAM COSGROVE

The local U18 girls rugby team have progressed into the Connacht League Final with a 12-7 win in tough conditions against the Claremorris Colts in their semi-final. It was a closely fought out game between two excellent teams. It was a tremendous display from the Ballinasloe team led by team captain Rachel Larkin, with all players showing huge commitment and skill in very testing conditions.

Players such as Rachel Larkin, Clodagh Powell, Zara Grehan and Joanne Curley to name a few have played extremely well up to date. They're eagerly awaiting their opponent in the final who'll be the winners of the other semi-final between Ballina RFC and Connemara RFC.

The other semi-final has been called off on multiple occasions due to the flooded pitch and as a result, no date for the final has been fixed.

"They've showed great team spirit, they have really come together as a group and have taken ownership this year. They're one of the best teams the club has produced" exclaimed girls U18 manager Gearoid Finneran.

They'll play their first cup game away to Tuam/Oughterard on February 8.

Meanwhile the Club's fundraising efforts continue with The

Club's 50/50 - half the pot jackpot draw is now up and running. Standing order forms are now available from all coaches, committee members and in the clubhouse.

Each month a draw is made and half of the pot paid in for that month is won. The other half goes to the club for its day to day running costs including capital projects. That's a winner every month, there's no roll-over, no bonus ball, just one monthly draw and one winner.

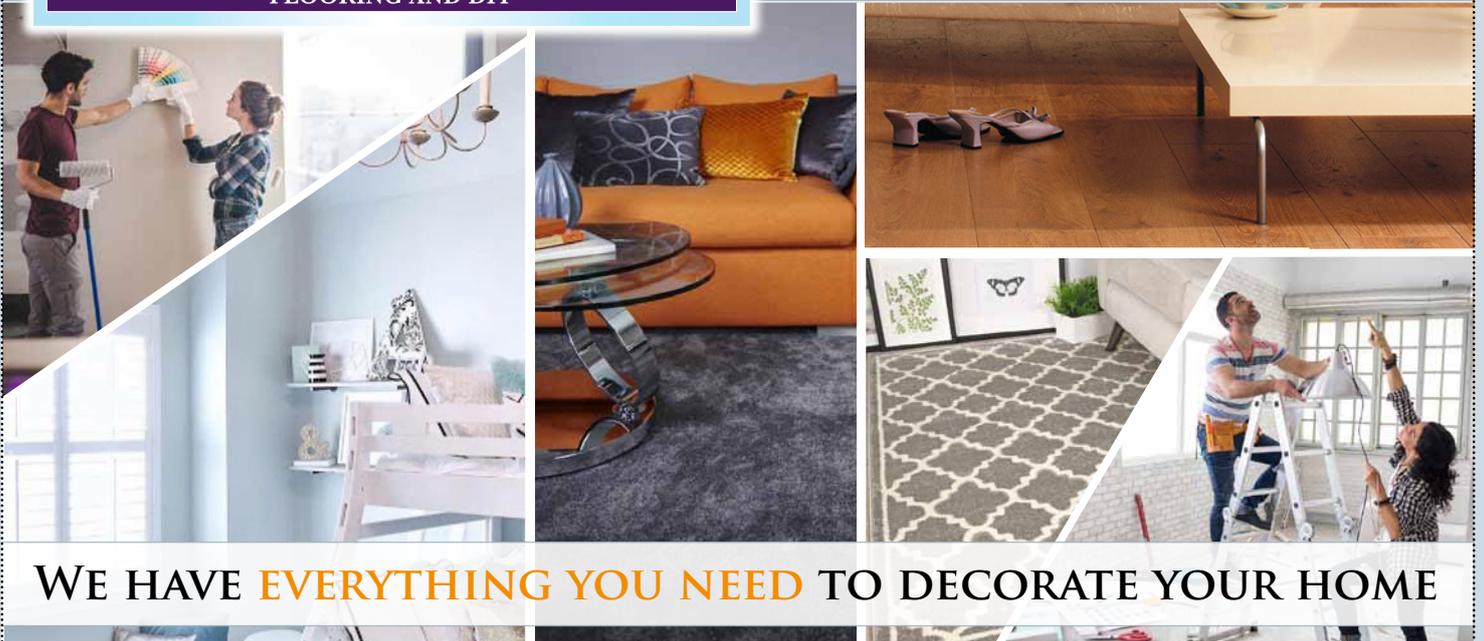
It costs €5 per month to enter. There are 3 ways to enter. A standing order for €5 direct from your bank account monthly. This is highly recommended. That way you're guaranteed entry to each draw automatically. You can pay €60 cash up front that will cover you for 12 draws or you can pay €5 cash each month per draw.

If you have any questions you can contact the rugby club on their Facebook page, any team coach or any committee member. Reminders and more info will also be given in the various WhatsApp groups. This 50/50 - Half the Pot draw is vital to the club and everyone is welcome to take part.



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WALKS AND TRAILS SHORTER WALKS

BY LIAM COSGROVE

As part of Ballinasloe Walks and Trails mission to raise awareness of health and wellness for the upcoming months, they're staging shorter walks of 10-12km to allow new walkers to build up stamina and get familiar and comfortable with walking small distances first.

These walks are being run every second Sunday starting in either Poolboy Bog or Ballinasloe Rugby Club. These walks are run on a volunteer basis so walkers' safety is their own responsibility.

Many walks have taken place over the last month with huge turnouts, such as Ballinasloe Rugby Club to Aughrim Village through (St. Ruth's Bush) and around the Battlefield. Ballinasloe to Kiltormer and Aughrim to the Spinning wheel in Mullagh are only a few of the walks that have taken place.

22 walkers involved with the group, have recently completed a level 1 leader course training which was facilitated by the Irish Heart Foundation. This course is aimed at people who wish to lead walking groups in their community and workplace. As a result, there will be more people available to lead many different walks. The course gives participants the skills needed to inspire others to get walking



Walkers and Trailers

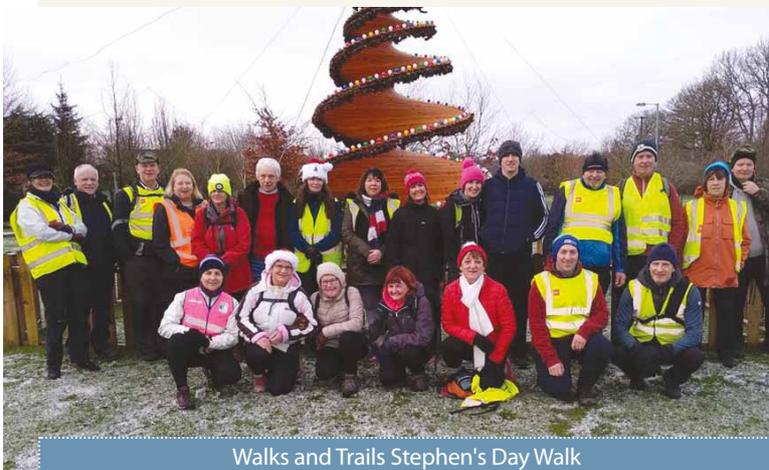
with them as a health promotional measure. Being active in nature, taking regular exercise and having social interaction are important elements which contribute significantly to health and well-being.

Environmental importance of unspoilt nature and biodiversity is highly valued by the walking group. Half of Europe's Whooper Swan population traditionally spend the Winter in Ireland - many in the Suck and Shannon Callows. Walkers have enjoyed watching for these visitors to our grasslands on the trails.

On Sunday February 23rd, Laurencetown Get Active Group will be joining them for their Sunday walk as part of an initiative to link up like minded groups in the surrounding villages with the aim of getting people out moving and exercising for better health.

If you are a member of any group or an individual that would like to come and join the walks and trails group, contact Valerie Dolan at 0876458979 and you will be added to the group WhatsApp after the first walk, they are always looking for new recruits.

All details about new and upcoming walks will be on their Facebook page: Ballinasloe Walks and Trails.



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CHESS CLUB JUNIOR PLAYERS' SUCCESS

BY LIAM COSGROVE

Three members of Ballinasloe Chess Club travelled to Ennis last month to partake in the 2019 Munster Junior Chess Championships. Donnchadh Duane, competing in his first chess tournament, was delighted to claim first place in the U8 section.

His cousin, David Cunningham, undefeated throughout the weekend, took first place in the u12s, while David's sister Leah took first position in both the u10 girls and u12 girls tournaments.

Membership is open to all children and teenagers from beginners to advanced chess players. Current members travel from Athlone, Mountbellew and Athenry areas. There are no membership fees. To join come along to Creagh National School on Wednesdays from 7:30 pm.



Pictured (from left to right) are Donnchadh Duane with his cousins Leah and David Cunningham who were all victorious at the Munster Junior Chess Championships held in Ennis last month.

CYCLING CLUB SIGNUP NIGHT

BY LIAM COSGROVE



After all of the excess of the Christmas just gone perhaps now is the time to do something to improve your fitness for the coming year and hopefully Summer.

Cycling provides an excellent means to increasing fitness for the upcoming summer, many of us cycled to school as kids and need to re-establish our relationship with our bikes and saddles.

As a way of getting started, Ballinasloe Cycling Club can help you to sign up to the club and take advantage of Cycling Ireland insurance along with a whole host of other cycling benefits, that the club can provide.

The club will also be doing a 6 week Couch to 50km from Sunday the 22nd of March and leading up to our annual Charity Cycle, 7 weeks later, the "Tour de'Sham's".

The club signup/promotion night will be held on Friday the 7th of February from 7pm to 9pm at the Ballinasloe Cancer Support Centre. A club gear fitting night will also be facilitated for those that wish to buy.

For more details check out the clubs facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ballinasloecyclingclub/>

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ATHLETIC CLUB SUCCESS IN GALWAY

BY LIAM COSGROVE

Ballinasloe Athletic Club kickstarted the year in style at the Galway Indoor Competition held in Athlone IT. It was especially great to see a number of new members competing for the first time and having the opportunity to try out a range of events from relays to sprints, middle distance, long jump and shot putt. Our competitors on Day 1 included:

U9 - Rebecca Manning (60m), U10 - Logan Donnelly Meehan (60m and 400m), Aaron Kelly (long jump), Lauren Loughrey (long jump, 60m). U11 - Jayden Treacy Thompson (60m, 600m), Kalum Manning (60m, long jump), Carrie Stephenson (60m, 600m) Lisa Herity (60m), Kate Kilkenny (girls 60m, 600m).

U11 Boys Relay Team: Logan Donnelly Meehan, Aaron Kelly, Kalum Manning, Jayden Treacy Thompson.

U11 Girls Relay Team: Lauren Loughrey, Kate Kilkenny, Lisa Herity, Carrie Stephenson.

U12 - Callum Mooney (60m), Adam Murray (60m, 600m, long jump), Luke Bookless (60m), Aoife Berrigan (60m, 600m, 60m Hurdles)

U12 Boys Relay Team; Adam Murray, Calum Mooney, Luke Bookless, Kalum Manning.

Day one saw Kate Kilkenny take home Silver in the girls U11 600m and Lauren Loughrey also winning Silver in girls U10 Long Jump and coming 4th in 60m sprint. Adam Murray ran a strong 600m in

the U12 boys to finish with a Silver medal also. Aoife Berrigan finished in 4th place in a very competitive 600m as did Lisa Herity placing 4th in girls 60m.

Competitors for Day 2 included:

U13 Brian Fitzpatrick (60m), U13 Cillian Ó'Tuairisg (Shot putt), U14 Eva Ruane (60m, 600m), U15 Caoimhe Kilkenny (60m), U18 Jamie Fernandez (60m, 3,000m), Senior Martin Keane (Shot putt).

On Day two, Martin Keane won Gold in the Senior Shot Putt and Cillian Ó'Tuairisg also winning Gold in the boys U13 Shot Putt. Jamie Fernandez took on the boys U18 3,000m to win Gold and secure a new PB time of 11:23. Jamie also competed in the boys U18 60m.

Not to be outnumbered, Caoimhe Kilkenny also finished first in the girls U15 60m taking home another Gold for the club during the January event.

Training continues on Tuesday 5.45pm and Friday 5pm @ Dunlo Recreational Track in preparation for upcoming competitions.



Club members Kate Kilkenny, Lauren Loughrey, Carrie Stephenson, Lisa Herity, Jayden Thompson and Aaron Kelly competing in the Galway Indoor Competition @ AIT



Kate Kilkenny winning Silver in girls u11 600m



Lauren Loughrey winning Silver in Girls u10 Long Jump



Cillian Ó'Tuairisg winning Gold in the u13 boys Shot Put



Caoimhe Kilkenny winning Gold in the girls u15 60m.



Martin Keane winning Gold in the Senior Shot Put.

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VINTAGE CLUB PRESIDENT-MICHAEL HYLAND

An Appreciation by Shane Burns



"Ah how ya? come in out of that!"
The warm greeting I got any time I called on Michael Hyland at his home. More often than not Michael was in the middle of rebuilding an SU carburettor or planning the latest reincarnation of his beloved Mini's engine but still had time for a chat. He loved nothing more than to hear of your motoring exploits before imparting his knowledge and experience on the subject, always the teacher.

I first got to know Michael, as did many, as a student at St Joseph's College, Garbally Park. Michael was the principal of Garbally. I can still remember the first day as this larger than life character read out the "rules and regulations" as it were that you were expected to abide by during your tenure at "Colaiste Gearbhaille". This was a no nonsense character, dedicated to his role as principal and who was passionate about ensuring you got the best out of your time in your new school.

Michael was instrumental in the introduction of Engineering as a subject to Garbally and the fitting out of the new metal work room and by transition year this project was completed. He recognised that not all school work should be solely academic and that some students needed an "outlet" as he put it. Welding, turning and all manner of mechanical fitting were taught. The definition of torque and the benefits of mechanical sympathy crowded the theory side.

Inevitably the subject of this class would stray as Michael would use an example of the previous Sundays F1 race to prove his theory! A Godsend to many a petrol head amongst us and broke up the monotony of an otherwise boring school week. The hands on approach to learning was again used in the building of an off-road kart which we was completed by the metal work class by year end.

Aptly christened the "Hylander" this machine was displayed with pride at the end of year celebrations.

I was lucky enough to be involved with Ballinasloe and District Vintage club at a time when Michael or "Mike" as he was known to his fellow members agreed to become joint president. Again his foresight, passion and drive brought the club to new heights.

Mike's input at each meeting he attended, or the copious phone calls in between, always ensured we were on our toes!! More often than not the notepad was produced during a vintage meeting. Mike would have the attention of young and old as he would recite his thoughts on a run we should be organising, a show we should have been at or an observation he made at an event he had recently attended. All were constructive criticism aimed at making sure you were giving your best. Michael showing us all how it was done at the wheel of his Mini in Tynagh.

Surely his lasting legacy with the club will be his creation of the Tynagh track days. Primarily these were events designed, as he put it, to explore the "potential" of your classic car. Now potential as Mike would have told you, with a wistful smile, meant "having a go" in a controlled environment just like he did on many occasions in his Mini Cooper. Many of us were not around to see his giant killing efforts racing and rallying in Mini Coopers and Mini Marcos back in the day but Tynagh gave us some insight into what he could do behind the wheel. Something his son Brian and grandson Danny emulated in more recent times.

We will all miss the friendship, the chats, the debates and the stories. We will find it very hard to fill the void that Michael has left on the 18th of Dec. His youthful enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge about all things mechanical endeared him to all who were fortunate enough to have met him.

To his son Brian, daughter Fiona, brother Cyril, grandsons Danny, Mikey and Tommy, daughter-in-law Nuala, son-in-law Colm, his sister-in-law Ann, teaching colleagues and friends we extend our deepest sympathies.

Ni bheidh ar leitheidi ann aris.

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The recent screening in Galway of a film on the life of Marshal Pilsudski, Polish military dictator during the inter-war years, has brought to mind a story related to me some time ago by Maura Hughes of Annabeg, Ahascragh.

Born in Ballymoe, County Galway, in 1906, Sarah Gunning was orphaned at the age of ten when both her parents died within a fortnight of each other. Sent by relatives to attend La Sainte Union convent school in Banagher, she

later boarded with the Dominican Sisters in Dún Laoghaire before moving to England to work as a teacher. In 1927 the Dominican nuns secured a governess post for her with a family living in the Polish countryside near Kraków. At the time it would have been unusual for a respectable young woman to travel abroad unaccompanied. Nevertheless, she set out alone with money sewn into her clothes as a precaution against attempted robbery. It was her good fortune to meet a kind gentleman during her continental journey who saw to it that she reached her destination unmolested.

Poland had lost its independence in the late 18th century when the country was parcelled out amongst Russia, Austria and Prussia. The Polish people, however, never accepted the dismemberment of their fatherland and had staged numerous revolts down through the years against the partitioning powers, the most significant of these being the 1863 uprising against Russia resulting in up to 20,000 fatalities. Józef Pilsudski, born in Lithuania of Polish parentage, set up a terrorist group in the early years of the last century with the objective of re-uniting the country. His organization managed to assassinate 336 Imperial Russian officials in 1906 alone. On the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 he allied his paramilitaries with Austria to fight against Russia. At war's end Poland was granted independence as a parliamentary democracy. It immediately

became involved in six border wars, including the 1919-1920 conflict with Soviet Russia from which Poland emerged victorious. Had the Bolsheviks won, their aim was to link up with the Communist Party in Germany and from there to extend Soviet domination to the rest of Western Europe.

Subsequently Poland experienced several years of political instability which saw the assassination of the country's first President after only five days in office. The year prior to Sarah's arrival, Pilsudski had launched a bloody coup d'état that cost hundreds of lives and established an authoritarian regime that curtailed many civil liberties but never became as repressive as that of the Nazis in the Germany of the 1930s. To his credit, Pilsudski was favourably disposed to Poland's Jewish community and tried to protect them from discriminatory practices, and this in a country where antisemitism was widespread. Surprisingly, Hitler, who as a rule never darkened the door of a church, attended the Marshal's requiem mass when the latter died in 1935.

Unfortunately, relations between Sarah and her host family became so fraught that she sought the help of the local parish priest who arranged a similar placement for her with a neighbouring family of extensive landowners, the Marsdens, who wanted an English language tutor for their four daughters. As was then the custom amongst the Polish aristocracy, conversation around the dinner table was in French. Sarah formed a lifelong bond of friendship with the eldest daughter Renée.

Though serfdom had been abolished in Poland in the 1860s, the landed gentry could still exercise a tyrannical influence on the lives of their tenants and employees, as illustrated by the following incident: one day when Renée was walking alone about the farm a peasant in a playful mood had pinched her bottom. The girl took it in good part, and later, within her family circle, laughingly recounted what had happened. Afterwards she was horrified to discover that her parents had had the luckless culprit flogged for his lascivious behaviour. In 1929, when the Marsdens departed on a grand tour of Europe, Sarah returned to Ireland but remained in postal contact with Renée. Eventually she married Thomas Hughes, the father of Maura's husband Tom, and settled in Annabeg to rear her family.

During the World War II German occupation of Poland Renée was arrested for harbouring members of the Polish Home Army

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(resistance fighters). While in detention she was subjected to such brutal torture that she was rendered incapable of bearing children. When the Red Army advanced westwards in the closing stages of the war, in the interest of their personal safety, the Marsdens relocated to the city of Kraków where they were obliged to live in straitened circumstances. Their estate was confiscated in the late 1940s by the Polish United Workers' (Communist) Party Government and divided up amongst the peasants. Renée eked out a meagre livelihood giving English lessons. Later she married a local man from her home village.

In 1948 Renée wrote to Sarah from Kraków, resuming their

correspondence despite the strict censorship imposed by the Stalinist authorities. Living conditions were grim in post-war Poland, particularly for former members of the landowning class, and in the 1950s the Hughes family tried unsuccessfully to obtain exit visas for Renée and her husband to come to Ireland. Sadly, Renée was stricken with dementia some years before her death.

Contact, however, was maintained with Renée's nephews and nieces, and this resulted in a recent visit by Maura and Tom to Kraków and the remains of the former Marsden residence, thus renewing a connection forged by two young women in the Polish countryside almost a century ago.

KILCONNELL COMPOSER FIRST OSCAR CONDUCTOR

Local composer-conductor Eimear Noone will be the first woman ever to conduct the Oscars on Sunday February 9. The star-studded event will take place at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California.

The 92nd Academy Awards will be televised in the United States by ABC, produced by Lynette Howell Taylor and Stephanie Allain and directed by Glenn Weiss.



Eimear who hails from Kilconnell, Ballinasloe and attended Ardscoil Mhuire is very enthusiastic about the gig. Details about her role are sketchy. It is not clear whether all five themes will be presented as a medley or separately, or whether the 42-piece Oscar orchestra will be onstage at the Dolby

Theatre or in the pit, but everyone who knows Eimear is very excited for her groundbreaking moment.

Noone, who along with her husband, composer-producer Craig Stuart Garfinkle, divides her time between homes in Dublin and California and conducts 40 to 50 concerts a year around the world. She has conducted many orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, National Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic of London and the Sydney Symphony in Australia.



She was the first woman to conduct at Dublin's National Concert Hall, and for four years she conducted the Dublin City Concert Orchestra, an ensemble she founded at 21 for the performance of specialist film music and scores.

BY LIAM COSGROVE

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COMPLICATED HISTORY OF SOME LOCAL R.I.C.



The government's cancelled plans to commemorate the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) sparked a debate about the nature of the force that policed Ireland under British rule.

Absent from that discussion has been an appraisal of the reasons that led tens of thousands of young men – like Edward (Ned) Mooney, who is buried in Ballinasloe – to join the RIC. Mooney was a typical RIC recruit. Born in 1890 in Kilchreest, Co Galway, he was one of eight children of Patrick Mooney, a farmer, and Catherine Clarke. Both were Catholics and spoke Irish and English.

On 18 October 1911, some months after his 21st birthday, Mooney was recruited into the RIC, No. 66185. At 5 foot 11¼ inches, he was the tallest of the ten other police recruits entered on the same page in the register.

After seven months of training, Mooney was stationed in Kerry. While an RIC constable could expect to move county five or six times in his career, the county would be Mooney's only posting, as the momentous upheaval in Irish history sparked by the Easter Rising led him out of the RIC and into the ranks of its new enemy, the IRA.

On 13 June 1919, after almost eight years' service, Mooney was "dismissed" from the RIC, as stated in the force's register. By the time he left – Mooney would claim that he resigned – six RIC men had been killed by the IRA. As the War of Independence intensified in

1920 and 1921, over 6,500 RIC men would resign, many of them intimidated into doing so but others in protest at what they were being asked to do, often alongside the notorious Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, largely recruited in Britain.

The Westmeath Independent would later write: "When the troubles started, (Mooney) was one of the first batch to resign and from that day forward his services were devoted to the freedom of his country. He was arrested by Crown forces and served terms of imprisonment for his activities with the IRA."

Shortly after leaving his police career, Mooney married Diane O'Halloran, who was from Abbeydorney, Co Kerry.

Some years later, the couple moved to Ballinasloe, where Mooney became an attendant in St Bridgid's Hospital, with the help of Dr. Ada English. A staunch republican, she did what she could to compensate former RIC who had resigned from the force by giving them jobs in the institution. Mooney was one of at least three ex-RIC men who joined the staff with Dr English's assistance.

Mooney, who lived at "The Villa", on Station Road, died on 16 March 1937, at St Vincent's Hospital, and is buried in Creagh Cemetery. His headstone declares that he was a "Member of the Mid-Galway Division Active Service IRA". There is no mention of his RIC past. Diane died a mere two years later. Buried in the same grave, her name was never added to the headstone.

BY DAMIAN MAC CON ULADH

As we go to print, we learn of the bereavements of the Quinn, McGovern and Minton families. Our condolences to them and their friends. In our next edition we hope to feature appreciations.

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MINOR FOOTBALLERS OF THE 50'S

Ballinasloe Co. Minor Football Champions 1954.

Front row, l to r: Ray McLoughlin, Georgie Geraghty, Liam Cunnane, Davy Duignam, Sean Keeley (capt), P.B. Ryan, Sean Meade, Tom Rankin, Ollie Carney.

Back row, l to r: Gabriel Donnelan, Tommy Buckley, Sean Mullins, Ollie Farnon, Martin Clarke, Michael O'Connor, Eddie Forde, Sean Greally, Noel McCann, Miko Kelly.



The Ballinasloe 1959 Minor Football Team who were beaten by St. Michael's in the Co. Final, played in Tuam Stadium.

Front row, l to r: Martin Ryan, Bernard Ryan, Seamie O'Connor, Johnny Smith, Cyril Dunne, Ken Kelly, Jackie Clarke, Declan Rankin.

Back row, l to r: Josie Carr, Christy Cregg, Pat McDonnell, Georgie Walker, Tommy Ryan, Gerry Farrell, Liam Smith, Johnny Curley, John Hurley.

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PADDY KELLY-KING OF THE TRACK

BY KEN KELLY



The sporting parish of Moore/Clonfad has been renowned for producing many fine athletes over the years but none have equalled the achievements of Paddy Kelly from Lowtown. Between 1907 and 1924 he won fifteen All-Ireland medals in middle distance and cross country events. He was the undisputed "King of the Track" in the early part of the last century.

Born in 1886 to parents Patrick Kelly and Catherine Naughton from Doohan, he was one of a family of 7 boys and 6 girls. All the family were reared on the farm at Lowtown but there were two families of Kellys on the same farm. Paddy's father Patrick and his family became known as "Funny's" while his uncle John and family were named "Crange." Both families were educated in Derrylahan National School by Patrick and Anne Geraghty.

As there was no club in Moore, Paddy Kelly ran with the Ballinasloe Club. In 1920, under the guidance of Dick Kenny, as trainer and coach, the Ballinasloe runners were crowned Cross Country Champions. In 1923 Dick Kenny, a teacher in Mount Welcome School, established the first Athletic Club in Moore and a year later Paddy Kelly won his first individual All-Ireland medal while his cross country team of his brother Willie, Johnny and Willie Goode from Derrylahan and Pat Barrett of Liberty, with three more, took the team title.

The Kelly family trained through the bogs, wearing wellington boots with the going "soft and rough." They ran the area known as "Drocil" Lowtown, right down to Thomastown and Clonbulia bog. "When Paddy Kelly was going to compete, he would spend all day working on the farm or in the bog, come home, get ready and cycled to wherever the competition was next day. All the events took place on a Sunday as nobody would waste a weekday for sports."

Some of the venues that Paddy Kelly competed in were Garrycastle, Rahara, Strokestown, Dunmore and Loughlynn. He won his first Connacht senior medal in 1907 in the mile event, a year later he won three All-Ireland medals, taking the 3, 4 and 5 mile titles; in 1909 he was the 4 and 6 mile champion, again in 1910 and 1911 he won 3 All-Ireland medals while he was All-Ireland cross country (8 miles) champion in 1908, 1909, 1910, 1913, 1918 and 1920. To round off his career, Paddy was the individual winner of the All-Ireland Cross Country championship in 1924 and helped his team to a silver medal in the event.

Paddy and his family were talented musicians and played at house dances and at the weekend dances in Camclon School in the 1920's and 1930's. He inherited the family farm and remained a bachelor. Considering most of his victories were achieved by the Lowtown man running in his bare feet, he is still remembered as the "King of the Track" in Moore.

On 10th April 1943, Paddy Kelly cycled to Ballinasloe town and on his return journey, while getting back onto his bicycle at "Barrett's Corner" he collided with another cyclist and received serious head injuries which resulted in his death. He was 56 years old and is buried in Moore South Cemetery, alongside his parents Patrick (died 1919) and Catherine (1939).

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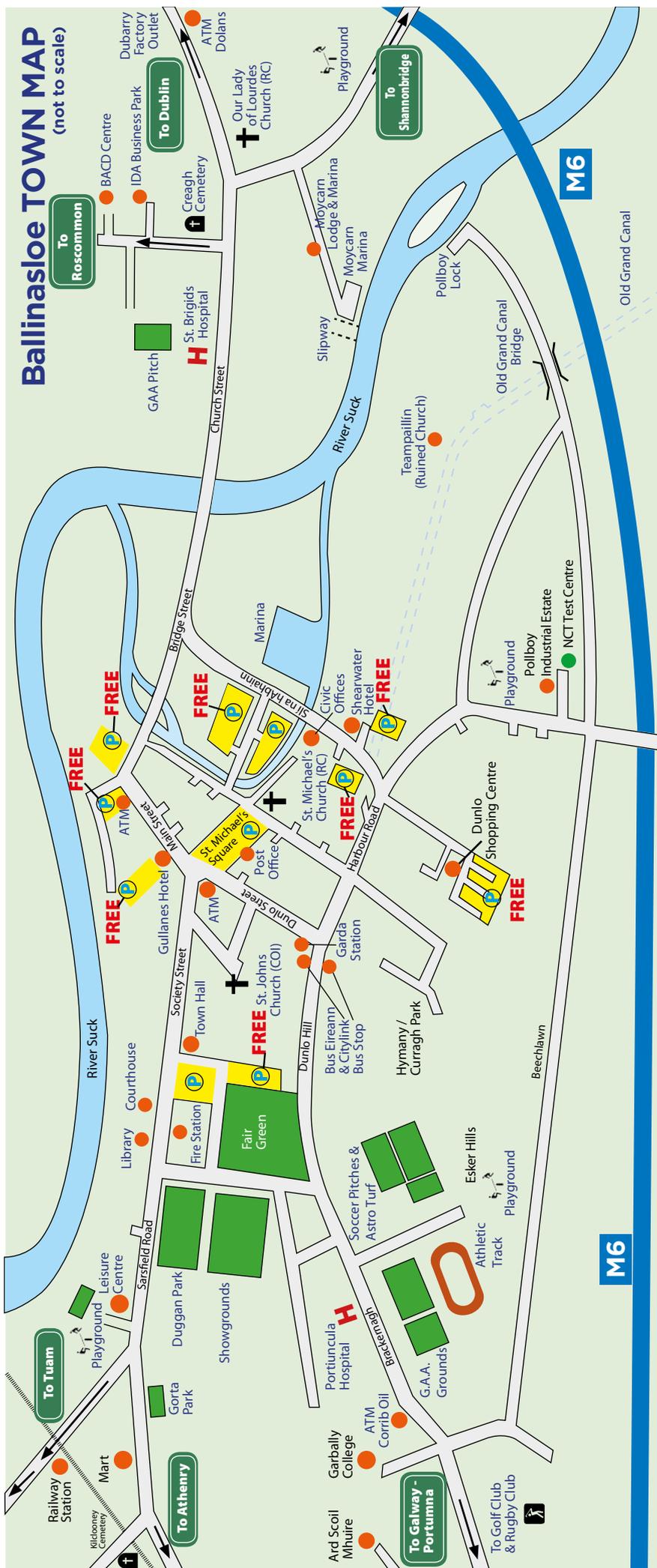
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Ballinasloe TOWN MAP

(not to scale)



Ballinasloe History Walk

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

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

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

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

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

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