



BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 11 Issue 5: Dec '21 - Jan '22



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REAMHRA

Welcome to Volume 11 issue 5

Welcome to the 10th consecutive edition with no formal events guide – but with lots of activity to report on.

A Meaningful Christmas – is now apparently up there with “flattening the curve.” The level of despondency and fear that stalks the land 21 months since we first saw Taoiseach Leo address from the steps of the Embassy in Washington, is palpable.

We are not (to be fair) quite where we were 12 months ago with some 93% of the population vaccinated but we are learning that being vaccinated does not mean we can't infect. We are learning that all those vaccinated will need a booster shot in some weeks or months. We are also learning that living with a global pandemic and a fourth wave means that we are going to be on this seesaw of emotion and instability for a few seasons to come.

Truth be told that our policy makers have crossed a Rubicon of sorts – there will be no full-scale lock down with attendant economic supports because we are prepared to see a cohort of the population die. Learning to live with COVID actually means seeing more people suffer and die from it.

What the policymakers won't suffer is the ramshackle of a Medical system being swamped with COVID and Non Covid patients; with 120 days of winter ahead of us I wonder what really is left in their tool box other than more personal responsibility to address this? Will we eventually follow the Austrians?

For me I'd rather a low key, family – 3 groups to a household – “windows open; blowing the flames out on the pudding type Christmas; if I did not have to revisit the awfulness of the Jan to April of last year. I suspect a great deal of readers might too.”

Planning is a vital part of any Enterprise, be it Commercial or Voluntary. We have seen many plans for our Catchment area and most “eventually” get there after being continually kicked for touch.

Many fail to have any timelines attached and get tied up in rules, regulations and red tape which chokes them.

As an organisation we have put together our Vision for 2030 and beyond and objectives we believe need to happen within that time frame.

We are appointing a co-ordinator for that plan to keep a focus on same and try and circumvent some of the stumbling blocks which arise.

Ballinasloe has been allocated in excess of €60 million from various Government departments in recent times and there is no link or co-ordination evident between them to give us a cost-efficient, speedy return on the investment over the next few years. The Dept of Education, HSE, Board of Works, Hidden Heartland, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Iarnród Éireann, Just Transition Fund, Galway Co Co, Roscommon Co Co are some of the bodies with funds committed. We need to see some joint up thinking from these bodies with commitment



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Busy times at the Enterprise and Tech Centre here these past few weeks with visits from An Taoiseach, Minister for Education and Leader of the Opposition – all enthused and encouraged by what they witness but thin with new practical supports.

The Glasgow reportage and the huge hike in energy costs have everyone thinking about green and sustainable issues – timely therefore to the new Sustainable Town Plan, being drafted at the moment.

The 2030 Plan for our Blueprint for Development Community is being rolled out from AGM onwards and sets out three main pillars of focus. The Statutory Local Area Plan is finishing its public round of consultation and as we go to print – news of a 5 screen Omni plex Cinema to be built by 2022.

All reasons to be somewhat cheerful.

Please, where you can support local retailer and suppliers with your Christmas gifting this season – there as some tricky months ahead and maintain our guard with pandemic etiquette. Spare a thought for all healthcare staff and the families of the recently deceased – theirs is a challenging time.

Beannachtai na Nollaig agus Bliain Nua Faoi
Mhaire agaih go leir.

Enjoy the read.

Le Gach De Ghui,
COLM CROFFY,
Editor.



to timelines for delivery.

You have your opportunity to view Galway Co Co's Local Area Development Plan for the Ballinasloe District and can make submissions or observations up to 3rd December (<http://consult.galway.ie/>).

We are holding our AGM on Tuesday the 7th December @ 7.30 pm in Gullane's Hotel when we will elaborate on an outline of the plan and invite views and observations etc.

Our Guest speaker is Ciaran Mullooly, formerly RTE correspondent, who now works as a Community & Social Enterprise Development Officer and he will speak on the creation of jobs in the social economy where he sees huge potential.

Finally, as we head into the festive season, I wish all our readers a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year for 2022.

SEAMUS DUFFY,
Chairman Ballinasloe Area Community
Development Limited.



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The coast to coast 270km car-free Galway to Athlone Cycleway route is due for completion in 2026 and Senator Aisling Dolan attended the launch of the Whitegates Cycleway Bridge from Athlone Marina to Athlone Castle.

Ballinasloe-based Ollie Kenny, of Kenny Ltd construction, and his team were acknowledged for the construction of the 40km section of the Cycleway project at 'The Old Rail Trail' from Mullingar to Athlone Marina.

The decision on the preferred route corridor for the TII Galway to Athlone section of the Cycleway is due to be announced through Public Consultation at the start of December.

So many groups and communities across East Galway on the routes through Ballinasloe have showcased the fantastic Cycleway experiences through unique boglands and rural landscapes and the heritage, culture and sense of community for both our local families and visitors to the area.

Senator Aisling Dolan stated: "I had the opportunity to meet Chief Executive Peter Walsh of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) who is a strong advocate for Cycleways as well as Fáilte Ireland Executives who are promoting the tourism spin-offs this will bring to local areas and impressed on the need for the route to come through Ballinasloe".

The TII Galway to Athlone Cycleway project team is based in offices in the

library - Society St. Galway to Dublin Cycleway Project Co-ordinator, Michael Kelly stated: "A lot of progress has been made in the last six months and the plan is to announce the preferred route corridor for the Galway to Athlone section of the Cycleway start of December 2021 as part of Public Consultation No. Three. We look forward to meeting communities again face to face to discuss the selected route at hotels in the area."



Fine Gael Senator Aisling Dolan pictured with Maria Walsh MEP, TII Galway Dublin Project Co-ordinator Michael Kelly and Greenway Public Liaison Officers.

LOCAL AREA PLAN - LAST FEW DAYS FOR INPUT

By Michael Keary

The Ballinasloe local area plan around how the centre and surrounds of town will be developed in a sustainable manner to 2027, is normally viewed as a template to ensure the correct development takes place in the right place and the right time.

The plan went to public consultation on the 22nd of October and will run through till the 3rd of December. The final plan will be adopted by early 2022 and will run alongside to the bigger County development plan. The County's plan is expected to run between 2022 to 2028.

The draft plans are up for local viewing at the planning office, Prospect Hill in Galway city on Monday to Friday from 9.00 am till 4.00 pm, Ballinasloe Library, Society Street, during regular opening hours.

The final location where the plans were available for viewing is the Ballinasloe Civic Offices, from 9.10 am to 5.00 pm, or are available for viewing on www.consultgalway.ie.

MDC Chair Councillor Dermot Connolly said "the local area plans are some of the most significant pieces of work they do during the term as local representatives, and I am encouraging all interested groups and individuals to make submissions until the 3rd of December".

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Eric Naughton Pictured with Councillor Evelyn Parsons Tidying the Town

The Tidy Towns Results are in and Ballinasloe acquired 315 points out of a total of 470 points, ranking the town in the E category for Galway in the Annual Competition.

The judges' report was thorough in its analysis of the town and pointed out the many agencies that participated in the community clean-ups such as the Brother of Charity, Probation Community, Galway County Council, schools and many more groups and individuals that came together to keep the town clean.

The team was also pleased to see the many improvements

and renovations the town has seen such as the Street Scheme and the implementation of the five picnic benches at the Fairgreen. They remarked on the reduction of the use of pesticides and recommended the introduction of practical classes on how to take cuttings and plants of most benefit to the wildlife.

They encouraged the organised local clean-ups that seen Cllr Parsons and many more take to the streets and bogs to clear the illegal litter. They also commended Ballinasloe Town AFCs Scrap and Metal Recycling initiative. Other remarks included the Glantaun Avenue Residents Committees Grow It Forward initiative and the new pedestrian footpaths.



Taoiseach Michael Martin T.D. paid a visit with the Minister for Education Norma Foley to Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre to confirm that the new build of a state of the art new school for St. Teresa's was being prioritised by the Government. Pictured here with members of the Board of Management and many Oireachtas Members and local public representatives.



Chairman Seamus Duffy, Manager Lyn Donnelly and Members of the Board of Directors of BACD formally welcome Taoiseach Michael Martin on his first ever visit to Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre and indeed his first visit to town - as Taoiseach, last month.

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FUNDING FOR 32 NEW RESIDENCES



Senator Eugene Murphy has welcomed the provision of new housing. Minister for Housing, Darragh O'Brien, has cleared the way for Galway County Council to proceed with a major investment at Dunlo Hill, Ballinasloe. The development will consist of 32 houses made up of three two-bed houses, 27 three-

bed houses, and two four-bed units.

"I recently met with the Minister and expressed the serious issues that exist with lack of housing in the Ballinasloe region where some people have been many years on waiting lists. I know Galway County Council are anxious to deal with some outstanding cases and this commitment will go a long way to help local families secure suitable housing" Senator Eugene Murphy stated.

Currently, in Ballinasloe, 588 households are awaiting social housing, 211 in receipt of the housing assistance payment, some 2,857 renters in the town with the average rent from last year rising 7.9% to rise to €743.72.

Senator Murphy continued: "Minister O'Brien confirmed this in addition to an investment of over €1.6 million to refurbish in excess of 100 vacant local authority homes in Roscommon/Galway with a view to having them re-let in the coming months".

This investment will tackle the issue of derelict housing in the region and could allow for potential affordable housing for those who are still on long waiting lists. It is hoped that finalisation of the part 8 planning process with design and procurement will be happen early in the new year.

LEADER BRIEFED ON NEW 2030 PLAN

Sinn Féin leader, Mary Lou McDonald, visited Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre accompanied by sitting TD Claire Kerrane and local MDC Cathoirleach Dermot Connolly.

It was birthday boy blushes for Dermot as both TD's gave an impromptu "Breithla Shona" to what Mary Lou termed the "Superman of the West".

Members of the Board, Chair and Manager gave an extensive briefing to the deputation on the progress and challenges ahead for our town and community before she toured the centre and met many of the tenants including the Principal and Staff of St. Teresa's School.

Meanwhile Claire Kerrane TD, questioned Minister for Local Government Mary Butler on why Galway County was being deliberately starved of per capita type funds compared to other larger counties.

"The response from the Fianna Fáil Minister is outrageous and shows a Government that is completely out of touch and out of ideas. If Galway County Council received revenue per capita as closest comparator they would have received an additional budget of €43.67 million in recent years and if compared to the average of comparators there would be an additional budget of €52.6 million. The Minister failed to address the continued lack of funding by Government and suggested that an increase in LPT and Rates could fill that gap" exclaimed Deputy Kerrane.



Pictured at the first ever visit of the Leader of Opposition to the Enterprise Centre were Lyn Donnelly Manager, Seamus Duffy Chair, Claire Kerrane TD, Mary Lou Mc Donald T.D. Leader of Opposition and Sinn Féin, Cllr Michael Connolly, Cllr. Dermot Connolly, Noel Madden Director of BACD.



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Galway County Council Cathaoirleach Peter Keaveney welcomed MEP Colm Markey along with Senator Aisling Dolan and other distinguished guests to unveil a new Europe Direct centre.

The Europe Direct Centre is one of seven Europe direct centres around Ireland which are managed by the public library service. The service and professionalism shown by the staff of the library service and their embrace of new technologies over the last few years enabled them to deliver a range of online services with supporting people across the country during multiple lockdowns.

Cathaoirleach Keaveney stated: "Libraries have shown themselves to be at the forefront of change and innovation and it is this focus on the future and on delivery of high-quality information which makes the partnership with Europe Direct a natural fit."

Europe Direct has been established to actively promote European citizenship within schools and colleges to organize citizens' debates and information sessions and to provide means and opportunity for EU citizens to access factual and timely information on a wide range of European policies, supports, and services.

Colm Markey, MEP Midlands Northwest, added: "I think this is a wonderful initiative because one of the things we struggle with within Europe is to relate what's happening at the European level back to the ordinary citizens on the ground. And one of the things concerning that that we are doing now is developing a conference which is specific on our future with Europe and the challenges surrounding it."

Colm concluded: "Looking at the broader political situation, at the moment there is something of a disconnect among the people with the institutions of Europe. In the past, Ireland was a place which greatly valued what happened at European level. But with the exception of countries that came into Europe in the early 90s we seem to have somewhat got a little bit disconnected from Europe. I suppose our early days was very much about funding. But

I think we have to reinvent what Europe means to us. I mean the last 12 breaking months with the COVID pandemic people like the vaccines. A joined up approach for their purchase made Europe more relevant. The way we want to continue to make the EU relevant is through a centre like this. It's to start that conversation and develop that conversation to shape our future."

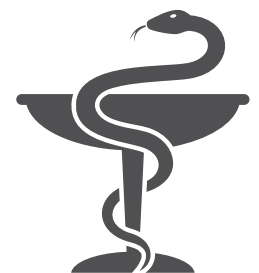
For more information on Europe Direct and any events the library has to offer visit their website: <https://www.librariesireland.ie/services/europe-direct>



Colm Markey MEP unveiling the plaque to formally open the European Centre at the Library on Society Street.



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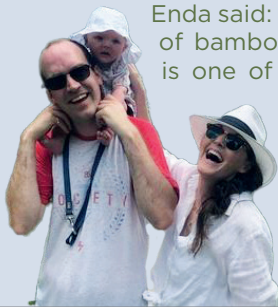
Enda Barton is a former native of Creagh, attending Creagh National School and Garbally College. In 2020, Enda was made redundant from his job due to the pandemic. At the same time, Enda and his partner Madeline were expecting their first baby. As so many expecting parents do, Enda started to research baby clothing to see what the best clothing for their baby was. That is when he discovered Bamboo fabric and all its amazing benefits.

Enda said: "Bamboo is an amazingly sustainable plant. In fact, one acre of bamboo will yield 10 times more than one acre of cotton which is one of the most common fabrics found in baby clothing today. Bamboo fabric is super soft, and is often compared to silk, making it ideal for babies with sensitive skin, particularly babies with eczema. These are just some of the amazing benefits of Bamboo fabric. You can learn more about it on our website."

The business launched in October over one year from when Enda first started working on it. He stated: "I have always wanted to run my own business, and I always knew it was going to be a tough thing to

do. The last year was difficult, but we learned so much along the way and continue to learn. We are really excited about building and developing our business in the Irish market, and hopefully in other markets in the not-so-distant future. So far, feedback from our customers has been extremely positive so the future looks bright."

To learn more on Bamboo Baby you can visit their website: www.bamboobaby.ie or Follow BambooBaby on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BambooBaby.ie> and on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bamboobaby.ie/>



Enda Barton with Wife Madeline and their Newborn Son.

THOMASTOWN TOTS

By Jack Treacy

A new Pre-school known as Thomastown Tots, operating the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) opened in Ballydangan in September.

The promoter is Elaine Daly, and she has brought about this service through her perseverance, hard work and tenacity which was made more difficult during the challenges of the pandemic. It is a very welcome addition in this local community as it ensures the continuity of this service in the Moore and Ballydangan district.

Elaine Daly set on her project by successfully completing the requisite accreditation in childcare management and education. The pre-school was then newly purpose built in line with specifications as outlined and approved by Tusla for all such facilities operating the ECCE scheme. The facility is located on the N6 (Athlone -Ballinasloe). It is operated and managed by Elaine and her staff, accommodating up to 33 children. It has both indoor and outdoor amenities.

Elaine says she is very excited about this new business and her objective is to provide for the needs of each child and family in a nurturing, safe, educational and fun environment. It will enrich the children and help them to develop a positive attitude to learning that will

sustain them through life and prepare them for the future education stages ahead. She also says she is committed to working in partnership with the parents to facilitate a workable process in the challenges that parents now experience in their working lives. "I am extremely thankful to all the people who encouraged and supported me while bringing my plans to completion and I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas" says Elaine.



Elaine Daly, Tots owner.

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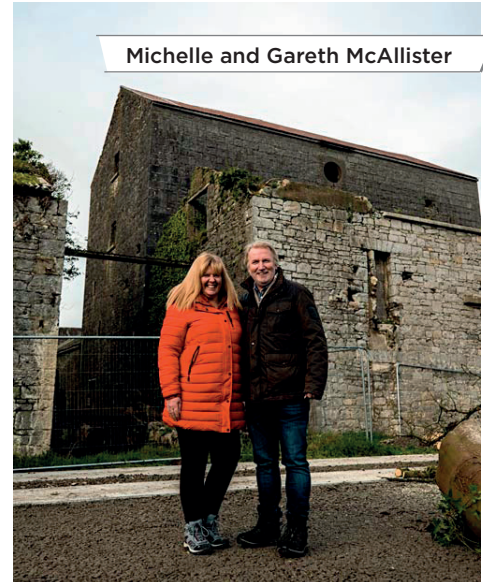
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Ahascragh Distillery have announced their 'Clan Investment' round that allows the wider community to own shares in the company and help realise the vision for the distillery.

The transformation of the old Ahascragh Mills into a world class distillery and visitor experience is moving forwards at pace. The old corn mill was acquired in 2019 and planning permission secured in October 2020, with structural and enabling works was completed in June of this year. The distillery is on target to commence production by late 2022.

Following a successful first round of funding, Ahascragh Distillery want to open the opportunity to a wider group of people. A series of webinars for potential investors have already commenced with good interest from domestic and international investors.

Ahascragh Distillery's 'Clan Investment' Round includes rewards and benefits that range from personal gifts to special experiences. These rewards are unique to this fundraising campaign. The minimum investment for the 'Clan Investment' Round is €115.



Michelle and Gareth McAllister

You can register your interest now at www.ahascraghdistillery.com to be amongst the first to be involved and for the chance to win a Clan Colla Irish Whiskey hamper.

Michelle McAllister, Founder & Managing Director commented "Ahascragh Distillery is rooted in County Galway. The distillery will be supported by local workers and suppliers, and will draw from the surrounding landscape and resources to distil our spirits. In return, we want to ensure that the wider community has the opportunity to own a little bit of the project. We have been overwhelmed by the welcome and support from locals since we began this venture. This round makes it easier and more accessible for the local and whiskey community to invest in the project even if it's on a smaller level. We're inviting the people of Galway and beyond to join us on this exciting journey."

Gareth McAllister added "We are privileged to have wonderful investors already on board and we want to continue to grow the family. This is an attractive opportunity for investors across Ireland, and the world, to buy in to the business and own a piece of whiskey history in the West of Ireland. Whiskey is now seen as a good asset class for investors. We are going one step further by inviting investors to get in at the ground floor and own a share in a new distillery."

Ahascragh Distillery will be a state-of-the-art whiskey and gin distillery in County Galway. Work has commenced on transforming a nineteenth century mill into a world class distillery, powered by renewable energy using innovative technology. In June, The Old Mill Shop & Café opened its doors to locals and visitors while the company launched their first products, Clan Colla Irish Whiskey and Xin Gin.

While living in Hong Kong & China, founders Gareth & Michelle McAllister spotted a gap in the market for premium Irish spirits. With plans to launch products internationally this year, they see Asia as a significant opportunity for the growth of Irish whiskey.



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Tosú Performance Centre

John and Miriam
Stand Inside the Tosú
Performance Centre

Tosú Performance Training is a new performance training gym located in Canal Drive offering two types of classes - Tosú Train and Tosú Yoga.

Tosú Train classes are fully programmed and coached by trainers, blending elements of weightlifting, basic gymnastics movements and are usually followed by a short metabolic conditioning session designed to enhance performance.

Miriam, a native of Ballinasloe and John, originally from Newcastle, Co. Dublin, moved to Ballinasloe in April of this year with the ambition of creating a space where people can train and improve their fitness amongst a community of likeminded individuals.

Miriam and John took up CrossFit three years ago, first training in CrossFit Clondalkin. John has a background in rugby, having played for over 13 years for Clondalkin RFC. John studied Strength and Conditioning and Personal Training with Setanta College and is also a CrossFit Level One trainer.

Miriam has been practising yoga for more than six years and is a qualified Yin Yoga teacher. Before starting CrossFit, she competed in bodybuilding and powerlifting at a high level.

John Allen Glynn said: "We aim to offer our members a place to become the fittest, strongest, healthiest versions of themselves. We chose Tosú as our name as we felt it fit our ethos and what we want to offer to the community. Tosú means start or beginning As Gaeilge and we believe that when it comes to getting fit, taking that first step can be the most important but it can also be the hardest one to take."

All classes are an hour long and contain a full warm-up, the main strength exercise, metcon or accessory work, and a cool down. Anyone looking to try it out just needs to bring a bottle of water and a positive attitude! They have a changing room, waiting area, and toilet facilities on site. It is recommended to wear runners and a tracksuit or shorts or leggings. Classes are suitable for all ages and abilities - they have designed their classes so that they can be

adapted for complete beginners whilst still challenging more experienced athletes. This is done by scaling the difficulty of the exercises. It is recommended that members try to attend at least three classes a week consistently.

Several membership options are available to suit any budget. For anyone who feels like they may need some extra attention, one to one personal training is also offered.

Tosú does not offer any quick fixes or transformations. Believing that consistency and creating sustainable habits yields results. They want people to be fit for life. Not just for a picture. Hard work pays off.

All pricing and packages are available to view through Tosú's website, where you can also book into a free trial class: <https://www.mindbodyonline.com/explore/locations/tosu-performance-training>

Coming up to Christmas, they also have vouchers available to purchase. online or can be picked up in the gym and can be redeemed against monthly memberships or for personal training.

Contact them through phone or email - tosuperformance@gmail.com / (085) 272 5987 or you can find them on Facebook or Instagram - Tosú Performance Training.



SURMODICS

SURMODICS TEAM SUPPORTING CROÍ NIGHT RUN



Surmodics employees held their very own night run to support the Galway based charity, Croi.

Over 30 Colleagues and family members took to the Dunlo running track on Thursday evening November 4th to run and walk 5km and also raised €750. This support helps to fund Croí services, including virtual health and support programmes like Heartlink West, Croí's free community phone line, and to providing a home-from-home to families in the Croí Courtyard Apartments.

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Raj Lyons - CEO with the new Showroom Installation

The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre is the new home to a start up in the Electric Vehicle sector - AffinityEV. The company was co-founded by Raj Lyons Chohan a native of the town & Brian King.

AffinityEV are reshaping the Automotive Industry via their unique digital software platform Just like dealerships have dedicated Sales, Service & Finance Departments, AffinityEV brings the world's first EV Energy & Charging departments to the car sales room.

"For many customers buying an EV or PHEV can be daunting and bring with it many pain points - AffinityEV remove all the pain points making the drivers switch to

electric smooth and seamless" says founder Raj.

The Electric Vehicle revolution is bringing together two huge sectors automotive & energy but unfortunately as many customers are already experiencing these act independently which creates multiple pain points for customers in making the switch.

Majority of customers must 1: Apply / Secure the SEAI Home Charger Grant, 2: Arrange a Home survey to be carried out to review the drivers home electrical setup, 3: Select a charger that will protect their homes electrical circuit whilst ensuring they are future proofed, 4: Arrange a qualified certified electrician to install their home charger, 5: Review Energy providers tariffs to see if any cost savings can be made, 6: Gain Access to public Charging networks: 7: Educated themselves on how to home and public charge.

By partnering with AffinityEV and having a dedicated EV Energy & Charging department they can meet their customer needs & requirements in a highly professional and seamless manner. It is a win win for both the dealerships and their drivers - "Our software platform takes away all the headaches for both dealerships and drivers offering the full 360 EV solution making it a simple switch to electric" notes Raj.

The company is off to a flying start with strong traction already in the Irish market & plans to enter UK in the coming months. Peugeot Ireland has appointed AffinityEV as their exclusive EV partner across their 33 dealer network.

Des Cannon, Managing Director at Gowan Distributors, PEUGEOT Importer in Ireland, said: "By partnering with AffinityEV, PEUGEOT dealerships can now offer their customers a simple and hassle-free way to arrange a full 360 EV Charging Solution, allowing the customers to get on the road and start enjoying the benefits of driving their electrified vehicle sooner. We are thrilled to be at the cutting edge of this automotive revolution by offering such a unique service through our dealer network".

The Windsor group which has 14 dealerships and are the biggest seller of electric cars in the country has also appointed AffinityEV on an exclusive basis. Niftibusiness formerly known as SIXT leasing are the first major leasing company to offer the platform.

The company is backed by Enterprise Ireland and is now in advanced talks with a number of investors for a major cash injection. These funds will be used to consolidate the company's position in Ireland and then launch in the UK. Currently, there are three staff, and this is projected to grow to ten.

"We are extremely proud to have created the Automotive Industries Worlds first EV Energy & Charging department. As more and more people switch to electric we will see a greater demand for our solution. 1898 was the year cars were sold via dealerships - 1919 the auto industry introduced their first Finance departments and now in 2021 in Ireland; the auto industry's first EV Energy & Charging department has been launched. We are delighted to be reshaping the automotive industry" Raj Lyons Chohan, CEO concluded.

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The Town Voucher Ballinasloe is the ultimate gift of choice for your Christmas Shopping. Available in €10's, €20's and €50's, they can be used in the vast majority of businesses in the Ballinasloe area including shops, pubs, restaurants, hairdressers, pharmacies, supermarkets and many more.

As a gift, the Town Voucher gives the recipient a wide variety of wonderful products and services to choose from, and better still, ensures money stays in our local town!

Coming into Christmas there are many local businesses in town to purchase from and support. Town Vouchers are to be used directly with your chosen business but cannot be used for online purchases on ShopBallinasloe.ie. They are ideal STAFF or Crew Xmas box gifts instead of an office party or other National based gift schemes!

For more updates from ShopBallinasloe are available from their Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ShopBallinasloe>



Honoria Mitchell-Black, Senator Aisling Dolan, Niamh Creavan-Connaughton

GROW REMOTE FESTIVE WALK

By Jack Treacy

Fancy a social meet up! Well a December Festive Ballinasloe Heritage town walk for old friends and new, remote workers and people interested to learn more takes place on Sunday 5th December.

A guided tour from Declan Kelly, landscape archaeologist, who has written a number of books on heritage and is publishing a heritage guide and walking tour of Ballinasloe early in 2022.

Join remote workers, learn about remote working opportunities, training for remote skills and enjoy social meet up.

Starting at the Study Centre Marina Point, with mulled wine and mince pies, then Declan Kelly will guide on the heritage walk taking place in under the illumination of the Ballinasloe Winter Christmas Festive lights. This will be followed by soup and sandwiches in the spacious upstairs of An Tain in St. Michael's Square.

It is a lovely way to meet up and kick off the early festive remote working local community cheer, sponsored by Grow Remote, An Tain, The Study Centre.

After Gort in September, Portumna in October, Grow Remote round

up with series three as Ballinasloe welcomes newcomers in December 2021.

You can register at: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/grow-remote-ballinasloe-meet-up-dec-festive-historical-walking-town-tour-tickets-208129189007>



Grow Remote Social meet - up

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Jorenas are celebrating thirty years in business and have recently carried out a major refurbishment in premises and are looking forward to continue to work in partnership with the community, to provide the best remedies.

All bodies are all different and have different needs but one thing we all have in common is we all want the highest quality and most effective formulas with researched tested ingredients. Jorenas has a wide range of supplements, vitamins and herbal remedies to meet every individual needs from established Brands, like Viridian, Solgar, Natures Plus, Dr Turner, Dr Dillis Claire, to mention just a few.

Natures Plus have recently created a clinically based Botanical and nutrient range of formulas called Bioadvanced these include: Liver Support which helps maintain liver function; Hair, Skin and nails helps collagen production; Menopause Support for all stages of menopause; Stress Support-helps normal psychological function; Vital man gives testosterone and muscle support fertility and energy; Monthly Support – helps hormonal health and fertility.

To mark the occasion of the Refurbishment of the premises Jorenas are offering a 20% discount on Natures Plus Source of Life Gold.

Jorenas staff are available to offer free expert advice from their vast experience for every ailment, also providing Natural Pet Care service as well as a spiritual and well-being corner.



Jorenas Gift Shop has established brands in stock: Galway Crystal, Aynsley, Beleek, Tipperary Crystal, Genesis, Newgrange, Max Benjamin, Dr. Haschka, Nesta Dante, Nicholas Mosse, Paul Maloney, MuckRoss to meet your needs.

Why not call into Rena and her staff and avail of the knowledge, expertise and experience of 30 years for free advice on natural products or herbal remedies for every ailment and speak to our specialist on animal welfare regarding your pets' welfare.

MOORE HISTORY BOOK LAUNCH By Jack Treacy

'A history of the Half Barony of Moycarn Moore and Creagh' by Padraic Kilduff M.A and Xandra Kilduff M.A. will be in the bookshops right on time for Christmas, including Salmons on Main Street.

Both members of the Moore History Group, the idea of writing one book on the Landlords of Moore developed into three and encompassed the Half Barony. Two volumes are scheduled to be launched together before Christmas a memorable present, and the third for Spring 2022.

The books have many photographs that are rare and came from emigrants across the world. Both born in Ballinasloe and living in Creggan, Moore, Padraic is one of the founder members of the Moore History Group and Chairman of the Community Council, while Xandra is the author of several poetry, children and history books as well as being a playwright Producer of Mathers of Falty, The Letters of Delia Croft, Stigma, The Cat and the Fiddle,

The Red Salamander Theatre Company and The Moore History Community Drama.

Covering the era from the sixth century to the mid-1920s, five years of intensive research led this project to its final stages. Working together through the early medieval to the Tudor and Cromwellian years, from the Penal era to the famine, land agitation and many changes in religion, population, and way of life they realised the wealth of human lives their stories of heartbreak, fears of eviction, and emigration.



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Joanne Jordan, a mother of three, primary school teacher, is now a mindfulness teacher. Five years ago, Joanne discovered the wonderful practice of mindfulness. She became very passionate about the changes it brought into her life that Joanne decided to complete a 15-month diploma in Mindfulness and Positive Psychology with the Irish Academy of Mindfulness.

Joanne states: "The official definition of mindfulness is the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-

judgmentally. It is a simple practice, but like anything that enhances our lives it needs to be practiced often. Mindfulness can offer you so many benefits, including decreased anxiety, depression, better sleep, and better relationships with those around you."

Classes are five weeks in duration. Each class is approximately one and a half hours long. Content covered includes CBT skills, which help reduce anxiety and negative over thinking, practice of gratitude, mindful living, self-compassion practice and learning how our brain patterns work, the science of neuroplasticity and how to incorporate mindfulness into your every-day life.

Each session will finish with a meditation designed to enhance your mindful practice. As part of your course, you will receive weekly notes, meditations sent to your phone, and check ins via text as you complete your journey.

The next course commences on December 1, and will take place in Gullane's Hotel, Ballinasloe from 7.30-9.00 pm. Classes are limited to less than 10

participants, so early booking is advisable.

Contact Joanne at (087) 252 6764 or look at her Instagram and Facebook pages under Joanne Jordan @thejoyofmindfulnessire. Total cost for the five weeks, with all course content included, is €99.00.



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Our office is open but operating under Covid-19 guidelines. Please call office or email to arrange consultation.

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- Cashflow forecast for finance restructuring
- Tax advice on Wage Subsidy Scheme
- Revenue issues arising due to Covid-19 crisis.



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Denise McAvinia, a native of Kilconnell, has recently returned to Co. Galway after spending the last eight years in India with her husband, Rohan, and two young boys. She has been practising Yoga for over 20 years and has been a teacher for the last 11 years. She trained to be a Yoga Teacher in a centre in Goa with an Indian Yoga teacher and his Irish wife and mother-in-law running the show!



Denise believes in Yoga being as much about the mind as it is about the body. Her classes are based on building both strength and flexibility within the body and learning how to breathe properly to help the

mind relax and down.

The classes Denise will be running in Ballinasloe will cater for all levels with particular attention placed on making sure each pose is done safely and correctly. There is no point reaching for your toes if you twang your back on the way down!

There is no need to have any prior yoga experience to begin these classes, nor do you need to be flexible in any way. It is a bit like thinking you need to be able to cook before taking cooking lessons! Everyone starts from somewhere.

Classes in Ballinasloe will initially be online on a Thursday evening from 7-8pm, via Zoom. Once spring comes, classes will happen in the Gaelscoil on the same day at the same time. Those searching for in-person classes, Denise also teaches in Kilconnell Community Hall every Tuesday from 7pm.

As a special offer over the Christmas period Denise is offering a Christmas Package: Buy two classes, get your third half price; buy four classes and get your fifth for FREE. Classes are 10 Euros per class. You can pay via PayPal or into Denise's bank account. Classes begin online from Thursday, December 2. Once you book in for the class, Denise will send you the Zoom link.

Contact Denise on (085) 262 2344 or email her at denisemcavinia@gmail.com with any questions or to book your special offer for Christmas.

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Arama CEO and Cleaghmore native, Donal Scannell, has worked on everything from 'The Late Late Show' to IRFU Rugby Specials to U2 tours.

Last month saw him as shortlisted as one of 12 to pitch his startup idea in Enterprise Ireland's prestigious Annual Showcase.

On one occasion, Garbally educated Donal sat in Tallaght Stadium, watching Shamrock Rovers play Dundalk in the League of Ireland when the realisation hit him, this game was never televised to so many fans who were unfortunate to miss out. He needed a way to make these games accessible.

Arama, with the assistance of Trinity Engineering Professor Anil Kokaram, uses its combination of algorithm-based video technology and human expertise to cover events such as football matches.

Donal stated: "We take a defined space, like a pitch, and we map it out with our cameras, then we train our algorithm to follow what's important. We can take all these big wide shots from the area and select areas of interest

which are then transmitted back to studio for a director to choose from."

Arama use AI and Computer Vision to give humans superpowers - a crew of three can achieve what currently takes 33 people, turning everything on its head using software, specifically AI and Video Processing.

RTÉ and Premier Sports are on board as trial partners and they are in talks with Sky Sports and Eleven Sports. Arama has slashed the costs of TV outside broadcasts-they can do for €5,000 what currently costs €40,000.

Other companies also offer solutions to reduce the labour involved in outside broadcasting, but Arama believes its selling point is the combination of AI and human knowledge it uses on live events.

The Enterprise Ireland-backed firm has already raised €330,000 in seed funding and is targeting a further €700,000 investment in the coming months.

In the long run, Arama believes it can allow the world's biggest broadcasters to cover far more football matches and later hopes to move into other live events.



Ciaran Donegan, Anil Kokaram and Donal Scannell of Arama.

Senator Eugene

Murphy

Seanad Spokesperson on Community,
Rural Affairs and the Islands

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Former RTE Midlands Correspondent Ciaran Mulloly is the Guest Speaker at the Area Community Development Company's AGM on Tuesday 7th December @ 7.30 pm in Gullane's Hotel.

Ciaran, who now works as a Community & Social Enterprise Development Officer, will speak on the creation of jobs in the social economy where he sees huge potential.

The Board will also be presenting the outline of the new 10-year community plan that they have been working on over the past couple of months.

All members (all persons/ businesses that have paid their membership /Pulse Club membership or subscribed to Ballinasloe Life magazine) are invited along with any

interested parties.

Due to Covid Restrictions, number will be strictly limited. Attendees must register in advance by email to info@ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie before 5pm Tuesday 30th November 2021.

If its not possible to physically host the meet, arrangements will be made to host it on Zoom.

SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE

By Jack Treacy

After being closed for 18 months, Ballinasloe Social Services' Day Care Centre re-opened its doors again recently with an emotional re-union of the centre's staff and volunteers with the elderly clientele who attend.

The Day Centre provides a home away from home environment for their older citizens in the community.

Art classes re-commenced under the guidance of Lily Kelly and these classes are funded by Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB).

A Christmas Sale of Work will take place, but only for the elderly attendees. Any donations of unwanted gifts, body sets or anything else would be very appreciated for this event. A Christmas raffle is also taking place in the Centre, for which support is welcome.

The Centre's kitchen was re-furbished during lockdown as a result of a grant from the Maureen O'Connell Fund. A grant from Galway Rural Development (GRD) enabled a new cooker to be purchased for this area.

The Centre is also looking forward to the delivery of a new bus to collect our elderly clients, thanks to a grant from Department of Rural and Community Development's Clar programme.

The Meals on Wheels service continued to operate at full capacity during all lockdowns, ensuring that older people and anyone recovering from illness could avail of nutritious homemade soup and a main course, delivered to their home with a smile and some friendly words. The cost of this two-course meal is five euros each, with no delivery charge. Phone (087) 232 5163 for further details.

Ballinasloe Social Services' pre-school re-opened recently after the summer break and provides a morning and afternoon session for three-six year olds every day. The Therapeutic Learning Centre continues to offer early intervention to children that are not reaching their developmental milestones.

For more information from Ballinasloe Social Services visit their facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Ballinasloe-Social-Services-206045866090492>



Mary Egan, Pearl Kilkenny and Ann Fallon with Art Teacher Lily Kelly



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If there has
To have been one
moment, it could be this:
body sprung from turf, suspended,
ssh-stick hoisted, level and at bay,
arm aloft to pluck a rough seamed purse
of rag and yarn and glory from the sky;
that instant, all elements of body
and mind outstrained to reach for
the impossible, when, into my
head like a bird it came
(John Fitzgerald, "Sliotar")



Joe with his late wife Brigid



Joe with his son Michael

Ballinasloe's association with Gaelic games can be traced back beyond an inaugural meeting of the GAA which was held in Thurles on 1 November 1884; on an earlier date in 1884, Killimor and the Dublin Metropolitan Hurling team played a hurling challenge in Ballinasloe and included in that Dublin team was Cusack who later in the same year, was to be a founder member of the association. In 1889, Ballinasloe had a football club with J.F. Gibney as captain. Despite the Parnell crisis, the Galway Football Championship for 1891 was played and Ballinasloe participated, playing Mountbellew in Ahascragh on 24 May of that year.

People came from far and wide to the county town to watch and cheer in the decades since or in the case of Joe Ward, to offer his services as a steward to support the game he cherished so dearly.

Originally from New Inn, Joe, his late beloved wife Brigid and their 7 children eventually settled in Hymany Park, Ballinasloe. He started Stewarding in Duggan Park in the late 70's continuing for thirty years, opening and closing the Duggan gates for a lot of the games, greeting people with a cheery smile as he asked after their families and taking part in banter as they all predicted who was going to win the match of the day: a familiar face to so many, with great loyalty to the game. Joe was happiest when he was in Duggan Park, attending training sessions until late night or guiding Traffic, until, sadly he became too ill to do so.

A great pastime for Joe, was to make the sliotars, and he carried on doing this until his hands were too stiff to assemble the sliotar anymore, a sad time for a man whose passion was to assemble a sliotar, hoping and dreaming that anyone of these finished products made by him would make it to the All-Ireland Final and help the best team bring the Cup home.

Joe is loved by so many, and so many people have great memories of meeting Joe, as he cheered on his favourite team, Galway, time and time again either home or away, well known and respected by the Galway players, who were happy to greet and speak with their biggest and most loyal Fan!

It was a sad day for Joe, when he had to step down from working from his beloved Duggan Park, but not a man to sit idly by, Joe then began to work in the local garden centre and was also a keen member of The Hymany/Curragh Park Residents Association.

It was with great sadness that Joe lost his beloved wife and best friend, Brigid in 2020. Although confined to this home through a debilitating illness, Joe still likes to entertain family and friends with fascinating tales of stories about his time with his beloved Duggan Park.

This is Joe's Swansong. A tale to be told while in life and not in death.

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office
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Wishing you a

Happy Christmas

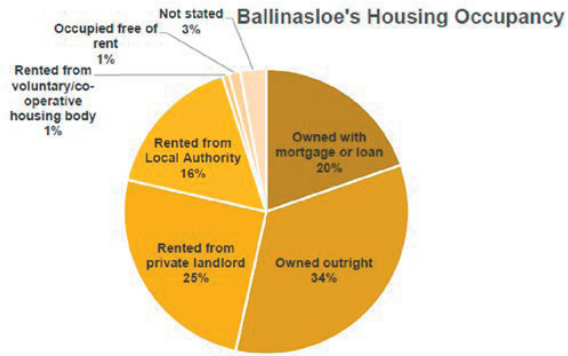
and a successful new year in business!

If you're thinking about starting up, have already started a small business or want to grow your existing venture, LEO Galway is here to help.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding your small business, any training or mentoring requirements, or you just need some general advice, please get in touch.

Local Enterprise Office Galway, County Hall, Prospect Hill, Galway. Ph: 091-509090

Want a greener, more sustainable business? Register your interest in our Green for Micro programme by emailing info@leo.galwaycoco.ie



Ballinasloe Town Team has been busy collaborating with ORS Energy Consultants and have just published our Energy Master Plan (EMP).

"This EMP provides a comprehensive overview of energy consumption and energy generation in town. It is a roadmap for progression towards sustainable energy and will be used to support applications for capital grants to upgrade and retrofit existing housing and commercial building stock" explains Anita.

The study also identifies the potential for the implementation of sustainable transport models such as Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, alongside renewable energy generation possibilities from many varying sources such as wind, solar etc.

An in-depth analysis has been carried out on the housing stock in Ballinasloe. Interesting stats will be including interesting stats from the EMP which gives a great overview of homes in Ballinasloe in terms of their age, occupancy, and fuel types used.

- 65% of Ballinasloe Home built between 1971-2010
- 53.5% of homes are owned by the occupant
- 25.1% of homes are privately rented
- 80% are fuelled by fossil fuels
- 67.7% have BER Ranging from E1 - C1
- 27.2% have BER ranging from E2 - G

A key objective of this EMP is to have the community live in warmer, cosier homes and the retrofitting of homes.

To begin the conversation of energy efficiency, an online interactive survey will be circulated and distributed throughout the community.

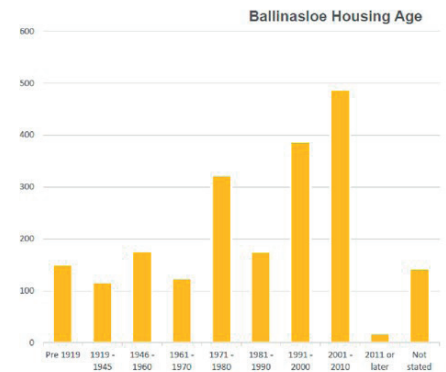
Aside from engaging the community, the survey is a source of information in establishing more detail on the current condition of homes throughout the area. Questions are asked regarding house types, materials used to construct homes, insulation installed, alongside heating systems and renewable energy technologies used.

To maximize the relatability of this study to Ballinasloe and the wider

community, a total of 10 home energy assessments will be carried out on typical dwellings from within the town and its region.

The results of the survey will identify energy saving opportunities. As well as those with a low investment cost which may include behavioural changes, how the homeowner interacts and interprets energy, to simple physical measures such as improved draught stripping and upgrading to low energy lighting.

Recommendations will develop to further mitigate carbon emissions associated with the dwellings energy consumption and should include upgrading the building external fabric with higher-performing insulation, improving heating, ventilation systems, and controls alongside introducing renewable energy technologies.



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Front (L to R) Elle Flanagan Olivia Ruane, Alan Connerty. All members of either Get Lippy Youth Council or First-Year Club.

Ballinasloe Youth Group, under the guidance of Ballinasloe's Training for Employment Gardener Eric Naughton and other Tidy Town Volunteers have been busy these past few weeks planting out over 1,500 Irish Daffodil bulbs.

As well as helping with the rewilding of the Church Hill - Fair Green Biodiversity zone, the flowers will be harvested and sold in March to raise funds for the Western Branch of the Irish Cancer Society. Cllr. Evelyn Parsons donated 1,000 bulbs to the project.

Eric said: "We planted a lot of daffodils and we had lots of help and it is great to get the help, it makes a huge difference, and it is for a great cause."

Youth volunteer Elle Flanagan said: "I have been doing a lot of the promotional stuff today - planting daffodils in aid of Irish Cancer West and sometime in March we are going to pick them and sell them to raise money and awareness for Irish Cancer Society."

"I am delighted to participate in this field project it initially came about through a collaboration with Senator Keohan. I did the previous project down in the Marina with the posters and this is a great initiative because it involves the youth. Keohan supplied 500 bulbs and the ideas of the youth work group here in Ballinasloe have helped to plant over 1,000 bulbs here in this biodiverse area" stated Councillor Evelyn Parsons.

Eric said: "So they should be in flower come next March and they will push up over the winter in the spring into March there will be another thousand to plant over the next week or so."

This initiative will bring the first food for the different pollinators in the area.

Cllr Parsons concluded: "When they poke their heads through the ground, they will be sold in aid of Irish Cancer Society. This is a wonderful initiative because the youngsters here are out in the air learning about Bio diversity and indeed Cancer".



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November. The month that is now associated with men around the world growing some absolutely horrendous moustaches in order to raise awareness for men's health. This year however, we decided to do things a little differently.

In June of this year my family was given the devastating news that my Dad had terminal liver cancer. This came as a real shock to us all as it was only a couple of days beforehand that he had been footing turf in the bog and you would say there was not a loss on him. The doctors in Portiuncula gave Dad roughly 1-2 years without treatment but nevertheless, sent him to St. Vincent's in Dublin for further tests. Dad's time in Vincent's was rough to say the least. Very few ups with plenty of downs led us to make the decision that the best place for him would be at home.

Thankfully, since coming back to Clontuskert, Dad has been in great form and most importantly is in no pain. We are delighted to have him home and that he is still with us. Who knows how long he has left on this earth, but we will be making the most of each moment.

A crew of us mates decided that we would go ahead with the task growing, but we wanted to do something extra. This is when the idea of Couch to 1000k came to us.

We then decided to keep the funds local-the East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support. A fantastic organisation who provide incredible free support to cancer patients and their families. They rely heavily on donations to continue to provide their services, so it seemed only right we do what we can to help them.

By the time you are reading this we should be nearing the end of November and the finish line should be in sight. Graeme Gullane, Darragh Stephenson, Conor Noone, Fin Dowling, Jacob Routledge and myself are



Jacob Routledge



Darragh Stephenson



L-R: Conor Noone, Graeme Gullane

the people who have given ourselves the unenviable task of running at least 167km each this month. An average of 5.6km per day.

We are well on track at the moment, having covered over 360km between us by day 10. I can safely say the bodies are feeling it now but we know the reward at the end of all this will be worth it.

The support so far has been absolutely unbelievable. Never in our wildest dreams could we have imagined that we would have raised over €3,000 in a week, but such has been the generosity of the public that we have already far surpassed our original goal of €2,000. Every cent is so important to this fantastic organisation however, so we hope this trend continues.

To donate please follow the link to our GoFundMe below, or find it through any of our social medias. If you would prefer to give a cash donation, please call into Gullanes Hotel and Graeme will be happy to assist you.

We had a difficult month behind of us, but your support will push us to that 1000km mark in no time. GoFundMe: <https://gofund.me/0765c8c8>



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Over 2,000 brave and fearless souls joined a cast and crew of over 120 volunteers to run the Town Team Annual Zombie Walk in Garbally Woods at Halloween.

Special thanks to all the Zombies, Crew, Painters, Riggers etc and to Dolans Centra, Dunnes Supervalu & Corrib Oil who sponsored Food & Refreshments for our volunteers over the two days!



Income	
Ticket Sales	€21,000.00
Expenditure	
Marketing/Signage/Flyers	€650.00
Production/Props/ Lanterns/Tea Lights	€6,300.00
Insurance & Indemnities	€650.00
Civil Defence First Aid Cover	€300.00
Snacks/Water/Food	€800.00
Bursaries	
Musical Society	€2,000.00
Donations to local groups (who provided Property, Equipment etc)	€950.00
Totals:	€11,650.00
Transfer To Town Team Projects Fund	€9,350.00



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The Ballinasloe Lions Club was set up following a charter night held in Hayden's Hotel on Wednesday June 2, 1982. There are three members of the original group still active members of the current Lions Club group. The club was led originally by its first president Roger Mulvihill, (RIP), Secretary Bernard Haddigan and coordinator Joe Lyons.

The International Lions club motto is "we serve" and in keeping with this motto the club commenced its activities to serve the local and international community - it is part of the world's largest service organisation (1.4 million members worldwide).

The club was funded by donations and organised fund-raising events. Regretfully, due to the age profile of the club's membership they now announce that after the completion of the 2021 Christmas Food Appeal the club will hand in its charter and cease its activities.

Ballinasloe Lions Club has been involved in many projects over the years. The international projects include flood relief, famine, and projects like Sight First, which was a project aimed at countering preventable and retractable blindness in disadvantaged countries.

Better-known local projects were the Christmas food appeal hampers, Fair car-parking, Teen Star, the local Telephone Directory and Youth Award where Aoife Murray from Ahascragh won the national and Great Britain and Ireland title.

As the book closes on the towns Lions Club, they are looking forward to running a successful final Food Appeal! The group distribute around 140 hampers annually. The food collection was only achieved because of the generosity they have received from many sources - national and secondary school students, sponsors, the EU Food Cloud, and generous local suppliers, as well as the funds from their annual Flag Day/church-gate collection which always very well supported. Volunteers and schoolchildren have always assisted in the

preparation of the hampers which is a big logistical exercise.

For close on 40 Christmases - with their friends and partners such as the local conference of St. Vincent de Paul, the Simon Community, Ballinasloe Social Services, and the Public Health nurses in the Health Centre, they ensured that the hampers reached those in most need in the community.

Matt Carey PRO concluded: "We appeal to all to support us this year as we find that the need for additional food at the Christmas season is as great as it has ever been in the past. It is our fervent wish that someone might pick up the baton and continue to organise the hamper distribution in future years!"



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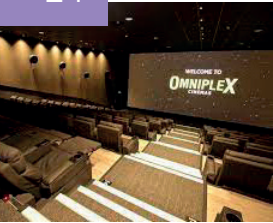


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Omniplex Cinema Group will shortly begin building new five-screen cinemas on land between Aldi and Tesco with the site scheduled to open in autumn 2022.

Omniplex, which is owned by the Anderson family and has 260 screens at 34 locations, is investing more than €11 million in the three projects, creating more than 100 jobs during construction and 65 full and part-time jobs when operational.

Planning permission has been granted for the five-screen cinema to be built near Tesco's in Ballinasloe! The application for the five-screen, single-storey Omniplex is approximately 7.9m high with associated car parking and the gross floor space of the project is 1123m².

CAPTURING IRISH LIFE LONG AGO

The BEO Online Local Heritage Archive Library is a repository of photographs, films and audio recordings that reflect the social, economic, educational, religious and cultural life in Ireland in days gone by.

The primary method of gathering this historical material has been through local social events hosted by schools and community groups with the Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association being one of its key early contributors. Coordinated by the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics NUIG in association with the Galway County Council Heritage Officer and Galway Education Centre.



Creggs School 1971

A series of workshops on collecting, enhancing, tagging and colouring old black and white photographs will recommence in January. To register contact brendan.smith@insight-centre.org www.irishbeo.com

The owners of the land, Limehill Esker Limited, have an agreement with Omniplex Holdings. Omniplex Director Mark Anderson stated: We look forward to creating new movie memories in Ballinasloe, as well as Nenagh and Mullingar."

The town previously has two Cinemas – the Town Hall or Aisling and The Central (Swanicks) where Utah is now – both on Society St.

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Galway Bay FM's CEO and morning anchorman for years - Mervue native Keith Finnegan is a city boy but spent a lot of time in Moycullen with his uncle and grand aunt, enjoying a great childhood.

"My parents were wonderful people and always wanted us to get educated and a good job. I always loved the radio; I had it on all the time. My dad was an electrician and he helped me to build a small medium wave transmitter in the mid 70s", explains Keith who turns 60 next year.

He began broadcasting in 1980 - RTE community radio came to town. "I just loved everything about broadcasting from presentation to the technical side of the business. I joined a few pirate stations, WCCR from Galway was the first, and we were broadcasting from Cloonacauneen Castle just off the Tuam road. I did the breakfast show, I was convinced the tower we broadcast from was haunted! The first job every morning was to take a florescent tube and crank up the transmitter until the tube lit up! There was no health and safety" recalls Keith as if "twere yesterday.

He joined what is now Galway Bay FM (rebranded in 1991) from day

one, an administrator in 1990 for six weeks during a change of Management and became Chief Executive on the 6th of January 1992.

From early days there was never a divide between City & County; a listener was a listener wherever they lived. "Still today when we are finalising the current affairs programme, Galway Talk - we ensure there is a balance of content to appeal to a cross section of our listenership" he explains.

There were many pioneers; Paddy Madden was one of many. Gerry Rabbit, Clem Walsh, Charles P Lynch, Eamonn Hannon and many many more. Some are no longer with us but their legacy continues. Seamus O'Connell and his team now look after most of the businesses in Ballinasloe. "I am grateful to all the businesses that continue to support us, such as - The Keller family, Sean Fletcher, Thomas & Caroline Gullane, the Credit Union, Utah, Supermacs and many many more" notes Keith.

His earliest memories of town are of his uncle bringing him to the Fair. "I was young but I can still see the plastic on the carpet in Hayden's. I got a sausage sandwich from a caravan or Van and the tastes were magical. I have the fondest memories of Ballinasloe. Joan and I take day trips now and we have visited the town three times alone this year. I love walking and the town is great for that" enthuses Keith.

Reflecting on some four decades of broadcasting about the town - Unfortunately some of the memorable moments he has are of closures, AT Cross, and he also covered the flooding broadcasting from a home that was devastated by flooding. "We celebrated many a good story with the assistance and guidance of Ken Kelly our reporter. We celebrated the success of KPW, the Enterprise Center, Gullanes Hotel for many an election row / debate. Good memories but great radio was made in Ballinasloe especially the many sporting occasions we covered also" states Keith.

Stand outs for Keith are the people, their honesty and their passion for the town. "I remember a few years ago I finished a broadcast in Fletchers and I was walking back to my car and a man approached me to tell me his story and the difficulties he had. We spoke for an hour and I learnt so much from him. We are still good friends. I also like how during tough times those that I knew were always upbeat and positive" he recollects.

As well as walking, he enjoys the growth "I love the marina and the Church. I admire the traders for keeping going and I like browsing in the smaller shops as they are mostly gone from the city now" he explains.

It's growth and that of the surrounding areas is what has surprised Keith most over the most recent years. The arrival of the motorway allows residents getting in and out with little or no traffic. The town is poised in the centre of Ireland.

He does believe Ballinasloe & Loughrea are definitely taking pressure off the city and rightly so. "I have a friend who is a native of the city and stills works downtown but lives just outside Ballinasloe and loves going home to his two acres every night and in his words "he is living the dream" said Keith.

"My wish is that this Christmas we get to spend it with family that we have not seen for over twenty months. For LIFE readers I hope they mind themselves and stay tuned in every morning. I wish them all good health mental and physical" he concludes.



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Alfred, Brendan and Adrienne Flanagan presenting the proceeds of the Mizen to Malin head run

'Thanks to everyone for their generous support for Galway Hospice in memory of Eileen Flanagan (Eileen's Gratitude) she would've been absolutely delighted and very grateful to everyone for their support. Míle buíochas ó chroí' declared Adrienne Collieran (Nee Flanagan) who ran from Mizen head to Malin – 590 Kms this summer to raise funds for Galway Hospice.

Originally with a target of €2,500 in mind. Adrienne surpassed all her expectations when she and her two brothers presented the whopping €5,000 proceeds to the Hospice lately.

Adrienne made the journey to visit her mother Eileen's grave and immediately she was transported to the day two years

a very surreal time. We had no place else we needed to be, and we all stayed for the precious moments and time, we will forever be grateful for and thankful to everyone in the Hospice who made it possible.

"It was our Eileen in May 2019, but the following month/year and every day it is other families. Sentiments are echoed by all the other families blessed to have this service available to allow their loved ones to die with dignity and love. They truly are special people doing very special work and need to continually support and thank them" stated Adrienne.

ago when Eileen slipped quietly away, no fuss, no anguish just a gradual farewell possibly enjoying the life and activity of her loved ones knowing all was well.

When Eileen switched to palliative care with Galway Hospice it meant that there would be no more hospital visits to a trolley in A&E, no more bumpy ambulance journeys to Portiuncula or NUIG Hospitals waiting for a bed, no more twice-weekly dialysis to Merlin and no more avoiding the inevitable. Adrienne's family were sad but at peace with all that meant.

"To have the members of the palliative care team lift the worry, to take over her care and support our family left us with eternal gratitude. We handed the reins to Galway Hospice and in turn, they handed us back the reassurance that Eileen was in good hands and granted us the assurance that all we had to do was be with her in the way that mattered most loving her, talking to her and just being present... They would take care of everything else" explained Adrienne.

Adrienne said: "We got this for 12 full days much to the amazement of her care team. Each night a different nurse would be assigned to stay with her to allow us to sleep. Later that day another nurse would arrive from the hospice to visit Mum, check her and make any adjustments necessary to speak with us.

"It would be 12 days before Eileen would leave us and it became our new normal,



Adrienne and her late Mum Eileen Flanagan

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Recently, seven Leaving Cert Applied Students from Ard Scoil Mhuire undertook a fundraising drive for the National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) a not-for-profit shop in St. Michael's Square, on World Sight Day through a raffle and the donation of old school uniforms.

NCBI's Barbara Coakley is the manager here at the NCBI shop and was thrilled with the interest and support from the students. They are open Monday to Saturday from 09:30 to 17:30. They hold a wide variety of items for all the families, they do Brick-a-Brack, clothing, furniture, and a whole lot more.

Barbara stated: "We are always on the lookout for our donations for people who are interested in volunteering for a few hours in the shop. If you are

interested in volunteering, you pick the hours and the days that suit you."

Amy Gaffie, a student at Ard Scoil Mhuire said: "We got involved to help raise awareness for the NCBI for world sight day, we chose a raffle and we raised money from this."

Another Student, Rachel Banadie added: "Well we got the support from all the students and teachers from the school. There were seven of us involved with the project, money was donated along with old used school uniforms to the charity in our town here at NCBI."

The staff and pupils involved managed to raise €155 for the raffle and all those who supported and donated towards the cause were warmly thanked.



Ard Scoil Mhuire Leaving Cert Applied Students alongside Ms Harte handing raffle money to NCBI Shop Manager, Barbara Coakley.



Ruth Manning Receives LCA Student of the Month for October.



Best of luck to the German Debating Team who have their first round of debating in the coming weeks. Acknowledgement to Ms Klapp for all her work with the girls.



A great week of celebrations in 7A between Shauna's 13th birthday and Lucy winning student of the week!! Thanks to All our teachers and SNAs who work so hard to ensure all our students are happy and learning!



Congratulations to Rebecca Bleahan who was selected to be part of the Regional Volleyball Development Squad. We are so proud of you! Special shout-out to your coach Ms Usher!



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This year Scoil an Chroi Naofa supported The RADLD Campaign raising awareness for children and adults with Developmental Language Disorder.



Ms Glynn's second class had a wonderful trip to the library recently to meet with author and illustrator Mary Murphy. They even managed to produce a very creative group illustration of their own!

SCOIL UÍ CHEITHEARNAIGH



Rang a Dó were very excited when they opened a package that they received in the post! Last year, while in Rang a hAon, the children took part in 'Bianna Iontacha' (Incredible Edibles) with Agri Aware. The children went on to win the 'Best Gaelscoil' award. They received a certificate in the post along with a rosette. The children were delighted to receive a watering can, gardening tool kit and mesh tunnel as part of their achievement.



Rang a Sé Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh ag Baint Taitneamh as Gléaseadh Suas do Oíche Shamhna



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Ms. Sindy Henry came to Garbally's College in 1992. She taught between Garbally and Ardscoil Mhuire for two years and joined full-time in 1994. Sindy taught English, Religious Education and Home Economics. Her competence and command in these subjects were clear and she acted as Leaving Cert Higher Level English examiner for many years.

Sindy took up the position of Programme Coordinator in 2003 and led an excellent Transition Year programme for seven years. There were many achievements in TY during her tenure, 'The HOT Mikado' packed the concert hall for three nights.

Students also excelled in concern debating and represented Ireland in the Public Access to Law competition in London and various other TY related modules. Sindy was also instrumental in introducing Home Economics into the

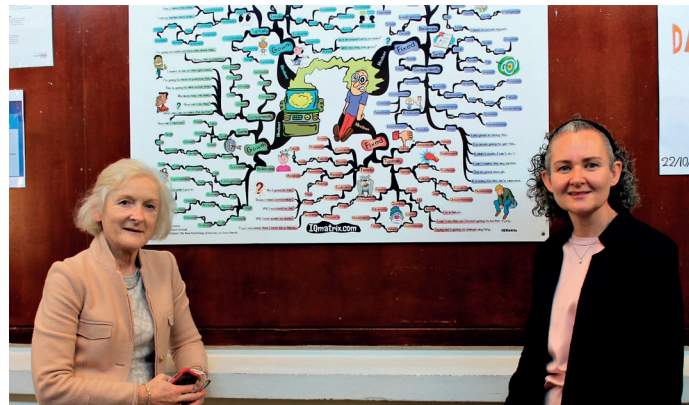
school in 2013.

Now that she is retiring Sindy will be greatly missed and appreciated by all who were taught by and those who worked with her.

She is succeeded by Ms Collette Quinn, a Religious and English Teacher at Garbally since 2001.



Recently Retired Deputy Principal Sindy Henry gives her Farewell to the School.



Retired Deputy Principal Mrs Sindy Henry pictured with New Deputy Principal Ms Collette Quinn, Religious and English Teacher at Garbally since 2001.

TEXACO ART COMPETITION



Six-year-old Tommy Greaney from Kiltormer N.S., who recently received a certificate of commendation for his entry in the Texaco art competition 2021. He won a 20 euro book voucher which he spent on some lovely books in Salmons. Pictured with his grandad Joe Duane, who also won a certificate of merit for his entry into the then Caltex Art Competition in 1964!



Most Recent Leaving Cert Students Josh Bleahan, Liam Hession and Gerard Colleran were able to achieve the maximum 625 points in their examinations.



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Marian Brady Chairperson of BCU pictured with Ahascragh-Fohenagh U14 hurling team and mentors at presentation of €1,500 from Credit Union social fund.



Marian Brady Chairperson of BCU, pictured with Ballinasloe U12 Camogie team and mentors at presentation of €5,000 to the club from Credit Union social fund.



Pictured at presentation of €10,000 from Credit Union social fund. Marian Brady BCU with Ballinasloe Town Band



Pictured at presentation of €1500 from Credit Union social fund to Moore Community council, Marian Brady BCU, Padraig Naughton, Carmel Scott & Padraig Kilduff.



Emer Nolan celebrating her 80th birthday at Karibas Restaurant. Grace Ward serenaded her with "La Breithe Sona Duit" on her big day !!



L-R: Anthony Kearney (Former club official), Font Egan (Club Stalwart) and Johnny Walsh (Club Development Co Ordinator) who officiated at the official ceremony to name the spectator stand at Ballinasloe Town AFC Grounds "The Font Egan Stand".



Joe Kelly Senior (Former Club Chairperson) with Font Egan (Club Stalwart).

For daily updates on news, events, death announcements and traffic updates - tune into our Local Radio Partner



Tara Flynn has been appointed President of MBCA (Master Builders Cont Ass). Second female to be appointed in 100 years



Sheep Ninny is 83-year-old PJ Murray. Born in March 2004, PJ hand-reared Ninny as an orphaned lamb. Ninny is pictured with PJ as she grazes happily after her seventeenth summer at Clonkeen, Killoran, Ballinasloe.



Anne Cassin and the Crew from RTE's Nationwide were in town recently shooting for a pre-Christmas programme featuring local Singer Eleanor Shanley. They paid a quick visit to Karribas - pictured here with proprietors John and Marian !



2020 Ballinasloe Winter League - CHAMPION KENNETH HIGGINS. Kenneth delivered the big results in denying his title rivals to join Tommy Dunne Jr at the top of the Roll of Honour with his fourth title (2011, 2016, 2018, 2020) thanks to five wins out of five! He received his trophy from Ballinasloe Chess Club President Christy Archer and Club Development Officer Darren Kelly



2020 Ballinasloe Winter League - Runner-Up GEORGE O'BRIEN. The ever consistent George O'Brien finished on the podium again and was a deserving runner-up of the 2020 Ballinasloe Winter League.



Valerie Seale and some Festive Mummies in the early 90s at the New Inn Mummies Festival.



Some members of the Town Team pictured at the launch of the new seasons Christmas Draw and switching on of the Festive lights

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Christmas is just around the corner, so it is time to get your woolly jumpers ready for the fourth annual Jumper Day on Friday, December 10, 2021.

Another aspect will be added to the fundraising this year and bucket collections will be held around town from 10 am to 4 pm. So, keep an eye out and support these worthy causes.

Folks are invited to wear a Christmas jumper/ hat/ mask, in fact, anything festive and to donate in aid of Ballinasloe Social Services and Galway Hospice. Both are very worthy causes and very much appreciate your donations.

Please check out Facebook page, Ballinasloe Christmas Jumper Day and tune into Galway Bay Fm for details of their upcoming competitions.

if you would like details on how to get involved, email them at bsloechristmasjumperday@gmail.com

The organising team members are Carmel Dillon, Geraldine Deane and Frances Leahy (087) 275 3861 or (089) 415 4193



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The Christmas Illuminations Project is run by the Ballinasloe Town Team under the umbrella of BACD Ltd. Funding has been received towards the project from Galway Rural Development, Galway County Council, Ballinasloe Credit Union & Local Business Contributions & Sponsorship.



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MANAGING SEASONAL STRESS

Soon it will be the season to be jolly but for many of us Christmas and the lead up to it can be far from jolly! It can cause anxiety, stress and financial strain.

In light of the pandemic it's never been more important to shop local this Christmas to help support your local businesses. Be sure to plan ahead and try not to leave your shopping to the last minute as this can cause additional unnecessary stress and reduce your chances of finding the perfect gift! Write a list and schedule a few hours a week or a day a week depending on how much you have to buy - writing a list will help keep you focused and create stress free, efficient shopping without spending a fortune.

THE STRESS HORMONE

When you are stressed your body produces the "stress" hormone cortisol from the adrenal glands preparing you for fight or flight situations. The production and release of cortisol is the body's natural response to stress and once the stressful situation has passed cortisol blood levels return to normal.

The trouble today is that life is full of stressors for many people, meaning that blood levels of cortisol can remain raised on an ongoing basis. The goal we need to consider is managing and hopefully limiting the stress we put ourselves under, which will reduce this stress hormone level and induce a more relaxed sense of well-being.

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

During times of stress, our bodies requirements for Vitamin C and the B vitamins can increase as they are used in the production of cortisol (and adrenaline and nor-adrenaline which are other stress hormones).

Wholegrains such as wholegrain pasta and bread, brown rice and quinoa are high in B vitamins so it's a good idea to add more of these to your daily diet. During stressful situations it's often difficult to meet the body's requirements for certain nutrients through diet alone so it's a good idea supplement with B Vitamins. The brand Tera Nova do a lovely blend of all the B vitamins with Vitamin C.



Another popular support for the adrenal glands is Rhodiola. It is considered an adaptogenic herb which helps the body adapt to stress and regulate cortisol

levels. Solo Nutrition do a high strength Rhodiola supplement called Rhodiola Root available in store.



KEEP CALM... DRINK DECAF

When we are stressed and tired our instinct is often to reach for a coffee to "keep you going", but this actually causes more stress as caffeine is a stimulant which triggers more cortisol production. Believe it or not a decaffeinated coffee or a herbal tea are better options. Green tea, although it contains some caffeine will also work as the calming effects of the L-Theanine (a natural protein) off-sets any potential jittery effects from the caffeine.

TIPS TO REDUCE STRESS

- Try to get some exercise every day even if it's only a 15 minute walk to clear your head.
- Schedule some quiet time to relax your mind e.g. 10-15 minutes of listening to music, meditation etc.
- Do some deep, slow breathing - breathe in deeply through your nose and slowly out through your mouth. This slows the heart rate and creates a sense of peace and calm.
- Reduce caffeine and alcohol intake.
- Develop a good sleep routine.
- Learn to say no - don't take on more tasks when you are stressed, work on reducing and managing current stress levels.
- Laugh - do something fun as often as you can, spend time with family and friends etc.

STRESS AND SLEEP

Stress and sleep are very much interlinked - if you are stressed it can be difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep, while a lack of good quality sleep is a stress on the body so it can be a vicious cycle. Therefore it's important to have good sleep hygiene.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Aim to avoid screens such as phones, laptops, i-pads etc at least an hour before bed. The bright blue light in these screens can disrupt the production of sleep hormones.



- Sleep-Wake cycle -try to go to bed at the same time every night and have the same wake up time even on weekends.
- Avoid drinking caffeine and alcohol 4 hours before bed as caffeine raises cortisol and will keep you awake.
- Avoid vigorous exercise 2-3 hours before bed as exercise is a natural stress on the body therefore will raise cortisol making it difficult to fall asleep.
- Create a relaxed space for sleep - make sure the bedroom is dark and quiet and play some relaxing music before sleep.

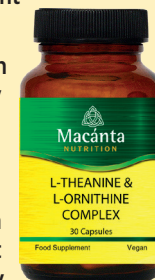


A simple sleep aid that works well for a lot of people is magnesium. It relaxes the mind a muscles and induces a sense of calm which helps with sleep. Mag 365 is a very popular magnesium brand or Kalmassure Magnesium Night Time by Nature's Plus.

For additional sleep support L-Ornithine which is an amino acid (protein) has been shown to improve sleep helping to reduce the time it takes to get to sleep and reduces sleep disturbances. Additionally, Lemon Balm, a herb from the mint family calms the nervous system and is also a powerful sleep remedy. If you have lemon balm in your garden try making a tea about an hour before bed.

Both of these nutrients are found in Macanta's L-Theanine & L-Ornithine blend which also contains B vitamins to support the adrenal glands and the nervous system. L-Theanine, the amino acid mentioned previously has a relaxing effect on the nervous system and induces a sense of calm. This product is non sedative therefore can be used morning and/or evening.

Macanta's L-Theanine and L-Ornithine can also work well for anxiety due to the blend of calming nutrients and the B Vitamins to support the nervous system. Our in-store customer feedback on this product for sleep and anxiety is excellent.



HEIGHT OF HEALTH

Anne and the team at Height of Health, Ballinasloe's newest Health Store are happy to offer their advice or answer any questions you may have about your how nutrition could help you to better manage your stress levels. The store on Dunlo St. is open from 10-6 Monday to Saturday. Feel free to pop in and chat with us at Height of Health where you will get expert nutritional and supplement advice.

Following the decision to amalgamate the Senior and Junior bands, the Town Band is making full use of its new home, the former Parochial Hall. Every Monday and Thursday night the hall hosts rehearsals for the main body of the band with the ancillary rooms being utilised for breakaway mentoring and sectional workshops. This amalgamation of the two groups is working very well and Ballinasloe Town Band is developing nicely into a large Community Band.

Rehearsals have centred around music from the films The Avengers, Raiders, Chariots of Fire, Jurassic Park, Apollo 13, Somewhere Out There, in preparation for the recent public appearance at Ballinasloe Town Library and Town Square for Comic-Con. 'Marvel-ous' costumed characters Captain America and Black Widow along with the imposing and intimidating Darth Vader and Storm Troopers intermingled with the Band and members of the public providing cherished photographic memories for excited local movie fans.

Focus now turns to prepare for Christmas public engagements, (covid permitting). The first outing will be at the turning on of the Christmas lights at the end of November. The band are anxious to revisit the local Nursing homes to play carols and festive tunes. They will also visit the Tuam Babies site in early December as in previous years. Saturday, December 11 then sees the band play at the Aughrim Christmas Fair.

On Sunday, December 12, the Band will host their own Christmas Fest and Sing-Along with the Band from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. This will be their first fundraiser of the year in the Band Hall, and all are welcome.

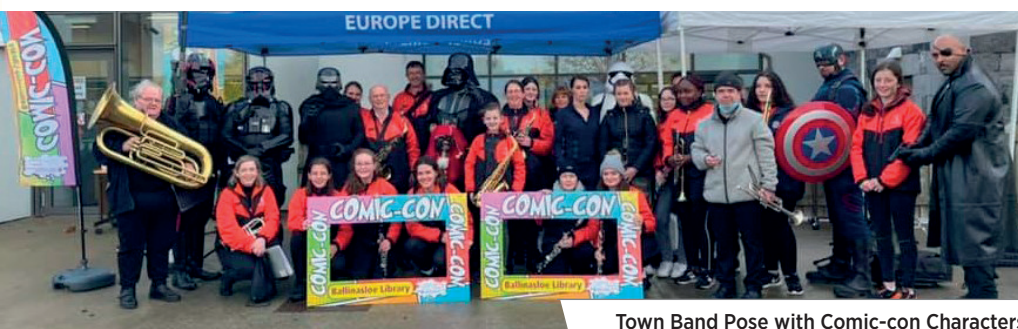
Performances will also take place in the Town Square in the lead up to

Christmas, with New Year's Eve being a highlight. Band Chairman Damien Naughton would like to thank the Ballinasloe public for their continued support and extends seasonal greetings and wishes all a peaceful Christmas and a joyous New Year to all on behalf of the Committee and Band.

Being the owners of a Band Hall carries financial commitments for its upkeep, maintenance, heat and light, along with the usual Band associated annual costs of instrument purchase and repair and music purchases. With covid rendering fundraising virtually impossible the band are anxious to maximise their fundraising events.

To this end, they are appealing for the public to assist with their clothes collection fundraiser with all items of clothing, shoes, bags, belts etc being accepted except for Duvets and Pillows. Please call any of the following numbers to arrange delivery to the hall or for the collection of bags by the band. A percentage of the funds raised will be donated to a band in the developing world.

For more information on the town band you can get in touch with either Kevin (087) 267 4546, Damien (087) 418 6536, or Martina (087) 971 049



Town Band Pose with Comic-con Characters



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This is the second year of Ballinasloe Library's Comic-Con. It featured interviews with history-making, world-famous, local composers and conductors Amie Doherty and Eimear Noone. Amie Doherty is the first woman ever to compose the score for a Dreamworks film, of which there have been 39. Eimear Noone conducted the orchestra at the 92nd Academy Awards, the first woman ever to do so.

The annual event took place on the weekend 5-7 November 2021, primarily held online, with a broad range of events taking place. However, on Saturday afternoon, things moved from virtual to the real-world, with the arrival of characters from Star Wars and the Avengers courtesy, of the 501st Ireland Garrison. The superheroes met keen fans at the Ballinasloe Public Library, while the Ballinasloe Town Band played popular movie themes. Both superheroes and the band then headed to the town square where they startled and delighted residents and passers-by.

There were drawing lessons from illustrators Simon Hetherington and Alan Nolan, and a talk from Wayne Talbot, of Rogue Comics on the Irish comics scene. The Superhero Scientist, Dr. Barry Fitzgerald delivered talks on Santa Claus and Time Travel, and the Science of Star Wars. Michael Carroll spoke about his favourite comics from times past.

Other highlights included panel discussions with some of Ireland's best-known graphic novelists and illustrators including Paul Bolger, Gavin Fullerton, Maura McHugh, Melanie Whelan, Ashwin Chacko and Coireall Carroll Kent. Michelle Ruane Creative gave a demonstration of makeup for stage, creating two looks - Gamora from Guardians of the Galaxy, and Wonder Woman from the original comics.

The videos of all the online events are available on the Galway Public Libraries YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/GalwayPublicLibraries>) and the Europe Direct Facebook page (@EDBallinasloe).

By Jack Treacy



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Rural activist-comedian Breda Larkin from Aughrim and burlesque chanteuse Miss Lavelle from Limerick city are bringing their chalk 'n cheese dynamic comedy cabaret to Ballinasloe for a night to remember alongside Limerick legend Karl Spain.

This December 10th at 21:15 sharp, in Gibbons Bar, Society St., enjoy a night of tongue in cheek humour, and this case we mean quite literally some cheek as there is some burlesque on the cards, along with singing, stand-up comedy and a live performance of the girls hit tree planting rap song "Any Oaks?" as seen on YouTube.

The Wild Geeze are also starting a regular comedy night ÁthaLuainatics in the Castle Inn Athlone on December 2.

Buy your tickets today on Eventbrite by searching "The Wild Geeze".

Comedians Breda Larkin and Miss Lavelle 'The Wild Geeze'



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Socially distanced Crowd Enjoy 'The Stunning'

The first live show with an audience in over 18 months took place in the Theatre recently and it was a huge success.

The Stunning', one of Ireland's biggest and most successful rock bands, took to the stage for an epic show. The free concert was part of Ceol an tSamhraidh, a series of live music events which took place recently, facilitated by Galway County Council Arts and Tourism Office as part of the Governments Live

Performance Programming Scheme.

Covid restrictions meant that capacity was limited to 60% for the event but that had no effect on the atmosphere in the venue or the enthusiasm of the crowd, it felt like a full house!

'The Stunning' treated the audience to an amazing performance, featuring all their biggest hits and culminating with their anthem-like 'Brewing up a Storm' which had everyone on their feet. It's hoped to hold more concerts and one-off shows like this in the Hall in the future.

The next event taking place in the Theatre is 'Virtual Voices with Shane' - a night of choral singing featuring: songs from musicals, pop, classical and golden oldies - taking place on Saturday, November 27 at eight pm.

The following day, Sunday, November 28, sees the return of the much-loved Christmas Craft Fair featuring a variety of handcrafted items for sale. It is the perfect spot to pick up some unique and local gifts and treats for Christmas. This event will be taking place in the Emerald Ballroom and, like in any other shop, wearing masks will be required.

The committee has been busy organising these events and are working to fill the 2022 calendar now that live entertainment has returned.

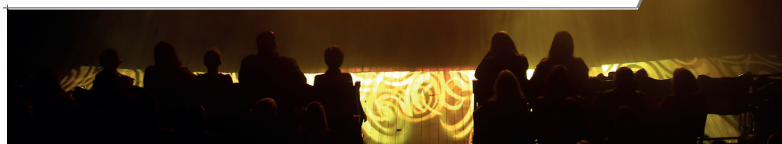
They have also been working on a complete refurbishment of the foyer and are looking forward to you all seeing the changes that have been made there.

The Town Hall Theatre has various size rooms and spaces available to hire in the Hall for classes, meetings, office space, exhibitions etc. at very reasonable rates.

If you would like to make a booking or an enquiry about hiring, please contact ballinasloetownhalltheatre@gmail.com. For more information on upcoming events, you can find Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre on Facebook.



'The Stunning' Light Up Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre



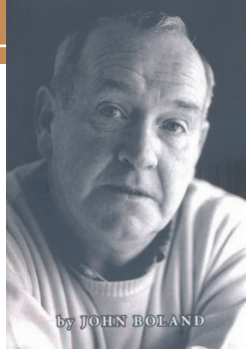
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by JOHN BOLAND

Retired National School Teacher, a revered Thespian and Shralea's man about town-John Boland-gave in to the chiding of family and friends and penned a memoir – soaked in local lore, tradition, landscape and peppered with people and vignettes.

An ideal Christmas stocking filler – the easy to read, well laid out and crammed with lovely photos of times gone bye; the autobiography is ideal for wading through or indeed just dipping in and out of these short winter evenings.

"Much of my life" the author states, has been well "filled". "Yet my life is no different from the lives of millions of others. The uniquenesses of my life are mainly small events or instances flung into my path by fate" explains John.

In the early part he extols that his tale, therefore, may ring a bell of recognition in the corner of your memory, a corner long under lock and key. "Some of my experiences may be exactly like yours. The only differences, very often, is in what, if anything, we learned from them".

John's life began in a small farm in south Roscommon. The river Suck was visible from the small rear window of the room where he was born. Like Paddy Riley in Percy French's song, he must have realised he was born into a warm and caring community, because instead of bawling, he "smiled on them all"! The memoir chronicles his decades of youth, adulthood, career, family, retirement and travels against the backdrop of the locale or what ever

situation the protagonist happens to honestly be.

"How we fill in the period between birth and death is what important to us and define our lives. Some spend the time on acquisition of knowledge or wealth. Everyone tackles the problem in a different way, and each is convinced that their way is best" he writes movingly.

The book is laden with sage wisdom. "it's important to know when we have enough and to remember to enjoy the trip through life, and not complain about old age, and unrealised dreams. You don't stop laughing when you age, but you certainly age when you stop laughing!" encourages the indefatigable John.

The book is available in Salmons for a very modest €9.99.

NUALA SHORTLISTING FOR NATIONAL AWARDS

By Jack Treacy



Local Author Nuala O'Connor has recently had her book 'Nora - A Love Story of Nora Barnacle and James Joyce' nominated for the One Dublin One Book Choice Award 2022, as well as the RTE Audience Choice Award in the An Post Irish Book Awards. The winner will be announced next summer of 2022.

Nuala stated: "I am honoured and humbled that Dublin City Council has chosen Nora as its One Dublin One Book read for 2022, the Ulysses centenary year. It is a great shot in the arm for the novel, for me and my publisher. I imagine Nora Barnacle would be as pleased as I am to see her contribution to the life and work of James

Joyce celebrated in this way. I am a proud Dub and this wonderful opportunity has me really looking forward to engaging with library users and readers, all over my home city, in 2022."

Currently Nuala is writing a novel about Kinsale woman Anne Bonny who ran away to the Caribbean and became a pirate.

Nollaig Shona agus
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 mhaise daoibh
 Happy Christmas
 & every
 good wish for the
 New Year

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The second running of RMAAC's Enduro Circuit Event at Kiltormer Motorsport Centre saw 32 crews starting the Halloween event. Designed primarily for clubman drivers and navigators, allows competitors in endurance spec cars compete against each other and the clock over 9 challenging tests within the ever improving east Galway motorsport complex. With all tests within a stones through of each other, all competitors enjoyed a well organised compact event.

Weather was always going to be a factor on the day with grip at a premium after some heavy overnight rain. So it was no surprise that the nimble Toyota Starlets set the pace in the front while drive class. In fact it was the Starlet of Shane Dunne (Kildare) who took top overall honours on the day followed by John Nolan (Dublin) second and Shane Burns (Ballinasloe) third in their class. Top rear wheel drive honours went to Dubliner Piers MacFheorais in his immaculate Toyota Mr2 followed by Offaly native Owen Kelly, also similarly Mr2 mounted.

Juniors were also catered for on the day, emphasising the efforts being made to get new blood into motorsport at an affordable level. On this occasion, three young hard chargers battled it out for class honours during the day with local man Jack Egan wheeling out his newly acquired Toyota starlet. Jack not only won his class but landed himself a voucher from Ballinasloe Tyre Centre (Tom Fox) for his efforts. He was followed home by Dwane Lally (Mayo) in second and Nevin Loughnane (Kiltormer) in third. Names we hope to see more of in the future.

Two of the main sponsors of the day also took part on what was their first foray into four wheeled competition. Maurice Doherty (Domac) who kindly donated plant and safety equipment and Tom Fox (Ballinasloe Tyre Centre) who sponsored food on the day and various vouchers for class winners. Both crews suffered mechanical issues during the day, but both crews "endured" to make it to the finish and have surely been bitten by "The Bug".

Along with associated sponsors Tommy Flanagan Electrical, Howley Motor Factors,

Kelly Motor Factors they showed great support for this fledgling event and have added greatly to its success. Last but not least a special word of thanks to all the marshals, time keepers and set up crew who put in a lot of effort not just on the day but also in between events.

With food and welfare facilities on site, a compact layout of challenging tests and a warm welcome for competitors assured, the next Endurance Circuit Event planned for Sunday 5th December promises to be a "Cracker". Further details can be found on RMAAC face book page or 083 0204434. Photos of the event can also be acquired from Eye to Eye photography a huge supporter of all RMAAC events.



Jack Egan

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Ballinasloe native Ross Fitzgerald,
Head Greenkeeper.

The Golf Club is pleased to announce the appointment of Ballinasloe native, Ross Fitzgerald, as Head Greenkeeper. Ross's most recent post was as Greenkeeper with Westport Golf Club and he has brought a wealth of experience and new ideas in course and green maintenance back to the Rosgloss parkland.

Together with Course Manager, Mike Barrett, their team of greens' staff and the huge support of Club volunteers, a tremendous amount of work has been done on the course this past year, which has received many compliments from members and visiting golfers.

New Clubhouse proprietors were welcomed, Ashley Wiley and Gary Rigney, trading as Meadow & Green. Having recently opened, Meadow & Green have established itself as a very popular destination for Lunch, Supper Clubs, or just a good cup of

coffee in the East Galway area, with high-quality food and comfortable surroundings for golfers and non-golfers alike to enjoy.

The lads are excited to be planning their first Christmas in the club and hope that local businesses and offices might consider Meadow & Green for their Christmas Party nights or for a Sunday lunch with visiting relatives.

As a sport and past-time, golf has experienced a surge in popularity in recent years and the club is delighted to have welcomed a large number of new members of all ages to the Club.

Various coaching programmes for Juniors and Lady Beginners have proven very successful in giving new members the basic skills to get started and giving them a chance to spend time with friends and make some new ones while doing something that is healthy and very safe in the outdoors environment.

The Club is now open for new members for 2021/22. They are

very hopeful to continue to grow their membership and can assure anyone considering joining that they will get a warm welcome and support from existing members. If you are interested in joining, it is encouraged for you to phone the office - (090) 964 2126 or email ballinasloegolfclub@hotmail.com to talk through options for beginners, improvers and returning members.



President Johnny Hurley presenting the takings from the donation box on his president's prize weekend, to his charity of choice - The Ballinasloe Town Band.

€1,000 was handed over as a donation by Ballinasloe Golf Club's John Hurley Senior.

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Ballinasloe RFC would like to acknowledge and thank Councillor Evelyn Parsons who nominated Ballinasloe RFC for a grant of €5000 from her municipal ministerial allocation. This grant allocation is in recognition of the great work on inclusivity with all genders, ages and abilities in Ballinasloe RFC and will be utilised for youth development and promoting/enabling infrastructure for girls in sport.

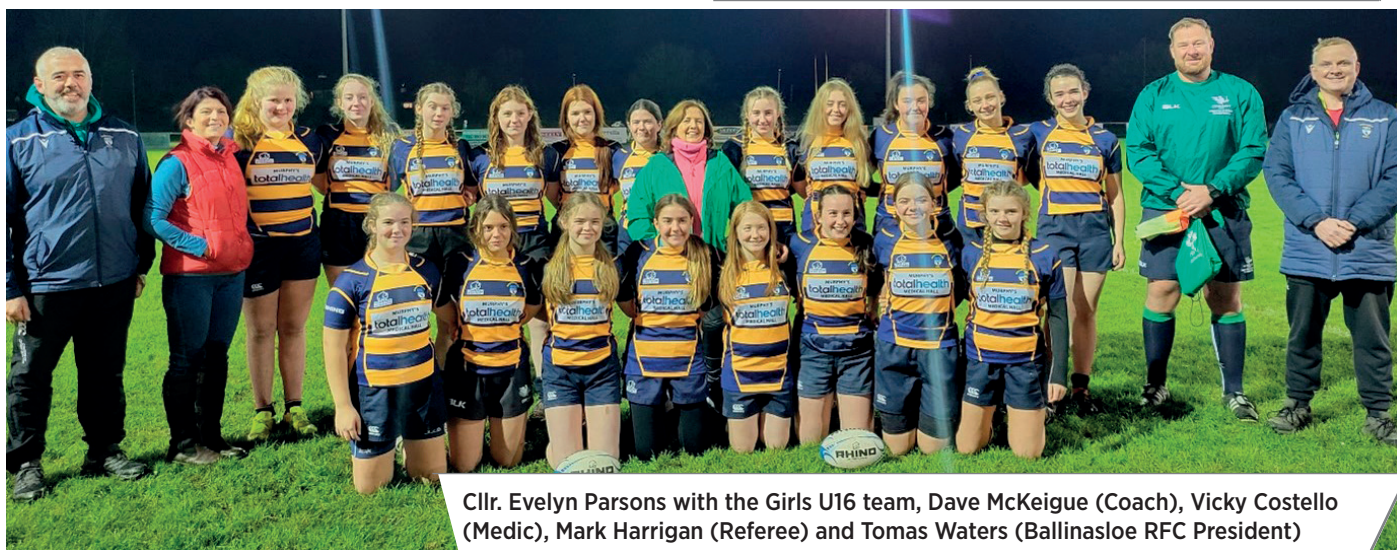
Ballinasloe RFC's fundraising continues with their monthly 50/50 draw. Please join and support the Club where every cent raised goes to the day to day running of the club including facilities and equipment for all the players.

Ballinasloe RFC has expressed their condolences to Gerry Kelly and the

Kelly family on the passing of their mother. Also, to the Dolan family on the passing of former player and Club stalwart Tommy Dolan.



Cllr. Evelyn Parsons with Aoife Keighery, Ann Conlon, Vicky Costello and Tomas Waters (Ballinasloe RFC President)



Cllr. Evelyn Parsons with the Girls U16 team, Dave McKeigue (Coach), Vicky Costello (Medic), Mark Harrigan (Referee) and Tomas Waters (Ballinasloe RFC President)

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Ballinasloe Town AFC recently held an official ceremony at the Curragh Grounds to mark the naming of the Clubs spectator stand as 'The Font Egan Stand'.

This was a fitting tribute by the Club to recognise 45 years of outstanding service to the Club by Font who during this time had served the club as a committee member, team manager and Groundsman. Prior to this Font had served the club as a player.

Club Development Co-Ordinator Johnny Walsh who officiated the ceremony stated: "Font Egan had managed street league teams for many years, club youth teams from under-eights all the way up to under 18s as well as adult teams and hundreds of youth players who played with the club can thank Font Egan for introducing them to the sport of Soccer."

Font's other achievements included working on the first club youth committee 30 years ago and the formation of the Roscommon and District Youth League and managing teams and assisting in the organising of the Clubs bi-annual trip to Liverpool to play the

Hailwood Juniors Club.

The club Development Co-Ordinator also paid tribute to Font for the part he played as one of six people in the late 1980s in talks to successfully amalgamate the Dubarry Apache Soccer Club and Ballinasloe Town AFC.

The Clubs Senior Reserve team managed by Bobby Burke, Mickey Burke and Mark Nee are currently in top place in the Roscommon and District First Division League. Hopes are very high in the Club that the Reserve team can claim the league title this season. The team have currently played eight league games and have won seven and lost just one.

Two of the club's underage players recently made their debuts at adult level. Conor Dowd made his debut for the Clubs Senior Reserve team at 16 years of age while 15-year-old Josh McCarthy has played with the Senior A team recently. This is a very good indicator that the extensive youth system is paying dividends for the club.

The Club Committee was absolutely delighted recently when Minister for Sports Jack Chambers TD took time out of his busy schedule recently while on a day-long visit to County Galway to visit the Curragh Grounds and to learn all about the club and its future development plans.

The Club are very hopeful that the imminent announcement of



Pictured at the ceremony to formally name the spectator stand at Ballinasloe Town AFC Grounds as the 'Font Egan Stand' were Font and family, friends, club committee members and club supporters.

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successful grant applicants for Sports Capital Funding will result in very good news for the Club.

Former Ballinasloe Town AFC Club player Heather Payne has once again been starring for the Irish International Ladies Senior Team in the qualifying games for the 2023 Women's World Cup.

In her recent game versus Finland, which brought her total appearances to 21, Heather made an outstanding contribution to the Irish team throughout the game. Finland scored a crushing equaliser to make it 1-1, but Heather was not ready to settle for that as within four minutes she was racing down the flank creating the winning goal that was scored by Denise O'Sullivan.

The performance against Finland was vital following the team's narrow 1-0 loss against Sweden and this result now sets up the Irish team very well for the two forthcoming qualifying games to be played in the Tallaght Stadium versus Slovakia on November 25, and versus Georgia on November 30.



Pictured are the Ballinasloe A team squad members and team management. The A team are currently top of the premier division in the Roscommon league.

CYCLING CLUB



Well done to members of Ballinasloe Cycling Club who recently completed a 'Ride Leader' course with Tutor Padraig Marrey, 11 Newly Qualified Ride Leaders.



Seamus Kelly BCC President Presenting a Cheque for €555 to Anita O'Reilly from St Teresa's Special School. The money was raised from Collections and Events the Club organised throughout 2021.

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Following a very successful championship campaign, the management team, Alan, Niall and Michelle along with a strong and committed panel of players were valiant in their efforts in their Junior B campaign but lost the final to Westport.

The path to the final comprised of comprehensive victories against tough opposition, Na Brideoga, Sarsfields, Salthill, and a narrow defeat against Westport topping their group. This earned the girls a place in the County final with the second final position decided in a semi-final between Westport and Salthill with Westport taking the spoils.

The U13s had a fantastic win recently in their shield final v Ballindereen. Game ended on a score line of 3:1 to 2:0 with the girls fighting valiantly for their hard-earned victory.

It was a strong year for the U16s that culminated in a final appearance. Unfortunately, on

this occasion it was not their day but a strong performance they can be proud of. Well done to their coaches Niall and Erica and to the players for their dedication throughout the season.

The Club also ran a very successful nursery group during the season to introduce young girls to Camogie. It was overseen by their coaches Kellie, Emma, David and Lorraine.



Ballinasloe Camogie Club Junior Panel



U13s Shield Win

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The Club is enjoying a very successful Cross-Country season and are delighted for new members that had the opportunity to compete in the recent Galway Cross Country Championships. The County Cross Country Championship races were held over two days in Ballybrit and Bushfield Loughrea with record numbers of athletes competing from across all clubs within the county.

On day one, Kate Kilkenny took home Silver in the girls u12 2,000m running a strong race in difficult conditions. In the girls u16 4,000m, Eva Ruane finished in first place to win Gold. On day two, Eva held her place at the top to be the first girl to cross the finish line and take home a second county gold medal.

Both Eva and Kate also competed in Day one of the Connacht Cross Country championships held in Ballina finishing fifth and sixth place and will go on to represent the club in the upcoming All Ireland Cross Country Championships to be held in Santry later in the year.

Day two of the Connacht Cross Country Champions was held in Bushfield Loughrea and Eva Ruane kept her winning streak to finish in second place in the girls u15 3,500m race. Eva will also go forward to represent the club in the uneven age All Ireland Cross Country Championships in Kilkenny in early December. Well done to all the athletes who competed throughout the season, in particular those competing for the very first time - the first of many!



Katelyn Culleton Girls Under 14s and Peter Culleton Boys Under 12s at Day One of the Galway Cross Country Championships in Ballybrit.

Sinead Greene and Eva Ruane after their race at the Uneven age Connacht Cross Country Championships. Eva Finished in Second Place Taking Home Silver and Securing her Place in the Upcoming All-Ireland Cross Country Championships.

Lisa Herrity, Kate Kilkenny (Silver Medalist), and Carrie Stephenson Competed in the U12 girls 2,000m on Day One of the Galway Cross Country Championships in Ballybrit.

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GALWAY ALL-IRELAND MINOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS 1960

Back row, l to r: Michael King, Larry O'Brien, Johnny Smyth, Seamus Leyden, Harry Anderson, Noel Tierney, Tony Ryan.

Front row: l to r: Johnny Gavin, Enda Colleran, Gabriel Lohan, Christy Tyrrell, Sean Cleary (capt.), Gerry Prendergast, Eamon Slattery, Andy Donnellan.

BALLINASLOE UNDER-21 EAST BOARD CHAMPIONS 1967



Back row, l to r: Michael S. Kelly, Jackie Moloney, Johnny Keighrey, Michael McDonnell, Willie Devlin, Billy Moloney, Jimmy McDonagh, Michael Lloyd, Mattie Ganly (Manager).

Front row, l to r: Eamon Devlin, Joe Kelly, John Dowd, Johnny Farrell, Paraic O'Neill, Peadar Ryan, Frankie Walshe, Anthony Farrell.



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HONDA **STIHL** **Mountfield**

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Ballinasloe Senior Ladies have been knocking at the door for silverware for the past three years. But on their fourth attempt, in a fiercely fought game Vs Carraroe in Annaghdown, the girls alongside Management Paul Madden, John Mitchell and Niall Cunningham claimed the trophy.

Senior Panellist Aisling Brannelly stated: "We could not believe all the hype the week before the game, there were lots of black and amber flags up around the place. People were talking about the game anywhere we went. The crowd on the day of the game was amazing it was like being at a lad's game with all the supporters. The stand was taken over with Ballinasloe. It was great to see!"

Aisling added: "We took a breather at half time, calmed things down and discussed what we were doing well, where we could improve. Management pulled us in, then added their thoughts. We were in this position before. We lost the last three County finals in a row to St. Michael's (after a replay), Oughterard and last year to Killannin. We were very aware there was nothing won at this stage, and we still had a big 30-minute shift to put in. Our trainer John Mitchell could not make the final. That was a big driving factor at halftime too, we wanted to win it for him!"

The wind got stronger in the second half, especially in the final quarter. The girls managed to sneak in a goal to solidify the lead, but Carraroe kept hammering on and at times it seemed like the ball never left the backline, but credit to the girls' nothing was going to get past them!

At long last, the final whistle blew and after nine long years since a Senior Ladies County Final win and three consecutive Final defeats, the Ladies were victorious.

Manager Paul Madden stated: "It was absolute relief and elation, a very emotional victory after our previous attempts. It was a team effort without a doubt, our squad was supplemented by the u16s who came in and made the training sessions more successful. Let us not forget the rest of the individual girls who created the team. It has been a long road and we never gave up and we never gave up and we kept our fighting spirit."

Aisling concluded: "It was complete and utter relief, after years of trying our hard work paid off. I was very emotional, celebrating with family and friends in the moments after the game was very special. Nine years ago we thought we were going to win every year. After losing the last three years in a row we really appreciate winning this one."



Back Row: Nicole Ward, Emma Keane, Niamh Prendergast, Lisa O'Neill, Natoya Fogarty, Gemma Ward, Orla Reynolds, Clodagh Killeen, Claire Colleran, Orla Madden, Roisín Coleman, Lisa Naessens, Rachel Mannion, Leah Dolan, Niamh Kelly, Ava Kilduff, Mia Costello, Abbie Hardiman. **Front Row:** Hannah Russell, Ava McCann, Emma Harvey, Aoibheann Fitzpatrick, Alana Ní Chuinneagáin, Maeve Reynolds, Amy Dempsey, Niamh Loughnane (Captain) Hannah Gullane, Ashling Brannelly, Eilís Kerr, Roisín Fahy, Shauna Mitchell, Emma Mitchell, Jessica Tully.



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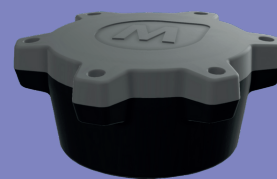
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For years, Pádraig Pearse's long and fabled history of near misses, regardless of what happened has bedeviled their 60 years of existence but the 2019 County Champions – doggedly secured their Victory crown.

People will look back at the 2021 Roscommon SFC final vs Clann na nGael as the game where Pádraig Pearse's learned how to win, but the transformation in the club was still there to see in 2020.

Pat Flanagan, Pearse's Manager states: "It was flawless because playing the neighbouring club – with very big local support, marvelous to see community buying into and great to see the support and great to provide a focal point for the community."



Pearse's Celebrate Cup Win

Sides that lack confidence and self-belief will struggle to overcome bad days and nights, and nights do not come much tougher than Pearse's second-round clash with Clann na nGael in Johnstown. They were outplayed and outclassed, and it would have taken incredible mental strength to come away from that fixture and still believe that the Fahey Cup was within their reach.

Joint captain Emmet Kelly (Sharing Captaincy with David Murray) stated: "We prepared for the final as we did for all the previous games. we just worked hard and



Joint Captain Emmet Kelly Celebrates Cup Win with Son Cillian

kept focused whilst we were playing our rivals and neighbors Clann na Gael it was very important to treat it as another game and not get caught up in the occasion."

A Pearse's team that fitted the stereotypical external perception of the club would never have found a way to come back from setbacks. This group did, and

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they did so the hard way – not by conjuring a goal, but by grinding out one hard-earned point after another.

Pat added: “We dominated the first half, but we were only a point up, it could have been more but we settled down to win the second half also, with no time and space for anxiety or pressure – just to keep their head in the game and get the job done.”

Pearses supporters might have felt like those points were the sign of an impending apocalypse. But crucially, the players did not. They held their nerve, they pounced on a stray handpass to open up the move that ended with Jack Tumulty’s goal, and they comfortably protected that lead through five minutes of stoppage time.

Emmet commented: “At the final whistle it is just relief-the outpour of emotion and joy in the faces of all the supporters is something that makes you realise what it is all about and why we do it-those moments on the pitch after is a feeling that you will never forget.”

Form comes and goes and when it goes, there are plenty of clubs in Roscommon that can trouble them. But when it comes to Pádraig Pearses

as a hard-luck story, the club who regularly find a way to play well and still not win, those days are no more.

The focus has turned to the next round now in the Connacht Championship where Pearses are due to meet Mountbellew of Galway or Ballinamore on November 28, in the semi-final – a tough battle awaits either way.

Pat concluded: “It is now history and it is up to the boys to set new goals, and to make new records there is still an awful lot more to achieve, to move consistently and keep our high standard.”



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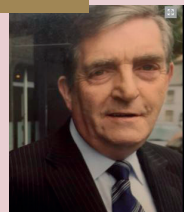
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CHARLES LYNCH-AN APPRECIATION



The Board of Directors, Management and wider Business Community of Ballinasloe were shocked and saddened at the recent passing of Charles Lynch – originally of Carrick on Shannon but for most of years of interaction with the town of Sallithill.

Charles was a County Council Official but when the Enterprise Boards were formally set up in the late 80s

– Charles headed up the one for Galway County.

He was practical in using state supports and was a key innovator in encouraging entrepreneurs to showcase – funding the Emerald Ballroom Enterprise Shows in late 80s. He was instrumental in assuaging the first round of job losses at AT Cross, was a huge supporter of Mary Harney's Interagency Task Force and indeed was a huge help with advice and leverage to a variety of state players in getting the Enterprise and Technology Centre off the ground in the late 80s.

Charles passed away peacefully at University Hospital Galway. To his wife Brenda, children Karen, Jennifer, Kevin and Shane, family and friends we extend our deepest sympathies and gratitude for his service and support to our community.

GIMME THAT BEAT OUT FOR XMAS



Tom Campbell, a Kilconnell native but now a Caltra resident, wanted to write a song with a feel-good factor. It is quite different to his previous work. Music is always evolving and morphing as you work on a song, and let the creative juices flow-Tom remains passionate.

Tom said: "It had such a good rhythm that I began to write lyrics about exactly that, a simple story about the importance of 'that beat'."

"I worked with music producer Dave Skelton to bring the finishing touches to the track," added Tom.

The Video to the track was shot all over Galway City on a fine Autumn evening, which proved much fun!

'Gimme that beat' is now available on all music platforms. Tom is hoping that his second single, 'Rising Star', will be available mid-December. Updates will be posted on facebook.com/pulse160.

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RECENT PARISH DEATHS

- 1 Tom Corcoran, St Grellan's Tce, Ballinasloe. Died 29th Sept.
- 2 Bridget Scates, 5 St. Teresa's Pk, Ballinasloe. Died on 4th Oct.
- 3 Kitty O'Brien, Harbour road, Ballinasloe. Died on 5th October.
- 4 Nancy Kelly, Castlepark, Creagh. Died on 18th October.
- 5 Grellan Carroll, Perssepark. Died on 18th October.
- 6 Josephine Ruane, Mackney, Ballinasloe. Died on 24th Oct.
- 7 Thomas (Sonny) Rigney, Poolboy. Died on 14th November.

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In the 1920's Cattle Driving was a regular occurrence in many parts of the country when the local IRA campaigned for bigger farms to be divided between smaller landowners. The Ballinasloe area was no exception and the "East Galway Democrat" of June 1922 reported on a number of court cases where there were clashes over land.

Giving evidence before Parish Justice, Mr. T.P. Bourke, Captain McNamara said he arrested Pat Caulfield, John Farnan, Peter Hannon, Thomas McDonnell Snr., Thomas Fallon, Thomas McDonnell Jnr, Patrick Lally and John Hannon, at Poolboy, and charged them with the driving of stock, the property of John Jennings, Derrymullen.

Mr. Jennings told the court he lived in Derrymullen and had a farm of land at Poolboy. On 24th April his stock was driven off the land, namely 58 sheep and 11 cattle. When he was returning the livestock a few days later he was met at the bridge, by a group of men and blocked his path. They included the abovenamed defendants.

Having met a Company of the IRA, who helped me return the livestock, he was surprised the stock were driven off the lands again the following morning. He also claimed he was assaulted by Thomas McDonnell Jnr. and Pat Caulfield during the process.

The defendants were all remanded in custody, for seven days, and conveyed to Galway Jail by the evening train.

In a similar case, involving the driving of stock off the lands of Creggane, the property of P.J. Greene, the following were also remanded in custody to Galway Jail for seven days: John Coleman, Michael Lyons Snr., William Hynes, Michael Lyons Jnr., John Rattigan and Patrick Lyons.

Captain McNamara told the court that after receiving complaints from Mr. Greene, on several occasions, he received orders from the proper authority to arrest these men.

P.J. Greene gave evidence that he lived at Deerpark and had a farm of land at Creggane. One Saturday he was going into Rourke's shop on business and was followed in four men who asked him if he was going to give them any of the land. He informed them that the lands were in the Land Commissioners hands and he had nothing to do with it.

Greene said he was followed out onto the street and threatened. He told him that Michael Lyons remarked "they had as good a legal right to take over the land as the men of Clare had." Greene stated the defendants had 65 acres of land taken in the Old Wood and he

never agreed to an exchange of land in Creggane, which the road divided from his land. In addition to the Old Wood, he claimed the defendants had also taken 29 acres in Woodpark and 23 acres in the New Meadow.

The above are only two samples of incidents involving cattle driving off lands. In some parts of East Galway the practice continued into the 60's, particularly with the formation of Lia Fail which led to the painting of roads in Lusmagh, Clonfert and Eyrecourt, warning of cattle driving.



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Christmas for us kids began in the National school with novenas to the Holy Childhood, preparation for Christmas tests and lists for Santy.

The dark wintry days and dim streetlights inspired a desire for escape from the November sadness and constant reminders of the holy souls and the recently dead.

Then suddenly one day coming home from school a cry went up and all the children rushed en masse towards Greene's window in Society Street. Hustling and jostling for a view, the little ones crying with frustration, some older ones with a scrap of paper making their list.

Always in the centre lay a magnificent doll with a Victorian dress spread around her in a fancy box, while teddies, and a tea set, ironing board with an iron, a train set and Christmas crackers, little wind up dogs who barked and walked, sometimes a tin doll's house with plastic furniture, a train set and lines of plastic angels, children's cribs all were draped with tinsel intertwined with multi coloured fairy lights.

For me my eyes always went to that doll but Santy never brought her. From there it was a short journey to Rourke's Bakery where the first Christmas cakes, with Santas in their sleighs lost in white fluffy icing, some having silver balls about the edges.

Connolly's in Main Street (where Salmons is today), displayed toys but for me had a good selection of storybooks, while May Kilduff waved at every child passing by as she dressed her window with boxes of chocolates, ranging from half pound Urney and Milk Tray to tins of Biscuits and on the high shelf we could just see the enormous scenic and Victorian Christmas scenes of the giant size presentation caskets. She always had a sweet in her pocket for every one of us. Her brother Rory, the Saddler, busy making harnesses and accoutrements for horses for the St Stephen's day hunt.

My own father, busy in his workshop making gentlemen's suits, children's and ladies coats, while still finding time to tell stories from his enormous repertoire to the children who crept in to sit on the floor and listen-hanging on every word in the era before



Young Xandra Warde.

television.

A few days later we would all troop into Cogavins and later Kellers where the front of the shop was transformed into a huge display table with Christmas cards, ranging from child size at a penny to Religious medium size, and so many designs of glittery Christmas trees and robins. A few choice boxed cards for those who were wealthy enough to buy them. Cullen's window brought us children fighting for space as the fashionable young women of the town walked backwards and forwards

admiring the evening dresses they hoped to buy for the Christmas season of Dinner Dances. Satins and Lace, full length elegance with furs and sequins only seen in films.

The weeks seemed to move on very fast. Then one Friday the school was a mass of whispers and secret notes, Santy was coming to Rothwells. The next day we all lined up and waited



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in the cold, jumping up and down to keep circulation moving, our heads moving up the road and down, everyone wanting to catch the first glimpse of the magical man who could make the impossible possible. Some clutched their scrawled little letters in hopeful hands while others pushed to be first in.

"Have you your letter" my friend Ann asked. "what did you ask for"

The answer, as always, was the doll in Greene's window.

There was one Santy who was my favourite, he was really fat and jolly and after a few whiskeys in Grenham's filled with the joy of Christmas. One year he came by pony and trap and another year on the Guinness dray pulled by a huge horse. He always threw a few packages into the crowd to those he knew would not have the half-crown to come in to see him. The Saturday before Christmas the Square woke up to the sound of geese, often laid out in a circle while ducks often sat in ass and carts cosy in the hay. The postman came twice a day with cards and parcels. The house decorations were put up with the crib on the front window.

Christmas Eve was magical. We had all written to Radio Eireann and hoped that when Santy read out the letters our names would be mentioned. Then he would say "I am on my way, Yo Ho Ho."

Next morning the packages were opened, the toys put away until after Mass, we all sang the hymns we had been taught at school with gusto and admired the style of the well-to-do women with their immaculate coats and hats. Outside the town band played at the top of the square "Joy to the world" and everywhere there were smiling faces and people wishing each other a "Very Happy Christmas".

After Christmas dinner goose with all the trimmings and jelly with custard we went up to the Convent Chapel, which was only opened at Christmastime, and knelt in the red glow of a lamp to visit with the Holy family. Then off to visit the relations and hear stories of times gone by.



St Bridgids Staff at an outing in 1957



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Clonbrock, 1860.

Some years ago I was privileged to open a photographic exhibition in the old public library on Ballinasloe's Fair Green. It consisted of a selection of photographs from the Dillon Collection that had been acquired by the National Library in 1977. I remember remarking at the time on the exceptional quality

of the prints, some dating back to the 1860s, and embracing practically every aspect of life on a landed estate in the latter half of the 19th century and the early decades of the succeeding one. Here we had family portraits featuring the ladies of the household in their voluminous crinolines, estate servants, tenants, farming operations and festive occasions: the vivid record of a bygone age. No professional had ever been employed, everything was the work of the Dillons whose story is surely worthy of recall.

The Dillons of Clonbrock, Ahascragh, were the branch of a family descended from the Anglo-Norman Sir Henry de Leon who came to Ireland with the future King John in 1185. Thomas Dillon, an eminent lawyer and judge, bought the original Clonbrock estate from the widow of Tadhg O'Kelly in the 1580s. Over the following three centuries the Dillon estate expanded to become the third largest in County Galway, eventually reaching a maximum of 28, 246 acres with only the Marquis of Clanricarde's estate and Lord Dunsandle's being larger.

Suspected of involvement in the Rebellion of 1641 because of their Catholicism, some of the family's lands were confiscated by the Cromwellian authorities but were recovered in 1663 following the restoration of Charles II. After the Jacobite War the family survived an attempt by the Trenches of Garbally to get part of their estate as a reward for claiming that the Dillons had fought on King James's side at the Battle of Aughrim. In the early 1700s, however, they were obliged to convert to the Established Church to avoid a threat to the integrity of their estate posed by the Penal Laws.

Robert Dillon (1754 - 1795), known as "Beau Dillon", was raised to the



peerage of Ireland by the title of Baron Clonbrock in 1790. A man of extravagant habits, he spent much time abroad and set a pattern for his successors by a virtual unending sequence of travels to Europe, including London and Bath, as well as a four-month sojourn in Dublin each year at his Harcourt Street townhouse. He built Clonbrock House in the 1780s to a design by William Leeson.

His son Luke Dillon (1780 - 1826) inherited the title in 1795. When he left Oxford and returned to his estate he set himself to improve the place by buying books, pictures and furniture for the house. One lot of 14 pictures cost him a thousand guineas, and in 1800 he began to assemble the library, spending £738 on books over the next

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six years. Fond of music, he also had a good knowledge of paintings, tastes he indulged during a three-month continental tour in 1824. He was active against the Ribbonmen, agrarian terrorists, in 1819, and had “established a chain of signals by bonfires and patrols at the head of 40 well-armed followers every other night at least, and at any hint of the approach of these rascals a fire is lighted and 300 or 400 fellows are, or have been, in less than an hour at some specified rendezvous.”

Unlike their more sober-minded neighbours the Trenches, whose only sporting interest was the promotion of cricket, the Dillons appear to have enjoyed an endless round of fox-hunting, shooting and yachting in both Ireland and England. They never practiced duelling, a vice almost exclusively confined to the minor landowners. Their wealth, however, failed to protect them from chronic ill-health which continued to plague them during the 19th century, necessitating prolonged annual stays at the French resorts of Arcachon and Pau. They earned a reputation as exemplary landlords, never resorting to mass evictions, whose well-run estate was complemented by a superbly-tended demesne, and who cultivated the goodwill of their tenants with lavish entertainments. Staunchly Tory and Unionist in outlook, the Dillons were said to have respected their tenants’ political opinions yet were known to issue instructions on whom to vote for at elections. The Third Baron seems not to have been universally popular. He, together with his gardener and his steward, received threatening letters in 1869. Infuriated rather than afraid, Clonbrock summoned his entire staff to inform them that if any injury should befall the two servants he would shut up his home and retire from Ireland, thus throwing them all out of employment.

Relatively new and expensive in the 1860s, photography as a hobby could only be pursued by members of a well-to-do and leisured class like the Dillons. Augusta Caroline Crofton (1839 – 1928) had already developed a keen interest in photography by the time of her marriage in 1866 to Luke Dillon (1834 – 1917) who shared her enthusiasm, and three years later a studio and darkroom, known as the photographic house, was built at Clonbrock. Together they had three daughters and a son, all of whom became avid photographers and whose work in this field continued up the late 1920s.

Though the estate was only slightly affected by the Land War of the 1880s, the fair rent fixing terms of the 1881 Land Act resulted in economic cutbacks, and in 1886 five servants were made redundant as a consequence. The Wyndham Act of 1903 offered very advantageous terms to landlords to sell and for tenants to purchase their farms. However, the Fourth Baron had a sentimental attachment to his estate and set his face against selling. On the other hand, his tenants, realizing that it would cost them less in annuities if they bought their farms than they would

have to pay in rents, subjected the estate to extreme agitation between 1903 and 1907. In 1909 the Baron felt he had no alternative but to sell, and by the start of the First World War he had disposed of the majority of his tenanted lands for the rough equivalent in today’s money of €20 million. He invested in global stocks and shares which were disastrously affected by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the 1929 Wall Street Crash. After 1929 the Dillons could no longer afford to employ servants. Robert had succeeded his father as the Fifth Baron in 1917 but died unmarried eight years later when the title became extinct. His sister Ethel (1880 – 1978) continued to reside at Clonbrock up to the 1960s. She seems to have been a lady of a conservative cast of mind. A favourite saying of hers was, “All change is for the worse.” The estate eventually passed to her grand-nephew, Sir Luke Dillon Mahon, who sold what remained of it in the mid-1970s. In 1984 the house was accidentally destroyed by fire.



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The Central Garage, with the petrol pump on the footpath, in Society Street before the premises were turned into the Central Cinema, nearly one hundred years ago.



Council workers Paddy Dervin and Seanie Caulfield with their horse, Charlie, and Council cart used cleaning the town's streets in the 1950's.



Buffalo Patrol (St. Michael's Boy Scouts in Ballinasloe in 1958). Left to right: P.J. Madden, Eamon Devlin, Brendan Lennon, Michael Kennedy, Gearoid Hogan and Joe Kenny. The Troup would march down to 11.30 mass each Sunday morning in St. Michael's Church, carrying the Irish, Ballinasloe and the Troup flags.



Pictured outside Ryan's Pub in Society Street, in the late 50's, were, from left: "Coffey" Bradley, Michael J. Ryan, Jack Tighe, Bertha and Samuel McMorow from Chester, England.

Photos courtesy of Robert Riddell, Eamon Devlin and Liam Jordan.



The first-ever St. Grellan's senior football team to play in the Town League in the early 60's.

Back row, l to r: Mattie Carr, Michael Dowd, Toby Grehan, Ned Caulfield, Jack Dempsey, Brian Caulfield, Joe Kenny, John Dowd, John Cummy, Paddy Curley, Paddy Carr, Tommy Finnerty, Vincie Ward and his son Billy.

Front row, l to r: Jimmy Hodgins, Seamie Fogarty, Ego Murphy, Eamon Dempsey, Joe Ronaldson, Bernie Loughnane, Jimmy Murphy, Johnny Curley.

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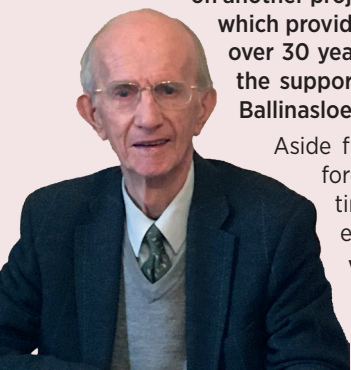
The "Good Old Days" of the silent pictures in Ballinasloe's Central Cinema, were recalled by many on hearing of the death of Noel Swanwick, who was its last owner prior to it closing in 1997. The Society Street venue had been originally the Central Garage but was converted to a cinema in the early 1930's by Noel's late parents, John and Frances Swanwick.

Noel Swanwick grew-up in Ballinasloe where his parents had settled and started in business in the 1920s. Noel would later continue and develop that contribution to the town. Indeed, across the generations their Central Cinema would provide entertainment right through from the 1930s until the new millennium, and Swanwick's Central Garage and Central Medical Hall in the same premises on Society Street had pre-dated even the cinema.

Noel had returned to Ballinasloe from college in Dublin with his new bride Valerie in the early 1960s. They settled in Kilconnell and he and Valerie lived there for over 55 years. They started their own first business venture there in 1963 with an innovative mushroom farm. In the following years Noel would split his time between Kilconnell and Ballinasloe. As well as further developing the cinema, Noel and Valerie embarked on another project together opening The Garden and Gift Shop in Society Street which provided employment and pleasure to other gardening enthusiasts for over 30 years. Throughout all these ventures Noel was always grateful for the support of all his customers and employees and the townspeople of Ballinasloe.

Aside from these business interests, Noel, who was 86, was first and foremost a dedicated family man, but when he did have some free time he was also a very keen angler and gardener. He was also an entrepreneur, an employer and most of all a gentleman.

Valerie and the Swanwick family have greatly appreciated the very many messages of sympathy, a small sample of which are quoted below reflecting Noel's contribution to life in Ballinasloe



and Kilconnell:

Noel was a real gentleman and will be remembered by many of the Ballinasloe filmgoers of years gone by.....a thorough gentleman who provided Ballinasloe with all the latest filmswhat wonderful memories we have of queueing for the cinema and munching on lots of sweets.....

I have many fond memories of working for him.....he was a pleasure to work fora true gentleman and a very conscientious employer....

A generous and decent man.....often gave me a lift home from Calla Lake where he was fishing....

Dearly beloved husband of Valerie for 60 years and much loved father of Greg and Nigel, father-in-law of Roberta and Mandy, and grandfather of Elizabeth, Catherine, Rachel, John, and Heather, he will be sadly missed by his extended family, friends, previous employees, neighbours, and fellow anglers. Noel's body was donated to medical science.

A DEDICATED NURSING SISTER

A Kerry-born nun who joined the Franciscan Sisters just after Word War 2, was described as a woman of substance, courage, integrity and justice, at her funeral mass in the Franciscan Convent, Ballinasloe.

Nora O'Shea was born in Barradubh, Headford, near Killarney, 95 years ago and at the age of 18 she entered the Missionary life in Guildford, Surrey in the UK, in September 1944. Three years later she was professed and later began her nursing and midwifery training in London and Birmingham.

With her training complete, Sr. Ciaran's life journey would take her to Zimbabwe, Ballinasloe, the Middle East and back again to Guildford and eventually Ballinasloe. From 1963 to 1973 she was in charge of the Maternity Unit in Portiuncula and from 1975 to 1984 was the Hospital's Matron.

Coming from a family of three boys and five girls, Sr. Ciaran left an indelible mark on her years in the Ballinasloe Hospital. She has been described as an extraordinary woman who was always just herself, someone who had a strong sense of justice, and was loyal and true-if you had Ciaran for a friend, you had a friend indeed. She had a freedom which enabled her always to be honest and to tell the truth as she saw it, without fear or favour. She was blunt, courageous, there were no half measures, favouritism and pettiness were not words in her vocabulary. Part of Sr. Ciaran's freedom lay in the fact that she was not dependent on whether or not she was popular or liked.



Acknowledged as an outstanding worker, her attention to detail was legendary. Her concern for patients and staff was real. There was nothing she wouldn't do to ensure that each of these groups had everything they needed, as far as this was possible. But on the lighter side, Sr. Ciaran loved going to wedding receptions, farewell parties and all the social occasions that were part of her duties as Matron.

With her passing, mothers and former nurses who experienced her dedication, loyalty and commitment were quick to pay homage to a unique maternity overseer, matron and honest nursing sister who dealt compassionately with them over the years. Sr. Ciaran was dedicated to her profession that she gave 75 years of her life to. Her funeral took place to Creagh Cemetery.

FORMER FOOTWEAR TRADER

A household name in Ballinasloe, where he trained in the footwear business, the passing of William Sinclair, after a short illness, evoked memories of a witty and obliging gentleman who endeared himself to customers of all ages.

William learned his trade in Parson's in Main Street before eventually setting up his own business further down the street, where his clientele enjoyed the friendliness of the man from Urrachry, Aughrim. For the past twelve years

many of those people also witnessed his humour, dedication and commitment when he was a staff member at Burke's in Aughrim.

A man of honesty and integrity, William (70) was predeceased by his father Benjamin and his brother Benjamin. He will be sadly missed by his mother Mary, brothers Noel, Derek and Norman, sisters Betty (Sheppard) and Marina (Burke), as well as many other relatives, neighbours and friends. His funeral took place to Glanloughaun Cemetery, Clontuskert.





Johnny with his Replica All-Ireland medal he now wears around his neck.

When Galway won the All-Ireland minor football final in September 1960, Johnny Smyth was the only Ballinasloe town player on the side. Born into a footballing family, Johnny's late father, Willie, was a member of Galway's first All-Ireland senior title win in 1925.

Defeating Cork in the 1960 decider was Johnny's greatest achievement but in 1975 his treasured Celtic Cross was stolen from his home in North London when it was burgled. He had gone there in 1962 and had teamed up with the Kilburn side, St. Mary's, with whom he lined out for three years, winning both the London league and championship senior football titles.

The youngest of a great sporting family, Johnny was a regular on Ballinasloe's football and hurling teams from an early age. At fifteen years he lined out with the senior footballers, two years later he was on the senior hurlers, played on the Galway minor hurling team in the Munster championship in 1959 and wore the No. 7 jersey in the All-Ireland minor football victory over Cork in Croke Park in 1960.

Johnny's late father, Willie, won a senior football All-Ireland with Galway in 1925; his late brother, Jimmy (Giggler), won a junior medal with Galway in 1961; another brother, Liam, was on the 1959 Galway minor panel while Johnny himself also won a Connacht junior football medal with Galway in 1961.

Now living back home in his native town, 79-year-old Johnny Smyth said he was devastated by the burglary at

them in 2009 and they are my most treasured possessions.

"I remember that day in Croke Park in 1960 so well. Our game was followed by the clash of Down and Kerry in the senior game-one of the greatest games I have seen. The games of today lack the footballing skills of these great players, high fielding and accurate scoring from the boot seem to be a thing of the past. It is a pity" concluded Johnny.



A youthful Johnny with some of his football, hurling and athletics medals.

his London flat. "They took mostly jewellery but the All-Ireland and Connacht medals were my greatest loss. Thanks to my nephew, Jason, he managed to get replicas of

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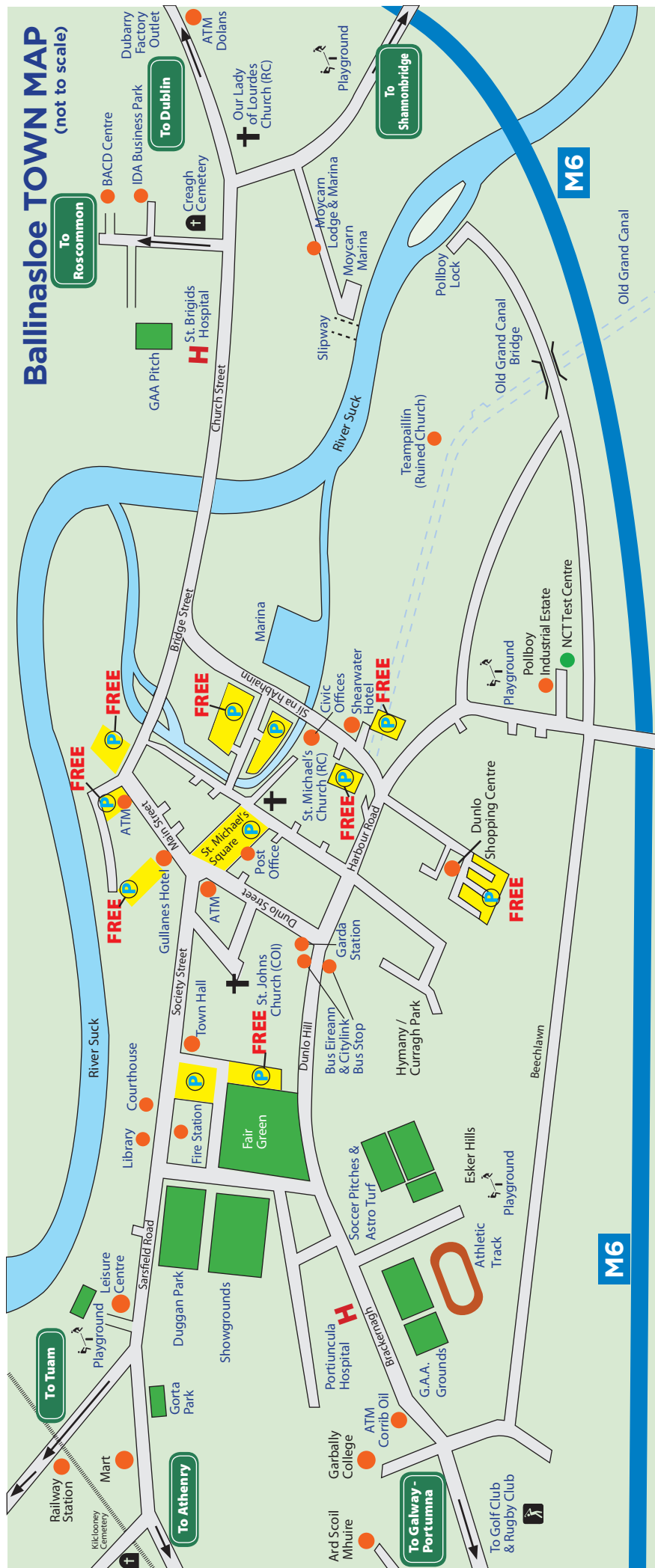


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Ballinasloe TOWN MAP

(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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