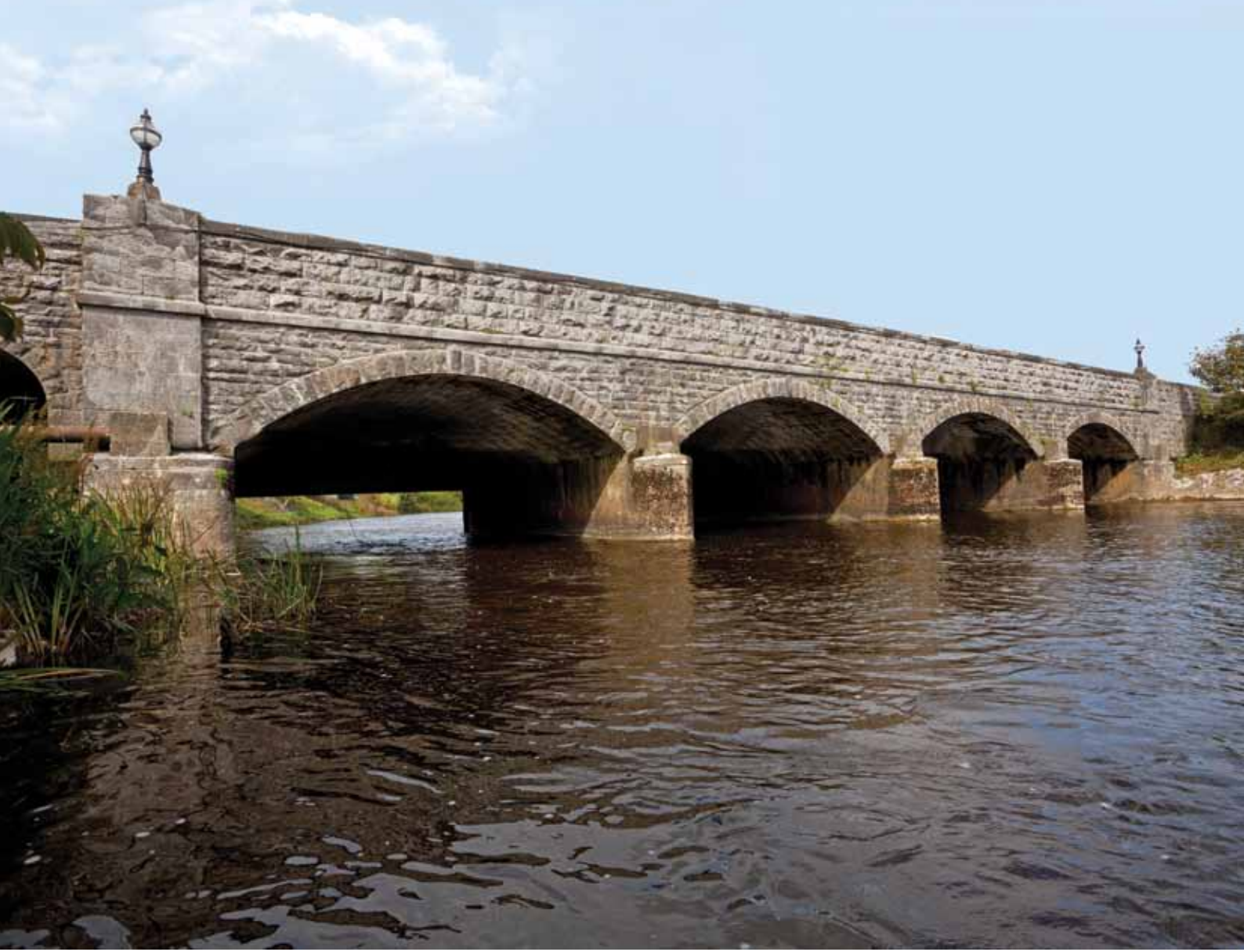


BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 2 Issue 2: June/July 2012



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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 2 Issue 2: June/July 2012

REAMHRÁ



So Rainy season is upon us again? It must be summer! This edition is packed with stories of the pre-summer wind down, school's end-of-term activity reports, clubs winding up for the off season etc. Everyone getting ready for the big off, to the beach, bog, mountain or meadow! We don't perceive ourselves as a Destination spot, we are not a Westport and we are a long way off Killarney, as a cynical Town Clerk once observed, but we have to rethink what we actually can offer to a short stay visitor or indeed a passing through tourist.

Over ½ a million tourists will pass west along the M6 to visit Connemara National Park and the Cliffs of Moher this year. How many will stop for tea with us? How many will want to while away an evening and maybe overnight? Equally how many of them will even know about us? How many of the Cruising visitors of the 12,000 who will traverse up and down the Shannon-Erne waterway will pull in below Shannonbridge and steam the last 8 miles to the furthestmost navigable point into the West? How many of these know about our walks, trails, canals, golf course and very new sporting amenities? What and how are we as a community, once so smugly reliant on the passing trade (even our town's Gaelic name owes its origins to the gatherings on the fordable part of the River) marketing our unique spot, brand, charm to the estimated 4.2 million visitors the island will get this year? Even with the Pike Angling Championships, the Ada Summer School, Summerfest behind us there is a hodgepodge of summer activity planned with summer sports camps, the Connacht Fleadh, Horse jumping, Stage and Performance Art Schools to mention but a few, all starting to shade a vibrant calendar.

The work of the tidy towns and the outdoor section of the Council in maintaining the public parks and spaces all helps portray a welcoming vista. But we have to strive to do much, much more. The action plan for the Market Town will hopefully help us all do just that!

Enjoy the read and hopefully we'll get the turf home before Race Week!

Le gach Dea Ghuí. Colm Croffy, Editor



Habits of a lifetime do not change overnight and nor does perception but we are going to have to revisit these in a changing world around us. As outlined in our last issue we, in Ballinasloe Area Community Development Limited, are a member of a group called Action for Market Towns which has 1600 UK members who are actively trying to enhance the towns they live in. On the back of this we are going to act as an umbrella group to pull together an action plan which we hope will make a visible difference to the area we live, work, socialise and shop in.

We are sending out an invitation to all groups and organisations to come up with a minimum of two initiatives that they will implement within the next 6 months which will make a visible difference to the catchment area of East Galway where we live. We are asking all groups ie youth clubs, senior citizen groups, sporting organisations, leisure groups, Business groups, tidy towns, civic authorities. The list is limitless to forward their two actions to info@ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie.

Lyn Donnelly, our Enterprise Centre Manager, will log all these actions onto one document and same will be updated on a regular basis and forwarded to all participating groups so that there is a greater awareness and cooperation across the whole Community. This is the first step, how we move it on from here will depend on the buy in from everyone. We expect it to be led by the Business Community but for it to be a success we need participation in some format from every resident.

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

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Ballinasloe Football Camp in Killarney

Ballinasloe footballers had their annual training weekend away in Killarney. They played Dr. Crokes and are pictured with All-Ireland winner and Kerry legend Dara Ó Sé, Michael Brennan, Pat Cunningham (Coach) Llyod Kelly (Selector) and Sean Riddell (Manager).



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Town Centre Enhancement Plan To Engage All Groups

Writes Seamus Duffy

Unfortunately it's the same story all over Ireland. Town centres are under strain, household spending is falling, Shops are closing on main streets and retail patterns have fundamentally changed. However, this does not mean we have to sit back and further watch our town further suffer, dwindle and fall into disrepair and dereliction.

BACD and leading sections of the community have taken it upon themselves to rejuvenate Ballinasloe as the main shopping centre of East Galway and South Roscommon once again. After a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce and Business Alliance on how to bring Liffey Valley Centre Management to a town centre of our size, it was agreed to engage BACD as the co-ordinating agency to provide a framework and monitor its progress.

What can you do? BACD are calling on all businesses, community groups, sporting organisations and voluntary committees to have a positive impact on the Town. They may or may not be aware of *Action For Market Towns*, which is a UK based initiative, with the main aim of

revitalising town centres. A delegation from the development company went to the Action for Market Towns Conference in England on revitalising town centres, Ballinasloe is now one of the only Republic of Ireland members of the EU funded association sharing best practice and innovative ideas on how bring back much needed life to our streetscapes.

Chief concerns are about the potential impact of supermarkets being built in or around their towns having a distorting impact on the town centre. Action for Market Towns is aware of towns that have successfully risen to the challenge and have developed initiatives and taken steps to ensure that their town centres not only survive, but even thrive in tough competitive conditions.

Using the insights and information from this group Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd (BACD Ltd) are bringing all members of the town and community groups together to initiate a revival action plan for the town.

The first steps of this is for BACD to act as main co-ordinator of an Action Plan whereby every business and group pledge to carry out 2 actions to improve or promote the town over the next 6 months. Chairman Seamus explains "This is not about consultants and more expensive plans. This about getting all

our component parts to just offer two concrete action items every six months to help us revitalise our community, we can't sit back and wait for somebody else to make it happen, we have to pro-actively engage ourselves."

Lyn Donnelly, Company Manager of BACD said "We will co-ordinate and update the action plan on a regular basis and communicate the progress of the action plan via email and through our community Initiative *Ballinasloe Life Magazine*. The most important thing is to get all groups involved. In fact many groups within the town are currently carrying out fantastic work and we want to co-ordinate it so everyone is aware of what is happening in the town. If you think you know of any party that may be interested in coming on board do not hesitate to suggest them to us or tell them about the project."

The main goal of this initiative is to get the community working together to make Ballinasloe a better place to work, live, socialise and spend money in. The initiative will also engage the local authorities and state agencies over time on the capital and infrastructural developments possibly planned for the town centre.

Please forward your actions or comments to info@ballinasloeenterprise.ie

The advertisement features a large puzzle of holiday scenes including people relaxing, a hot air balloon, and a beach. A tag with the 'Right Price HOLIDAYS' logo is attached to the puzzle. The logo includes the text 'Right Price HOLIDAYS by Keller Travel Worldchoice www.rightpriceholidays.ie'.

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An Taoiseach Launches the *Ireland XO* Diaspora Project

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny launched the national Ireland Reaching Out (Ireland XO) Diaspora project in Ballinasloe recently.

The Ireland XO project is based on a simple idea; instead of waiting for Irish-Americans and their global counterparts to come to Ireland to trace their roots, they go the other way. Working through voluntary effort at a townland, village and parish level, they identify who left, and trace them and their descendants worldwide, proactively engaging with them and inviting them to become part of an extended “virtual” community with their place of origin. In this way, the entire Irish Diaspora of 70 million can be systematically reunified online and invited back to engage with their ancestral parish for the benefit of all.


The project held an inaugural *Week of Welcomes* in June 2011, inviting back members of the Irish Diaspora to their parishes of origin in South-East Galway, mobilising over 500 community volunteers in the process. The initiative has been praised for its innovative use of technology, community volunteerism, and professional organisation, and received substantial coverage in national and international press including RTÉ, BBC and the New York Times.

The project now has over 200 parishes involved nationwide. Through the Ireland XO project, local communities are identifying, inviting and welcoming back members of the Irish Diaspora throughout the year, hopefully establishing lifelong enduring connections and relationships between members of the parish Diaspora and the parishes of their ancestors. The benefits to local communities are very considerable, opening up new economic opportunity, resources and international networks and energising communities at home.



Pictured with the Taoiseach Enda Kenny, T.D. are Staff and Volunteers with the East Galway Branch of the Ireland Reaching Out Project, at the launch in Dublin recently.

Speaking of the project, An Taoiseach said that “From its beginnings as a pilot project in South East Galway, *Ireland Reaching Out* has shown how ‘reverse genealogy’ can engage the diaspora to bring real social and economic benefits down to parish level. The Week of Welcomes last June which invited members of the diaspora in the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand back to their parish of origin proved the success of this initiative. It is great to see that Ireland Reaching Out is now being rolled-out to 2,500 parishes North and South.”

While Ireland XO parish volunteers are reaching out around the worldwide, the project’s website www.irelandxo.com provides a landing point in Ireland for people abroad who have some detail about where their emigrant ancestors come from in Ireland. By joining any parish community online, they can seek direct genealogical research assistance from local people in the area who also volunteer to meet them on their return. This “Meet, Greet, Connect” offer from parish communities across Ireland has been identified as a missing element from developing the Irish Diaspora in times past. Teresa Scott is one of the local East Galway project founding volunteers and is looking for people in Ballinasloe to assist. She can be contacted at justalark@hotmail.com 

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Alternative Complimentary Therapy, A Positive Solution

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Ever felt that you could use a kick start or maybe need some help with pain and illness? We all have those days where you feel like the world is caving in on you and all you want to do is become a hermit simply because your drained and don't have the energy levels. Perhaps you're energetic but your being held back by a sports injury? Well maybe local woman Claire Gibbons has the perfect solution for you.

Alternative and Complementary therapy may be the answer. Together they encompass a range of different therapies which can be used by the practitioner individually or together to assist with sports injuries, back pain, lifestyle changes, as well as general wellness to improve the quality of our lives. It has become increasingly popular over the last number of years in this country and Claire now brings this practice to our doorstep as she is based in the town. Claire Gibbons has been practising various alternative therapy disciplines



for over 23 years now and uses her wide experience of different therapies and treatments to tailor-make relevant treatments for her clients. A core part of her practice, throughout her career has been the successful treatment of back and sports related injuries, but she also specialises in energy medicine and energy focused techniques which are aimed at treating the mind traps that we all fall into and result in ill ease and ill health in the body.

Energy is the body's self healing elixir. Energy medicine feeds body and soul and attending to it and maintaining its resources restores your natural vitality and optimises your ability to help body and mind function at its best. Claire is currently running a series of evening and morning classes combining energy medicine techniques and guided meditation. Classes take place in The Pillar House (upstairs) on Mondays at 10.30am and 8pm in the evening. For more information and class booking contact Claire at 087 9574582

An International Perspective

Writes Colm Croffy

Each year the Association of Irish Festivals and Events (AOIFE) hosts 18 international students, typically from EU member states, who are on University sponsored or EU Mobility approved Internship programmes.

Finishing up after a 20 week stint are Maja Pegan (34) from Slovenia and Merel Jansma (20) from Holland. Both were very busy with their assigned tasks with Research and Summerfest co-ordination and Theatre Assistant and Ada English School Co-ordinator, respectively.

Merel, a Theatre and Special Events undergraduate, had visited the town briefly during the AOIFE conference in November with a large delegation of her class but admitted that our web presence suggested a real small village with very little going on, before she arrived. "I ended up enjoying almost every moment here. Everybody knows each other and knows what's going on. A lot of people were interested in why I came to town (the moment I started talking, people knew I wasn't Irish). I met a lot of nice people who are willing to help me and each other. When I was

walking around I had the feeling that time wasn't moving, like Ballinasloe is a few years behind. I liked it for twenty weeks but I don't think I could live here permanently, there is not enough for my age group to do or enough of my age profile here."

A most peculiar feature that she remembers of the town is the clothing people (mainly girls) wear when it is 12 degrees outside. "Short and colourful on a beautiful white skin that hasn't seen sun for the last 11 months!"

Coming from the City of Mariabor in Slovenia, but with Grandparents who lived in the countryside, Maja a fine art Graduate from Aberdeen University in Scotland found the tranquillity of rural life challenging. She felt that locals sometimes, do not particularly care about the town. "It seems as that all the capacity for a more local and communal identity gets lost in the run down, unused and littered streets. The dog poo mine field that foul the pavements are not good, there are not enough litter boxes or signs warning on those issues. It is vital that the locality is aware that the way a town looks reflects the way the people respect their own

habitat and each other. However, the genuine interest of the people in new arrivals shows a unique charm, that is the biggest asset for here."

For Maja, the hidden gems of the town are the cloister ruin of Clontuskert and the Poolboy bog. "They are the biggest asset of the town but interestingly enough they are also the most forgotten and regularly misused." Again for Maja the magic of the Town Hall Theatre leaves her with some of her best memories "*Beauty and the Beast* by the Musical society" They put together a great show and performed it with sheer exuberance, equally they have a strong team spirit and community ethos, which other times can be difficult to see."

The town has a lot of work to do becoming a destination for international visitors "My friends wouldn't stay here for a good hotel alone, we want the total small town experience with outdoor things to do, which means cleaning up the illegal dumping in the Bog, fixing the riverside walks, having the marina landscape and parks looking their best throughout the week and telling the heritage and history of the place a bit more easily."

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Farewell Merel and Maja

Finishing up after a 20 week stint with the Association of Irish Festivals and Events (AOIFE) are Merel Jansma (20) from Holland and Maja Pegan (34) from Slovenia (Pictured here outside Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre). Both were very busy with their assigned tasks during their stay, with Research and Summerfest co-ordination and Theatre Assistant and Ada English School Co-ordinator, respectively. A big Thank You to both girls and we wish them all the best for the future.

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Salmons: A half Century at The Heart of Main Street Retail

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The Salmon family name has been synonymous with the Main Street of the town for some time now and this year the department store celebrates 50 years in business.

For most young children growing up locally, Salmons was looked upon as the Harrods of Ballinasloe. A shop full of everything and anything and the toy section was and still is a child's wildest dream, with shelves packed full of toys, especially on the run into Christmas. Salmons opened its doors in the earlier sixties. The late Tommy Salmon a native of Kiltormer, came to the town as a young boy to serve his apprenticeship in the town's leading grocery Cahill and Co. in Society Street (David Manning's Menswear). A few years later he immigrated to Chicago where he married Peg McDermott from Newbridge, Co. Galway. The couple returned to Ireland and the well-known stationery and newsagent outlet of Connolly's was purchased in the early sixties and a few years later the adjoining premises was bought. This had formerly been the licensed premises of John Loughnane, helping to establish the first ever off-licence in the town.

Tommy was making ground-braking moves in the commercial life of the town and his next step was to set up the first ever supermarket in the locality. He succeeded with Salmons being one of the main Supermarkets in the town for many years. Unfortunately Tommy passed away in recent years but the family business lives on with youngest son Dermot Salmon now Manager. Without the encroachment of multiple and discounters Salmons of Main Street employed over 30 full time staff. Today it employs a significant 12 full time and part time staff. For years Salmons was the one stop shop for all your household needs and groceries but over the years the shop has adapted and rebranded itself to suit its clientele and



John Slattery, Nicholas Power, Tommy Salmon and Pat O'Sullivan.

their needs. It's the town's leading giftware and department store, where you can get some great gift ideas from jewellery. They stock a large selection of well known brands including Galway Crystal, Waterford Crystal, Newbridge Silverware, Genesis, Yankee Candle Company and much much more.

The shop has a vast and interesting book section with a selection of leading autobiographies, novels, historic and local books. You are sure to find something that will suit anyone's taste, with DVD's and CD's, toys, a sports section and greeting cards, it really is the one stop shop for all your gift ideas. Located at the heart of Ballinasloe town the shop is not fully affected by the on street parking charges as it has over 100 free car parking spaces at the rear of the building. To celebrate 50 years in business Salmons have launched their new website and facebook page. To be in with a chance to win a €50 gift voucher for the store simply like the facebook page.

For special offers and a full range of all Salmon's stock, logon to the website www.salmonstore.ie or join us on facebook/[salmonsdepartmentstore](https://www.facebook.com/salmonsdepartmentstore)

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BACD Development Company Reviews A Successful Year

Writes Colm Croffy

Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd had their 11th annual general meeting in the Enterprise Centre recently with a very large representative crowd in attendance.

Chairman, Seamus Duffy thanked all of the Directors for their help and support and attendance at meetings. He thanked and praised Nicola Hampson who stepped down for personal reasons and to Kevin Whyte who ably represented the Chamber of Commerce for a number of years and welcomed his replacement Aidan McGrath onto the Board. He also welcomed Evanna Ryan from the Carlton Hotel Group as a director to replace Nicola.

He acknowledged the work Helen Kelly did in her role as manager for over 4 years. She put the Company on a solid footing and has overseen the modernisation of this old building to meet all fire, health and safety regulations and welcomed Lyn Donnelly as her able replacement.

At the AGM last year Mr. Duffy had two objectives - to raise the profile of the Enterprise Centre and secondly he would have liked to see one overall plan to promote the town and capitalise both socially and economically. Mr. Duffy is confident that they have made good progress in raising the profile through various initiatives promoting the Town especially through the *Ballinasloe Life* magazine has helped to promote the town socially, culturally and marketing wise. "We have work to do in helping it economically, hopefully we can leverage off our association with AMT and with local Businesses to move this agenda forward."

Company manager Lyn Donnelly outlined the company's community development involvement through the RAPID Programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment

and Development) Community Employment Scheme, BEST Competition, Galway Mayors Award and the Ballinasloe Life Magazine. Full details of the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre were reviewed covering all services provided at the centre and the existing 12 enterprises located in the centre that employ in excess of 180 people.

The annual income for the company was in excess of €190,000 with operating expenses in the region of €189,000. The company has an asset valued at €1.4 million and a steady rent roll but it is still significantly dependent on funding agencies for the capital development programme - of which a complete roof repair job is next on the list.

It was noted that over €205,000 had been received from Galway Co Council, Galway City and County Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland, Galway Rural Development, Ballinasloe Credit Union, Creagh Community Development Council and RAPID towards the capital refurbishment of the building in the most recent past.

The website www.ballinasloeenterprise.ie was discussed with detail of it being officially launched in March 2011 and to date receiving over 4600 visits (average 80 per week) with visits from USA, Canada, Australia, Brazil, UAE and Russia to name just few.

Lastly the manager discussed what the company hoped to achieve in the forthcoming year, namely to Continue Community Development Work (Ballinasloe Life, Rapid, Expanding BEST Competition, Adult BEST), Raising Profile of Centre and Company through Webpage or social media, Ballinasloe Life and to get buying and implement an Action Plan for Our Own Town Centre

Directors elected to serve for the following year were Seamus Duffy, Michael Dolan, Paul Hargadon, Aiden McGrath, Cathal Concannon, Dan Dowling and Shane McNeill



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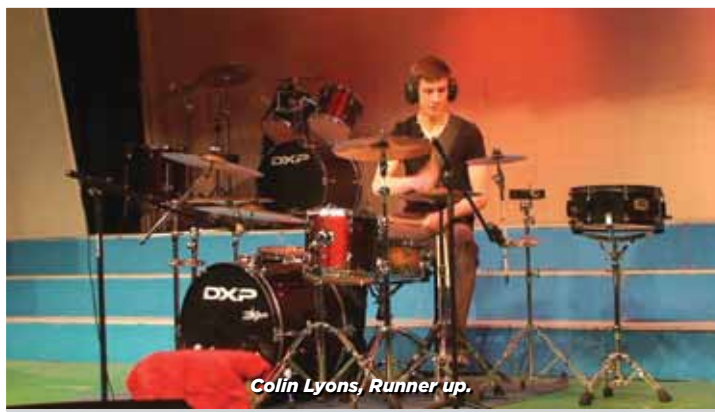
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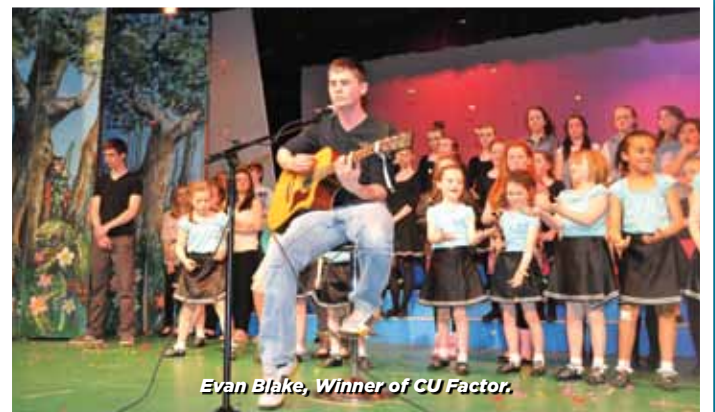
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Evan Blake, Winner of CU Factor.



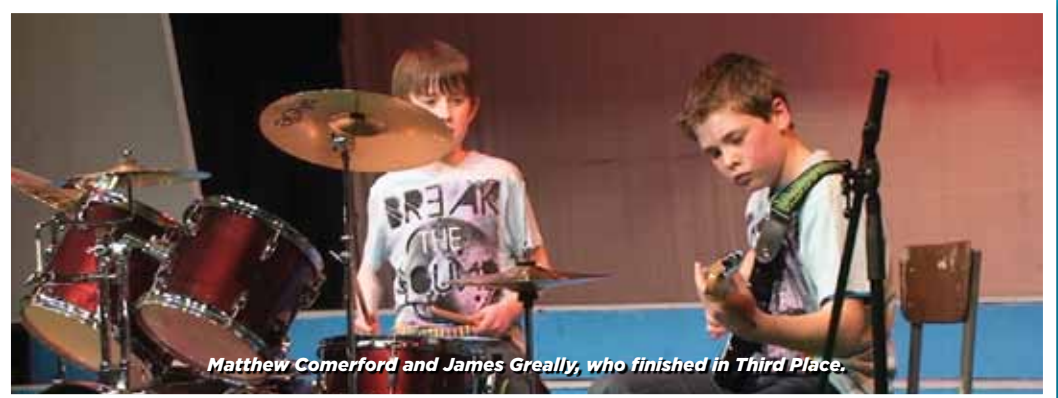
Blaithnaid Fenton, Fourth Place



Pupils from Ballaghlea National School perform at CU Factor



Katie Fitzgerald



Matthew Comerford and James Greally, who finished in Third Place.



Lisa Brady



Rachel Connolly and Roisin McCollum

Canal House Moves in Right Direction

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Ballinasloe Training Workshop was founded back in 1977 with some volunteers led by John Kilcommins and with Brendan Dillistone as the chairperson. Reverend Kingston provided the Church of Ireland Hall situated in Dunlo Hill for its activities.

The project was started by John Kilcommins (Probation Officer) in 1977 and other volunteers to help people, before the court or at risk in the community. It gave these young people training and a work habit, clocking in, keeping time and holding a position for at least six months which was later extended to twelve months. During that time they developed the job skills and social skills required for a part time or full time job. It was set up to benefit both the person and the community, by giving these young people practical working skills and also providing products that the local community could buy.

The first phase of the project was in Dunlo Hill Church where a project was developed with Dubarry Shoes. The trainees at the time stitched shoes and worked with inter-lacing leather uppers for shoes. In 1978 the Committee were looking for a suitable premises to buy and they decided to buy the old Canal House building, which was purchased by the Department of Justice at a cost of approximately £21,000 punts. The same year ANCO became involved and provided training allowances for the trainees. As Canal House was badly in need of repair, it was renovated under a CYPT scheme by FAS. Materials were purchased by the Department of Justice. A foreman was appointed and the trainees did the renovations.

Tom Forde was supervisor at this time. The project responded to needs that arose around the area. The concrete products and the printing initiatives emerged from this and Canal House became known for its products and its printing. In 1980 Mr. Tom Hussey T.D., Junior Minister for Health, represented the Minister for Justice, in the official opening of Canal House, Ballinasloe Training Workshop. Jimmy Hodgins was employed as manager of the project. In 1980 County Galway VEC became involved with providing three part-time instructors who provided the necessary skills in desktop publishing, social skills, leather crafts and woodwork.

Precast Production was introduced as a means of providing income to the Centre. The Department of Justice was committed to grant aid 95% of the funding for Canal House, but the Precast Concrete provided 50% of this funding due to income from the work of the trainees. Therefore there was not total reliance for funding on the Department of Justice at this time due to this commercial enterprise. For the first time in Ireland, Driving Lessons were introduced to the centre in 1987. An ex Garda instructor, Noel Finneran, was appointed by the Galway VEC on a part-time basis. As Canal House grew, consultations began with the Manager Mr Jimmy Hodgins and with instructors and the findings were brought before the Board of Management. In 2005 funding was approved by The Department of Justice for a building extension. The approximate amount approved at this time was €650,000. The building of the new development was completed in 2009.

In 2009 Pdraig Lyons was appointed new coordinator of Ballinasloe Training Workshop, now known in the community as Canal House. Female trainees (now called learners) were introduced and new FETAC Modules were developed to meet the required needs. It was identified that counselling supports needed to be put in place. Appropriate networking with Statutory Bodies was necessary to support the needs being presented. A holistic approach to learning and training was introduced through individual learning plans. In 2010 Canal House received its Charter from Junior Minister Sean Haughey in Dublin as an approved registered FETAC centre. New restorative practice projects were developed with



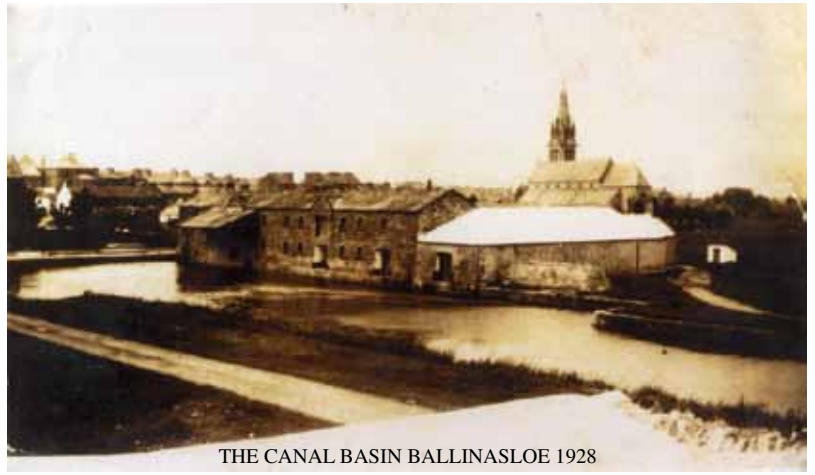
Ciaran Cannon T.D. opens the new Canal House extension, in the company of Mayor Mike Kelly, Pdraic Lawless, Pdraig Lyons and trainees.

the local community through the Tidy Towns and other initiatives and new in-house group sessions on addiction awareness, challenging behaviour and other support programmes were put in place. Links were also made with Colleges and Universities to access courses for trainees interested in moving on from Canal House. In 2012 we are launching this new development and celebrating thirty five years in existence in Ballinasloe. Pdraig Lyons stated "It is a real tribute to all concerned with Canal House to provide such a necessary service to the community for the last thirty five years."

Johnny Kilcommins one of the founders of the house stated 'Canal House was the first of its kind in Ireland and following some years of research Ballinasloe Training Workshop began in 1977 and has gone from strength to strength in teaching people the skills for work and helping them to access work and further education'

For more information or to get in contact with Canal House contact lyons.p@canalhouse.ie or phone 087-6832721





THE CANAL BASIN BALLINASLOE 1928

Excavation of The Grand Canal commenced in 1756. The Canal was opened to Shannon Harbour in 1804 and to Ballinasloe in 1827. In 1812 malicious acts were committed and a £300 reward was offered for information leading to conviction of offenders. Much damage was done to the canal banks by pigs and in 1788, lock keepers were paid 5/- for every pig destroyed. The Canal is 279 ft above seal level, 25 miles from Dublin, its highest point. There are 64 locks, 35 water supplies, 139 bridges & 2 aqua ducts, one of which is in Lismany near Ballinasloe. The completed canal and docks cost over £2,000,000. The locks were 63' 6" x 14' capable of passing boats of 60 tons in five minutes on the ascent and three minutes on descent. Boats submerged half an inch in the water for every ton loaded (60 tons—30 inches). Vessels were usually 52ft in length with a centre width of 9ft. Boats took 45 first class passengers who had the comfort of cushioned seats and Wilton Carpets, pillows and foot warmers. There was accommodation for 32 passengers in the second class cabin. The Fly or Swift boats were established in June 1835 for daytime travel & were towed by 3 or 4 horses at a speed of 10 m.p.h. In 1845 steamboats were used on the canal for the first time. Refreshments charges 1808—Breakfast including eggs 1s 4d, dinner with small beer 1s. 7. 1/2d, bottle of cider 10d, 1 pint of sherry or claret 1s. 7. 1/2d. The crew consisted of a master, a steersman, one man and one boy, together with the master's wife superintending refreshments assisted by a barmaid. Two postillions were employed per boat. The uniforms consisted of leather breeches and gold banded hats. The canal to Ballinasloe closed in 1959. Those who travelled by boat had the advantage of remaining unmolested by highwaymen who infected the countryside through which the vessel passed, as the crews were supplied with firearms.

INFORMATION COMPILED BY THEO HANLEY

Distances, Journeys, Times and Fares c.1836

| TO | Distance From Dublin Miles | Average Time | | Fares | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| | | By Fly Boat h. m. | By Night Boat h. m. | By Fly Boat 1st 2nd | By Night Boat 1st 2nd |
| Hazlehatch | 11 | 1 50 | 2 - 45 | 1/6 1/- | 1/6 1/- |
| Sallins | 19 | 2 45 | 4 15 | 2/4 1/6 | 2/3 1/6 |
| Robertstown | 26 | 3 45 | 5 40 | 3/2 2/- | 3/- 2/- |
| Ticknevin | 33 ^{1/2} | 4 35 | 7 10 | — | 3/9 2/6 |
| Rathangan | 34 ^{1/2} | 4 55 | — | 3/9 2/6 | 3/9 2/6 |
| Edenderry | 38 | 5 00 | 7 40 | 4/5 2/11 | 4/2 2/9 |
| Ballybritain | 41 | 5 25 | 8 30 | — | 4/6 3/- |
| Monasterevin | 41 | 5 55 | — | 4/6 3/- | 4/6 3/- |
| Portarlinton | 46 ^{1/2} | 6 30 | — | 5/- 3/3 | 5/- 3/3 |
| Vicarstown | 48 | 6 45 | — | 4/6 3/- | 4/6 3/- |
| Philipstown | 49 | 6 15 | 10 00 | 5/9 3/8 | 5/3 3/6 |
| Mountmellick | 53 | 7 15 | — | 5/6 3/6 | 5/6 3/6 |
| Athy | 54 ^{1/2} | 7 35 | — | 4/6 3/- | 4/6 3/- |
| Tullamore | 57 ^{1/2} | 7 35 | 11 50 | 6/8 4/4 | 6/- 4/- |
| Corrinalor | 60 | 7 40 | — | 6/8 4/4 | 6/- 4/- |
| Kilbeggan | 65 | 9 10 | 14 | — | 7/- 4/9 |
| Gillen | 73 ^{1/2} | 10 10 | 15 20 | — | 8/- 5/6 |
| Shannon Harbour | 79 ^{1/2} | 11 00 | 17 00 | 10/- 6/9 | 9/- 6/3 |
| Kylemore | 87 | — | 18 35 | — | 9/6 6/8 |
| Ballinasloe | 99 | — | 19 45 | — | 10- 7/- |

To obtain a true picture of costs to the average traveller, reference should be made to the afore-mentioned meal and refreshment charges.

Top: Padraic Lyons and John Kilcommins pictured outside Canal House. Above left: Canal House in its current guise. Above: Details of the Distances, Journeys, Times and Fares from Ballinasloe in 1836. Pictured Below: The Canal House Board of Management pictured with Ciaran Cannon TD.



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Fohenagh & District Historical Society

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The Historical Society was set up in 2009 by Frank Gavin and others of the same beliefs to keep the local history of Fohenagh and its locality alive and well.

It maybe small in numbers but vast in knowledge with Frank Gavin as Chair, the society are taking steps in the right direction to regain and research the history that exists in the locality. The members consist of Frank Gavin, Chairman; Anne Burke, Secretary; Gerry Greaney, Treasurer; Paula Kennedy, Brendan Donnellan, Robuck Ffrench, Adrian McCormack and Mike Glynn.

Growing up as a child, Frank was enthralled by history and recalls spending his summer Sundays sneaking into the beautiful Clonbrock House and its gardens with friends. Upon leaving school, Frank started working in the gardens of Clonbrock house until it was sold in 1976. Frank stated “we have vast amounts of history in Fohenagh and its district but the jewel in our crown has to be Clonbrock House.” Frank went on to explain further why the society was set up and what they hope to achieve, “to inspire and make people notice the treasures we have in our area and to eventually bring tourism to the area and get Fohenagh back on the map. To get

people to sit up and realise we have some serious gems in the area full of history, culture and areas of real sublime beauty that unfortunately nobody seems to realise exist at all.”

Some of the activities the society get up to are gathering of local folklore, through interviews with local people and broadcast those through producing historical shows. Seminars Include Big houses of East Galway and Aspects of the big house, Mass in the local children’s graveyard. Recent heritage work and a cleanup of the back avenue and replacement of the gates at Clonbrock house.

The society is proud of the fact they have researched and brought areas forgotten back to the local public’s eye. The society’s most treasured area of interest is that of Clonbrock House. The mansion is a large relatively well preserved tower house of rectangular plan. The Dillon family of Clonbrock was amongst the first of the Anglo-Norman families to settle in Connaught. The original line was descended from Sir Henry De Leon who arrived in Ireland with the Earl of Moreton (late King John of England) in 1185. A junior branch of the family first established themselves at Clonbrock sometime in the 1580s.

The Dillon’s were Catholics and continued to practice that religion until



Frank Gavin, Chairman of the Fohenagh and District Historical Group.

the early 1700s, when Robert Dillon, heir to the estate, was raised as a Protestant because of the threat posed to the integrity of the estate by the Penal Laws. The family subsequently remained members of the Church of Ireland. Robert Dillon, afterwards 1st Lord Clonbrock, built Clonbrock House near Ahascragh in County Galway, between 1780 and 1788. It was designed by William Leeson and was built to replace the old castle which remained intact until 1807 when it was accidentally burned in a fire that resulted from a fireworks display on the estate to celebrate the birth of the 2nd Lord Clonbrock’s son and heir

Perhaps one the most interesting aspects of Clonbrock House is the fact you can visually step back in time, It is most fortunate that the 4th Baron Clonbrock, Luke Gerald Dillon (1834-1917), and his wife, Augusta (1839-1928), daughter of Lord Crofton of Mote Park



Clonbrock House today.



Dark House where photos were developed.



The Dark House in its current guise.

in Roscommon, were such enthusiastic photographers. This at the time was a new fad and only the wealthy were able to afford such a luxury that was Photography. Local historians count their lucky stars that this is the case, as the collection is now priceless and gives a personal insight into how life was at Clonbrock house. The photographs are part of a rather unique collection of over 3,000 glass-plate negatives, sheet-film negatives, lantern slides

and some albums which illustrate so many aspects of life on the Clonbrock estate over a seventy year period from c. 1860 to c.1930. The collection mainly contains portraits of three generations of the Dillon family who resided at Clonbrock, but it also contains a wealth of photographs of the family and their friends during festive and sporting occasions, photographs of the house and its demesne, its servants, estate workers and tenants, as well as photographs of

local community events and activities involving the family.

In 1977, the National Library of Ireland acquired the Clonbrock photograph collection for the princely sum of £25 and the cost of transportation and some of the photos can be viewed online at www.nli.ie

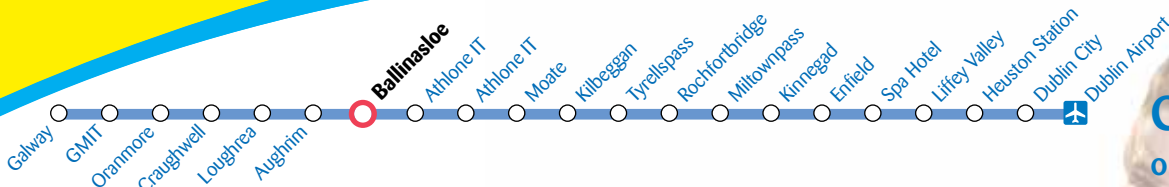
To learn more about Clonbrock House or Fohenagh and District Historical society Call 087 2775097 or email frankiejgavin@eircom.net



Waterfall at Clonbrock House.

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Ó Muircheartaigh Launches East Galway Cancer Support

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

East Galway Cancer Support (formerly known as Ballinasloe Cancer Support) was relaunched under its new name in Gullane's Hotel and Conference Centre, by legendary GAA commentator Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh and attended by a crowd of over 200 people. Chairperson, Mr. Fergus Curran gave a special welcome to Mícheál and stated that "EGCS are a non-profit charitable organisation which provides a network of psychological, emotional and practical support for those diagnosed with cancer."

East Galway Cancer Support is affiliated to the Irish Cancer Society and volunteers are trained by Cancer Care West, who also provides a psychotherapist, Dr. Helen Greally, who counsels and helps those in need of the services EGCS provides. Trained therapists offer their services free of charge, incorporating treatments like Reflexology, Reiki, Mindfulness, Hypnotherapy, Acupuncture and E.F.T., while a medical social worker provides information on entitlements.

Liaison officer and Oncology Nurse Specialist, Vicky Costello stated "Try as we may to have empathy and put ourselves in their shoes, it is others that have cancer that really understand what it feels like to lose your hair or be told 'You have cancer'. Support groups offer an opportunity to speak with others outside of family and friends." Emily Barker spoke for the Breast Support Group, Johnny Hurley spoke for Prostate



Pictured at the relaunch of East Galway Cancer Support were, Back Row (L-R): Michael Daly, Fergus Curran, Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh (Guest of Honour), Mary Jordan, Gerry Devlin. Front Row (L-R): Jacqueline Daly, Cathy Keogh, Vicky Costello.

Support Group and Sr. Alacoque Gleeson read a letter on behalf of a member from the Family Support Group. They each talked about the great sense of solace, care and companionship they received from being involved in support groups.

Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh gave a talk on volunteerism. In a wonderful bilingual speech he spoke about the real meaning and power of community. He said he was reminded when talking earlier in the night to international rugby star and local hero, Noel Mannion, that two of the seven people involved in the birth of what we know today as the GAA were rugby players and the great organisation now reaches not only nationwide but internationally as well. True volunteers, he said, volunteer not for their own benefit but for the betterment of everyone in the community. He commended the

volunteers and therapists of EGCS for giving their time, services and skills free of charge. Noting that the word 'Sail' and 'Launch' had the same Irish translation, 'Seol', he wished the group well on their voyage. Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh was presented, by the committee, with a print depicting the Battle of Aughrim by the internationally known artist, Mr. Ben Maile.

Monthly meetings of the various support groups are held in The Family Centre located on John Dunne Avenue (opposite the Health Centre in Brackernagh). The centre opens from 7-9pm on the second, third and fourth Tuesday of each month and Thursdays from 1-5pm. On Wednesdays the volunteers work out of Portiuncula Hospital from 11am-1pm.

To contact EGCS Call 087 9840304. 

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Ada English Summer School is Back For A Second Year

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Ada English, was perhaps a once forgotten name in the locality. She now has a Summer School dedicated to her and it will return for a third year. In recent years a number of studies into Cumann na mBan women, their role in the Rising and War of Independence and critically their professional legacy to their medical fields, has sparked an upsurge of scholarly and general interest.

The summer school and the exhibition of St. Brigid's Hospital Memorabilia and artefacts that was held in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel proved to be a huge success, commemorating and exploring the issues surrounding the extraordinary life and times of one the town's female historical giants.

The Ballinasloe and District Soroptimists International Branch established an early summer school last year dedicated to exploring the themes invoked by the lifetime of one of the town's forgotten historical giants of the first four decades of the last Century, Dr. Ada English. Deputy RMS of St. Brigid's Hospital from the 1920s to 1941, she is still remembered locally by many of a certain generation, as the onetime War of Independence patriot and early Dáil TD.

The Summer School, held over the May Bank Holiday weekend attracted large crowds. With a jam packed programme of events, delegates were spoiled for choice as the event attracted prominent current and former female public representatives and commentators including Brigid Hogan-O'Higgins former TD for Galway South, Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD, Cllr. Constance Hanniffy, the Irish representative to the EU committee of the regions, Alison O'Connor Irish Independent Columnist and Mary O'Rourke former Minister and TD for Longford/Westmeath to name but a few.

The Opening debate proved to be a lively affair with Mary O'Rourke, chairing the panellists and contributors from the floor with jocular wit and feisty determination. She trooped off with Soroptimists President Mary McGee to open the first ever exhibition of memorabilia and artefacts from St. Brigid's Hospital which occupied the Hotel lobby for the weekend and drew great numbers of past staff and families who had members who worked there.

Saturday, after the Mayor Mike Kelly saw the opening, the keynote presentation was given by Dr. Brendan J. Kelly who



Merel Jansma (Summer School Co-ordinator) and Mary McGee (President of Ballinasloe and District Soroptimists)

Below: A collection of Ada English Memorabilia

has presented on ADA and indeed some of the other Cumann na mBan medical luminaries. Further themed presentations followed with Mary Clancy, Dr. Caitriona Clear, Dr. Oonagh Walsh and a riveting visual presentation of a very rare collection of black and white photographs, from the diocesan archivist Rev. Declan Kelly of the town in the 1940s.

Closing the school formally in a final discussion, chaired by Senator Michael Mullins, the delegates were firmly of the view that the new two day format worked well and the themed structures around

elements of Ada's life allowed for more in depth discussion. He warmly thanked all the local Soroptimists, speakers, Merel Jansma the Co-ordinator and especially the sponsors: Ballinasloe Town Council, Ballinasloe Credit Union and the Carlton Shearwater Hotel.

After a walking tour of the St. Brigid's Hospital grounds and a visit to her grave the school wound down with a wonderful special singers circle in the Dunlo Tavern commemorating the Irish female patriot in song. Dates have been announced for next year, May Bank Holiday weekend 2013.



Aughrim Battle Remembered

Writes Colm Croffy

The Battle of Aughrim was the decisive battle of the Williamite War in Ireland. It was fought between the Jacobites and the forces of William III near the village of Aughrim. The battle was one of the more bloody recorded fought on Irish soil. Over 7,000 people were killed. It meant the effective end of Jacobitism in Ireland.

Aughrim Remembered is a cooperation between The Kelly Clan Association, Galway County Council, the Aughrim

Community and Oireas historical services. The aim is to commemorate the Battle of Aughrim and those who died in it, in a dignified fashion through the expression of the arts, music, literature, military tradition and heritage.

Contrary to popular belief the battle was fought on the 22nd July. At that time there were two calendars in use. The calendar used by the Jacobite side was the Gregorian calendar, as used today. The commemorative event will run from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, 20th to 22nd July.

“There are many able historians who can give chapter and verse on the blow by blow details of the battle, but what

I find particularly interesting are the stories of people who have in their family folklore compelling evidence of their families involvement in the battle and the aftermath. Stories such as James Lynch and twenty of his clan, nine Kirwan’s, thirteen of the Ó Madden’s, died at Aughrim along with Darcy’s, Blake’s, members of the Joyce family, it’s a long list. Christopher Keane who I met has evidence of eleven of his ancestors who died in the battle, and an account of some who were buried in nearby cemeteries. Kelly folklore has it that four hundred Ó Kelly’s died. That maybe farfetched but no doubt many died. This information is suggesting that many clans fought as irregulars or Rapparees, and that a lot more research needs to be done in this area.” stated Organiser Joe Kelly.

Last year was the first year of what it is hoped to be an ongoing event. The weekend had a series of lectures; all the talks were varied and interesting ranging from archaeological discoveries, records of the gentry of east Galway and their estates and more currently the Ireland reaching out project to aspects of the battle. This year promises to be very exciting and will be of great interest to military historians and also those who have an interest in history of that time. On the Saturday afternoon Tommy Graham of History Ireland, along with Dr Eamon Ó Ciardha (Senior Lecturer in Irish/English Literary and Historical Studies, Arts and Humanities



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Previous Page: Battle of Aughrim painting by Ester Barrett. Above: Memorial plaque in memory of the tree planted (right) by Brian O'Kelly. Bottom: Actor in the period dress of the time.



Research Institute, University of Ulster) Dr. Billy Kelly (Lecturer in Ulster Scots Studies, Arts and Humanities Research Institute, University of Ulster), Mr Richard Doherty (Military Author and Historian) along with other speakers will discuss *From Jacobitism to Jacobinism: A Reconsideration*.

There will also be a first for Aughrim, A book launch in the Interpretive Centre titled *Danish troops in the Williamite army in Ireland, 1689-91*. This book looks at the Danish contingent in William's multi-national force fighting in Ireland in 1689-91. It examines how the Danish king, Christian V, essentially hired out a portion of his army due to the deplorable state of national finances, his desire

to give his troops and officers some valuable combat experience, and his support of a fellow Protestant monarch.

Simultaneous to this activity will be the Soldiers Bivouac which will be set up in the park. The Bivouac was very successful last year and gives a very accurate snap shot of soldiers quarters and all aspects of how they lived in a 17th century army. This year we will have Living History representatives from France and Holland. Knowing how soldiers like to compete there will also be a Poc Fáda competition.

Further details are available on our website www.kellyclanireland.com or contact Joe Kelly at cavkelly@indigo.ie or Mobile 086 8138552.



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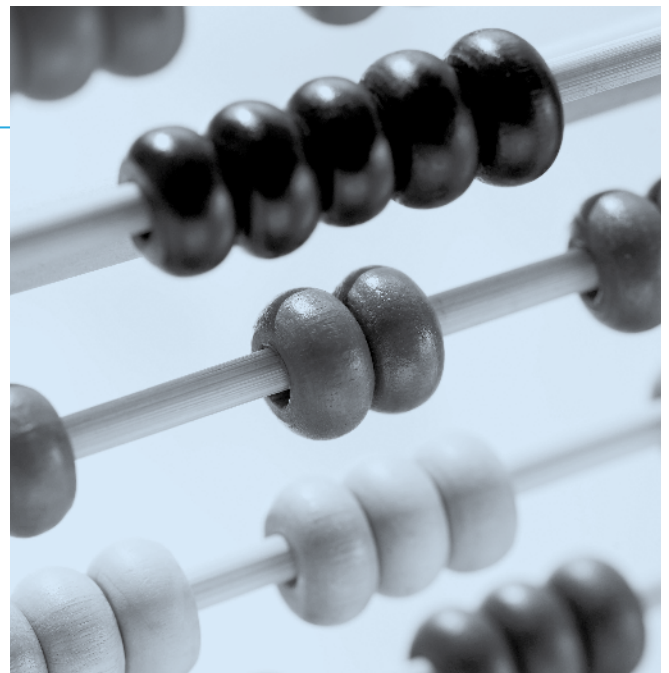
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Ballinasloe Fair and Festival

Writes Kevin Murray

Next October Fair Week, the people of Ballinasloe may notice an influx of New Yorkers. The man responsible is award-winning Irish photographer Kenneth O'Halloran. Kenneth took numerous photos of the Fair last year that the New York Times printed along with a few words from Chairman, Timmy Broderick.

Kenneth was in Ballinasloe following presidential hopeful David Norris on his campaign trail. In an interview with the Ballinalsoe Life magazine, Clare native Kenneth told us how it all came about. "In my work as a news photographer, I've been sent to cover the Fair many times. It is a great assignment for a photographer. The characters, the colours and the horses themselves make for excellent photographic opportunities."

"I have even come to take photos in Ballinasloe when I wasn't working, that's how much I love it. But last year I was with Senator David Norris' campaign team in the weeks leading up to the election. We hit Ballinasloe on the first Sunday of the Fair. We were coming down Bracknagh and following on across Dunlo Hill. I took advantage of our vantage point over the Fair Green and took a couple of good shots. When I got back to the office, I sent on my photographs to the New York Times."

Kenneth continued "I have a good working relationship with the NY Time, they had published some of my work previously.

They contacted me straight away to say that they loved the shots of Ballinasloe. So they sent me back on the second Saturday."

"I spent a few hours in Ballinalsoe trying to capture the essence of the Fair and the New York Times loved what they saw. They publish a couple of my photographs in their Sunday magazine towards the end of October and the rest on their website. It is difficult to put a number on how many people saw the photos, but it is in the millions. Let's hope that some will come to see the Fair for themselves" Kenneth added.



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License for UpRiver at Marina

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

UpRiver has been granted permission to operate openly in the marina of the town which simply means more water fun and activities for everybody.

This year sees a dramatic change to the local waterways of the town. The once quiet areas of the of the upper Suck river are now going to be home to Canadian canoe hire, adult lessons and budding kayakers of all ages. The move sees Waterways Ireland granting an operating license to UpRiver.ie to operate within the marina and surrounding navigation channel.

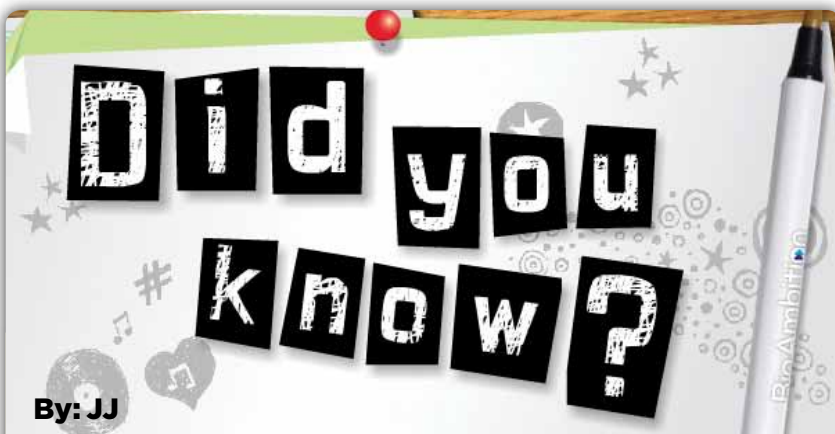
“This means that our clients, when starting from our new base in Croffy’s yard will be able to follow the river around by the Old Norman castle underneath the town bridge and finish in the Marina itself, all from a town centre location” says Eoin Croffy, manager of UpRiver.ie. “Our Kayaktivity camp members and adult learners will now get to see the local river from a new and exciting perspective”

Many groups have taken to the new facility with groups from Dublin, Galway and photography groups from as far away as the States venturing out onto the river this year for trips with UpRiver.ie. Eoin enthusiastically told us “Many Kids parties, stag/hen groups are coming and availing of our packages, staying in local hotels and enjoying the town in a new different way, experiencing the river from a unique angle that many of the towns’ people have never seen before.” To date UpRiver.ie has attracted many customers to the locality, Cadburys Ireland, Diageo Ireland, tour companies and most recently playing host to the “The Rose of Tralee escort bootcamp” for two years. UpRiver.ie was also central to the filming of the R.T.E “Abhainn” documentary, which saw the filming of the River Suck from source to Shannon.

Many of the kayaktivity camp members travel from Athlone, Loughrea, Mountbellew and even some travel from as far as Cork to stay the week while their kids partake in the camps. Already there are limited places available with many customers returning year after year. “This will be my fourth year to take part and I can’t get enough of it - I can’t wait for the bridges in town”, says eleven year old Cillian Ryan, Poolboy native, “I’ve learned so much about our river, how to be safe around water and met loads of new river friends”. The biggest complaint from a parent of another Camp member, John Hargadon “is the appetite and tiredness that follows a day on the river, both my two were in bed by eight each night!”

This year’s river festival in May will see UpRiver show off its new routes by offering Suck Safaris and kayak try outs in the Marina itself, anyone interested is welcome to come along and have a free try-out. It’s no doubt going to bring much needed added colour and traffic to the town centre this summer.

UpRiver are now looking for seasonal staff from the locality for full-time and part-time positions for the summer months. Applicants must have outgoing personalities, previous kayaktivity is not essential but would certainly be a huge advantage. Apply with CV to info@upriver.ie or for further information on UpRiver.ie contact Eoin on 087-9219700 or like us on www.facebook.com/UpRiver.ie



By: JJ

- *There is a private burial vault on the Seymour Estate in Laurencetown, where several family members are interred.*
- *The first family of foreign origin to settle in Ballinasloe were the Brabazons. They took up residence in the Castle, at River Street, in 1580.*
- *The Parker families supplied teachers to Clontuskert National School from 1866 to 1932. The school was then located at Chapelark.*
- *Dubarry Shoemakers was established in Ballinasloe in 1937 following talks with the local Chamber of Commerce.*
- *The Grand Canal from Shannon Harbour to Ballinasloe was opened on 3rd September 1828, giving direct access to Dublin. It was closed in from the Ballinasloe Basin, for several miles, over forty years ago.*
- *John “Tull” Dunne from Brackernagh, Ballinasloe was captain of the 1938 All-Ireland Galway senior football team. He went on to become secretary of the Galway Football Board for over fifty years and was manager of the historic three-in-a-row All-Ireland teams of the sixties which included his son, Cyril.*

Three Men in a Suckside Canoe

Ruari Moore and Colm Croffy

Since the floods which near-crippled half the town over three years ago, it is fair to say that the river has become an untold annoyance to many, something to be fortified against rather than seen for its potential to reanimate the town.

The opening of the Marina and connecting the Suck to one of Europe's longest navigable waterway routes, the Shannon-Erne in 1999, after an OPW investment of close on €18 million has still not awoken fully a Carrick-on-Shannon feel to the heart of the town.

Pleasure craft coming through the Poolboy lock last season were up slightly on the 2010 figures and despite Emerald Star and another number of Cruiser Hire Companies reducing fleet numbers and capacity in the past four years, numbers seem buoyant for quarter one.

Work is still being undertaken by the Chamber of Commerce to secure agreement with Bord na Mona to raise the light railway bridge on the lower stretches, which with high waterlevels acts a hindrance to the newer larger cruisers, who have elaborate high flying bridges.

In Life's effort to promote the River Suck as the natural attribute to Ballinasloe that it really is, it was decided that an undergraduate, grappling with a paddle



in one hand and a second-rate digital camera in the other, just wouldn't cut it. Enter Alexey Zaradov, a professional photographer based out of Galway. Our mission was to traverse the river course from Bunowen, across the backlands of Society St, Main St. Under the bridge at River St. and arrive DRY to the Moycarn Marina. So it passed that on one of those rare, warm mornings last season when the sun graced us with its presence for more than a fleeting, mocking moment, the crew at Ballinasloe Life pushed off onto the River Suck from the Bunowen Bridge, the perfect starting point for a long, meandering tour behind the

town. Armed with paddles, canoe and roughly half an idea how to use them thanks to those at Upriver.ie, editor and reporter were tasked with navigating the eddies and swirls of the river, to show our readers the many hidden gems that make up the scenery along the bank and to generally avoid dumping our photographer and thousands of euro worth of equipment into the depths. Easier said than done. The expedition began a little shakily, the canoe bouncing from bank to bank more often than not as all three of us attempted to work in unison. Eventually a rhythm that didn't involve becoming closely acquainted

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with each and every trailing tree branch was established and Alexey began to snap in earnest, often having us tread in place or cling to rocks for minutes at a time, just long enough to coax the sun from behind the clouds above and to show the verbascum plants in their shimmering glory.

From the Bunowen which rises in Ballmacward, the waterway slithers down around the railway bridge, curling back up behind Main Street before meeting the main body of the river where it flows from the Marina down towards the moorings at the Moycarn Lodge & Private Marina. Eight short downstream miles later you can be in Shannonbridge.

On the rare occasions that it chose to make an appearance, the sun was merciless and navigating the thick reeds or the shallow, rockier patches could be punishing at times. The current Bunowen bridge replaced a metal structure erected by Galway County council in the early 90s. Niall Dolan a formidable Coarse Angling Journalist exclaimed it the “the best trout fishing in Europe”, but we didn’t see one finned creature on our paddle past.

We larked about under The Great Western Railway bridge, erected in the late 1840s, in time for the opening of the Mullingar to Galway Railway line in August 1st 1851. It is a truly monumental piece of Victorian engineering, rising majestically on its columns of Brackernagh stone, from the shallows of the river bed.

We decided in the interests of completeness to brave the overgrown reeds and treacherous bends of Horsemans Rivers which rises in Kilclooney and hacked a way to the little bridge at the former Railway Hotel designed and built in the 1840s by the Church of Ireland Diocesan architect James Forth Kempster. For most of the 19th century this was actually a significant salmon hatchery river and many of the ancestral houses in Derrymullen would have had Salmon staffs, nets and other


trapping devices still knocking around. The conflux of Horsemans and the Suck - known as the Cut - is a deep stretch of slow water which is favoured by the Pike - a fish treated like salmon on the villages of the twinned French Loire but decidedly a catch and stuff variety here, rather than a catch and cook.

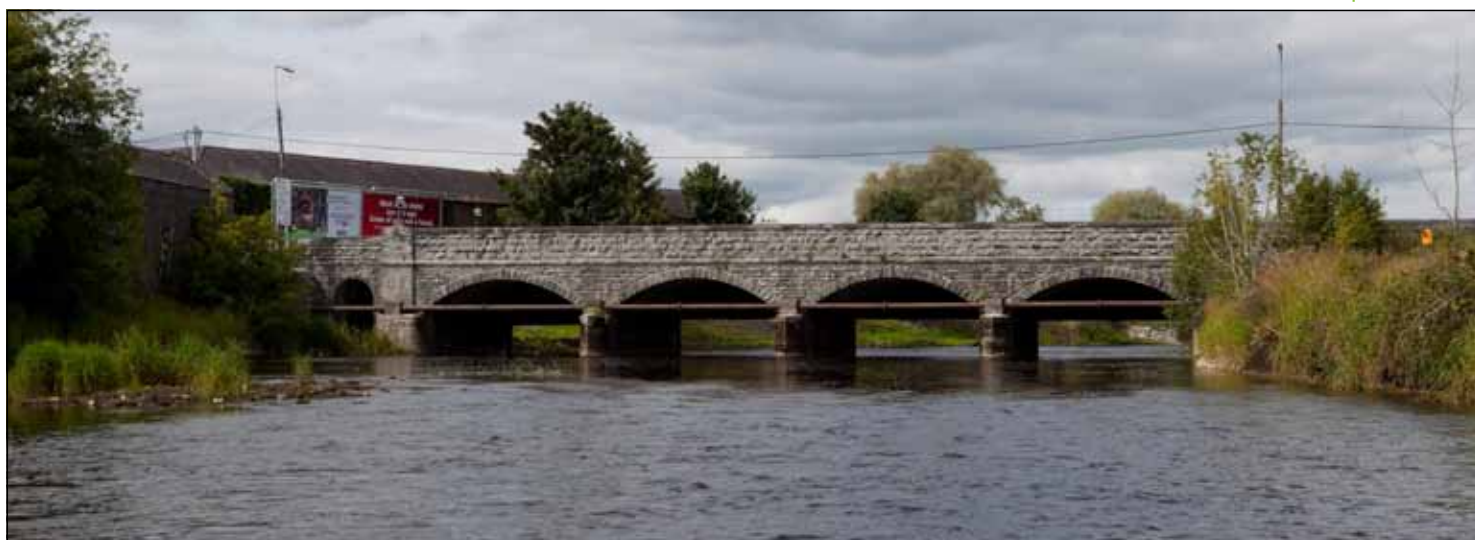
The broadest and deepest part of the River sweeps from the Cut, all along the back of the horribly overgrown jewel of Society St., the former Convent of Mercy 12 acre manicured gardens (which used to sweep to a river walk at the lower end) all the way to Gullanes, Colohans and then veers East, away from the town before churning us up at the Rapids to the rear of Joe Murrays.

Hard to believe that this powerful swirl of water had the force of nature during the devastating flooding to breach the houses on both Bridge and River St. and all along Sli na hAbhainn, but it did! A tourist of 1839, therefore, displays more wit than accuracy, when, speaking of the stream in connection with the town, he says, “It is very like its elder brother, the Shannon, the same slow, dark-flowing stream, gliding like a black snake through callows, moors and red bogs. Was it not very poetical of a Roscommon bard to call the punch-drinking squires dwelling on the banks of this sedgy stream “the sons of Suck?”” The passage across the river at the town was a series of bridges and causeways, carried from island to island and from stream to stream and extending upwards of 500 yards. The arches amount aggregately to 16, but they are of very different dimensions, they stand at very irregular intervals and, in several instances, they are single. The chief bridge, or that over the principle water-way, consists of 4 arches, respectively about 16, 16, 14 and 12 feet in span; and this, jointly with the other parts of the passage, is very old and anciently formed a key-post of communication between the main body of Connaught and the east. Paddling under the sluice gates of the current bridge built in 1887

- again marvelling at the stone masonry and the keen eye for nature (or might it have been commerce?), the late Victorians had where the Salmon run channel - can still be seen; reacquaints the kayakers with modern traffic and thunder of truck and car - snapping one out of the peaceful “three men in a boat” demeanour. We thrashed along quickly to keep out of the way of the cruisers as we visited the Marina at Sli na hAbhainn and chatted to visitors and locals alike about their views on the waterway, many had walked down and back from the Lock - along the canal route - up by Canalach - a nice circulatory preamble.

Our attempts to commune with nature met mixed results, from the grazing horses who lined up accommodatingly along the riverbank for their beauty shots, the puck and billy goats at Murrays, to the charge of a cantankerous male swan which almost saw our Editor end up in the river. (No trip on the River Suck is truly complete without an encounter with “George”, affectionately so-named by the Upriver crew who have taken him as their mascot in lieu of an albatross).

Pulling into the Moycarn Lodge and Marina brought with it a mingled sense of relief and sadness - relief that we could finally rest a moment without fear of aviary assassination, but sadness that so few people of the area have had the chance to see first hand, what we had seen, so few are even aware what is there. The down stream trip takes about an hour and 40 minutes in total; an hour and a bit if you swing home at the Town Centre Marina, for a reasonably fit person. Though floods in years past once painted the river as no more than a problem to the town and for some many locals the River was a place of danger and destruction, anyone at all curious about one of the town’s most valuable assets should take an evening to explore the river. The town once thrived thanks to its unique position along the waterway and better that it be enjoyed and made use of rather than ignored. 



JUNE Events Guide

| 1 June | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Town Hall Theatre | Instep Stage School | 7pm |
| Maud Millers | Live Music | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Trad Session | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| 2 June | | |
| Town Hall Theatre | Instep Stage School | 7pm |
| Haydens Hotel | Christy & Mike | 10pm |
| Gullanes Hotel | Celebrity Seanós Factor | 8pm |
| Maud Millers | Keith & Johnny | 10pm |
| An Tain | Ger Richardson Live Band in the Bar | 10pm |
| Pillar House | Geagan Pagans | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Live Music | 10pm |
| 3 June | | |
| Town Hall Theatre | Instep Stage School | 7pm |
| Haydens Hotel | Night Owls | 10pm |
| Downeys Bar | Live Band | 10pm |
| Maud Millers | Barry Power | 10pm |
| Pillar House | Div & Killer | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Country Dance in the Ballroom | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Geagan Pagans | 10pm |
| 4 June | | |
| Town Hall Theatre | Instep Stage School | 4pm |
| Downeys Bar | Anne Marie McLoughlin | 10pm |
| 5 June | | |
| Gullanes Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| 6 June | | |
| An Tain | Trad Night | 8pm |
| 7 June | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | 10pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | Daphne Maltpress - Talk | 7.30pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | Ciorcal Comhrá | 11am - 12pm |
| Maud Miller's | Live Acoustic Session | 10pm |
| 8 June | | |
| Maud Miller's | The Converse Allstars | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Kiwi Paddy | 10pm |
| 9 June | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Last man standing | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Rivulettes | 10pm |
| An Tain | The Cavern Beatles / 60s Party Night | 10pm |
| Pillar House | John & Evan | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 11.30pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | The Klients | 10pm |
| 10 June | | |
| An Tain | Euro 2012: France v England | 7.45 pm |
| Town Hall Theatre | Hopkins School of Dance | 7.30 pm |
| Haydens Hotel | one to one | 10pm |
| Downeys Bar | HELIUM | 10pm |
| Maud Millers | The Hoppy Bar Stars | 10pm |
| An Tain | Euro 2012: Ireland v Croatia | 19.45 p.m |
| Carlton Shearwater | Country Dance in the Ballroom | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| 11 June | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Line Dancing | 8pm |
| An Tain | EURO 2012: France v England | 7.45pm |
| 12 June | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| 13 June | | |
| An Tain | Trad Night | 10pm |
| 14 June | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | 10pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | Ciorcal Comhrá | 11am - 12pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | Bruno Groening: Circle of Friends | 7pm |
| An Tain | EURO 2012: Ireland v Spain | 7.45pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Singers Circle | 10pm |
| 15 June | | |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | The Ramblers | 10pm |

| 16 June | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------|
| Hayden's Hotel | Country Comfort | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Coverstory | 10pm |
| Pillar House | DJ Keith Geraghty | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Sons of Erin | 10pm |
| 17 June | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Fathers Day Lunch Special | 12.30pm on |
| Downey's Bar | Actin' The Maggot | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Skillet Pot | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Country Dance in the Ballroom | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| 18 June | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Line Dancing | 8pm |
| An Tain | EURO 2012: Ireland v Italy | 7.45pm |
| 19 June | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| 20 June | | |
| An Tain | Trad Night | 10pm |
| 21 June | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | 10pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | Ciorcal Comhrá | 11am - 12pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | E. G'way Cancer/B'sloe Services Log Cabin Night | 9pm |
| Maud Miller's | Live Acoustic Session | 10pm |
| 22 June | | |
| Maud Miller's | Idle Tone | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Buzz The Agent | 10pm |
| St. Michael's Church | Regional Novena | All Day |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| St. Michael's Church | Rite of Reconciliation | Eve |
| 23 June | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | One To One | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Streetwise | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Kensy 3 | 10pm |
| St. Michael's Church | Regional Novena | 10pm |
| 24 June | | |
| Downey's Bar | Paul Burns | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Hoppy Bar Stars | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Country Dance in the Ballroom | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| St. Michael's Church | Regional Novena | All day |
| St. Michael's Church | Mass with Blessing of Children | Eve |
| 25 June | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Line Dancing | 8pm |
| St. Michael's Church | Regional Novena | |
| 26 June | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| St. Michael's Church | Regional Novena | |
| St. Michael's Church | Sacrament of the Sick | |
| 27 June | | |
| An Tain | Trad Night | 10pm |
| St. Michael's Church | Regional Novena | |
| 28 June | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Ciorcal Comhrá | 11am - 12pm |
| Maud Miller's | Live Acoustic Session | 10pm |
| 29 June | | |
| Maud Miller's | The Hooch Hikers | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | One to One | 10pm |
| 30 June | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Tara Shamrock | 10pm |
| Carlton Shearwater | Live Music in the Bar | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Rivulettes | 10pm |
| Pillar House | Cool Hand Dukes | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 11.30pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Anne Marie McLoughlin | 10pm |



1. Barry Lally and some of the attendees at the Summerfest Heritage and History Walk

2. Sean Tully on the banks of the Canal Basin with some of the attendees at the Summerfest Heritage and History Walk.

JULY Events Guide

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 July | | |
| Downey's Bar | Helium | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Skillet Pot | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| 2 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Line Dancing | 8pm |
| 3 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Multi-Cultural Evening | 10pm |
| 4 July | | |
| An Táin | Trad Night: Tony Kenny's 88th Party | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Connacht Fleadh 'Singers Circle' | 10pm |
| 5 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Live Acoustic Session | 10pm |
| An Táin | Trad Night | 10pm |
| 6 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Connacht Fleadh | 10pm |
| Downey's Bar | Trad Session by The Gaegan Pagans | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Gaegan Pagans | 10pm |
| An Táin | Connacht Fleadh | 10pm |
| An Táin | Trad Night | 10pm |
| Pillar House | Connacht Fleadh: Cáirde Ceoil | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Trad Session: Still Slopín' & Friends | 10pm |
| 7 July | | |
| Town Hall Theatre | Connacht Fleadh | All Day |
| Hayden's Hotel | Night Owls | 10pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | Connacht Fleadh | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Rivuletes | 10pm |
| An Táin | Connacht Fleadh | 10pm |
| An Táin | ALL DAY Traditional Music & Song | 10pm |
| Pillar House | Connacht Fleadh: Johnny O'Halloran | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 11.30pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Trad Session: The High Reel & Friends | 10pm |
| 8 July | | |
| Town Hall Theatre | Connacht Fleadh | All Day |
| Gullane's Hotel | Connacht Fleadh | 10pm |
| Downey's Bar | Actin' The Maggot | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Hoppy Bar Stars | 10pm |
| An Táin | Connacht Fleadh | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 11.30pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Evening Trad Session | 7pm |
| 9 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Line Dancing | 8pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA | GAA Cúl Camps (Hurling) | 10am |
| 10 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| 11 July | | |
| An Táin | Trad Night | 10pm |
| 12 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Live Acoustic Session | 10pm |
| 13 July | | |
| Maud Miller's | Keith & Johnny | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Live Music | 10pm |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 14 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | One To One | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Streetwise | 10pm |
| Pillar House | DJ Corry | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Geagan Pagans | 10pm |
| 15 July | | |
| Downey's Bar | Anne Marie McLoughlin | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Skillet Pot | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| 16 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Line Dancing | 8pm |
| Ballinasloe GAA | GAA Cúl Camps (Football) | 10am |
| 17 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| 18 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Irish Blood Transfusion Service | From 5pm |
| An Táin | Trad Night | 10pm |
| 19 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | 10pm |
| Gullane's Hotel | Irish Blood Transfusion Service | From 5pm |
| Maud Miller's | Live Acoustic Session | 10pm |
| 20 July | | |
| Maud Miller's | The Converse Allstars | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Done & Dusted | 10pm |
| 21 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Last Man Standing | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Chill Out | 10pm |
| Show Society | Show Jumping | 10am |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Kensey 3 | 10pm |
| 22 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Céili: 4-7pm Tim Joe & Ann Riordain | |
| Downey's Bar | Actin' The Maggot | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | The Hoppy Bar Stars | 10pm |
| Show Society | Show Jumping | 10am |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 10.30pm |
| 23 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Line Dancing | 8pm |
| 24 July | | |
| Gullane's Hotel | Tea Dance | 9pm |
| 25 July | | |
| An Táin | Trad Night | 10pm |
| 26 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | Kevin Rohan & Friends | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Live Acoustic Session | 10pm |
| 27 July | | |
| Maud Miller's | Idle Tone | 10pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Sons of Erin | 10pm |
| 28 July | | |
| Hayden's Hotel | One To One | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Coverstory | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 11.30pm |
| 29 July | | |
| Downey's Bar | Paschal Brennan | 10pm |
| Maud Miller's | Barry Power | 10pm |
| Pillar House | Geagan Pagans | 10pm |
| Planet Night Club | DJ | 11.30pm |
| Dunlo Tavern | Live Music | 10pm |



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COMPETITION TIME: Ballinasloe Life are holding a photography competition. You don't need a high spec camera to win this competition, simply snap a beautiful summers evening in the Ballinasloe area on your iPhone, smartphone or digital camera and upload it to our Facebook page. Top 5 winners will be published in the next edition and the winner will get dinner for two at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel.

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3rd Annual 10k Fun Run, in The Sun

The sun came out for the 10k Fun Run. All competitors, both Runners and Walkers, took up their positions behind the starting line. At the countdown the eagerness could be seen on all our runners as they had fingers poised on stop watches ready for the off. The first person to cross the finish line was Noel Kelly (pictured right), 2nd was Damien Landers and 3rd James Ryan, followed by a continuous flow of runners and walkers.

The Stargazer Lily Team official organisers of the 10k were quoted as saying "This is our third annual run and it was great to see so many people take part." The Stargazer Lily team would like to thank the Traffic Corps Tuam, local Gardai, Civil Defence, Marshals, Volunteers and our local Sponsors for all the help again in this year's event. The money received from your registration will be presented to The Irish Cancer Society.



Best of luck to Ballinasloe Comhaltas and the Connacht Fleadh

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Out and About in Ballinasloe

Galway Rose Contestants pictured at the Carlton Shearwater.



Jackie Brien (Ahascragh, Camogie of Connacht) meets President Michael D. Higgins at Áras an Uachtaráin. Camogie President, Joan O'Flynn, (right) and Mary Moran (centre) and Eamonn Brown (Munster Camogie).



Sen. Lorraine Higgins with Ada English Memorial Award Committee Members: (L-R) Jackie Eastwood, (Ballinasloe MHA), Valerie Swanick (Ballinasloe HMA), Kieran McMahon (MHA), Senator Higgins, Mary Dillon (Ballinasloe Library), Nicola Morley (MHA Ireland), Gerry Blake (MHS Ballinasloe).



Community Art Project display boards at Ballinasloe Railway Station: Pictured (L-R) are Jackie Eastwood (Ballinasloe MHA), Colette Murphy HSE, Peter Caulfield (Station Master), Grellan Ganly (Artist), Valerie Swanick (Ballinasloe MHA), Kieran McMahon (MHA Ireland), Kerrill Burke (Ballinasloe Railway Station) and Cllr. Mattie Ganly.



Presentation of a cheque from McHughs, Taughmaconnell to the Oncology Unit in Portiuncula. (L-R): Martin J. Higgins, Vicky Costello, Sally Carey, Leonie McHugh, Teresa McHugh and Noel Finneran.



Ballinasloe GAA are presented with new set of jerseys, sponsored by the Carlton Shearwater Hotel.



Newtown and Attyrory NS first communion in Creagh Church.

The 3rd Annual Mayor's Awards

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The 3rd Annual Mayor's Awards took place at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel recently. When the acting Mayor Mike Kelly and his fellow councillors embarked on the initiative 4 years ago, they were not sure if it could continue indefinitely, however, the response of the town's people has been such, that the awards are now an biannual event and a welcome firm fixture in the town's calendar.

The Ceremony is an occasion for celebration, a time to formally recognise the many individuals, groups and organizations in the town and the immense contribution these people make to the community.

There were over 60 nominations across a broad range of categories, Social and Community Support, Arts, Culture, Heritage and Environment, Neighbourhood and Resident Groups, Sports, Recreation, Children and Youth. A new category was added this year the Young Persons Award.

It was great to see both young and old being recognised and celebrated on the night. Kevin Kelly, Director of Services of the Town Council, supports strongly the great idea of the Mayor's Awards and stated "I'm delighted with the turn out

we have here tonight and to recognise the voluntary work that goes on in the town, in times of plenty often times it goes unnoticed but in these times it is vital." Keith Finnegan of Galway Bay FM, MC for the night, noted "the amount of voluntary work that goes on in this town is unreal, just having a quick browse through the programme is evidence of this."

Mayor Kelly praised the young people of the town and said "it is my opinion that there are many committed and dedicated young people and youth groups in our town who are making a positive contribution. It is important that

we foster and recognise their community service, so that they grow and develop and continue to make a positive impact."

Organising an awards ceremony of this nature takes a lot of coordination and planning and special thanks was expressed to Director of Services Kevin Kelly, Town Clerk Mark O'Donnell for their enthusiasm and support. Anne Power and Maria Flaherty were also singled out for praise for their co ordination of this event. Pianist Richard Moore and 4 soloists, Sarah, Niamh, Maedbh and Rachel regaled the audience with their gifted musical talents. Music Matters of New Inn opened the ceremony with some



Ken Campbell (Running Against Cancer) receives his Mayor's Award award from Mayor Mike Kelly.



Frances Leahy (Ballinasloe Musical Society) receives her Mayor's Award award from Mayor Mike Kelly.

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beautiful classical music and provided entertainment after the ceremony.

A special Council Presentation Scroll was made to Eamon Fagan, his Management Team and Staff of Dubarry on this the celebration of 75 years of business in town. The contribution to Ballinasloe life, of the founding members of Dubarry, the Scott and Cullen families, are to this day, fondly remembered. Mayor Mike Kelly stated that under the guidance of Eamon Fagan and his Management Team the business has expanded and Dubarry is now an international brand, known world wide, producing high quality, foot and leisurewear specialising in sailing boots. The Dubarry brand continues to be synonymous with Ballinasloe of which we are all very proud. He congratulated them on their achievements, and wished them every success in the future on behalf of Ballinasloe Town Council.

THE WINNERS WERE AS FOLLOWS

- Young Persons Award**
Get Lippy Youth Democracy Group
- Sports, Recreation and Youth**
Ballinasloe Eagles Special Olympics
- Arts, Culture, Heritage & Environment**
Jackie Eastwood
- Social and Community Support**
Maureen Cahalan
- Special Recognition**
Annette McDevitt
- Neighbourhood & Residence Groups**
Maureen Casey

Clockwise from top left: Padraic Lyons (Canal House) receives his Mayor's Award award from Mayor Mike Kelly. Barry O'Connor (Snooker Club) receives his Mayor's Award award. Cathal Coleman, Noel Dillon, Mayor Mike Kelly, John Mitchell and Liam Manton (All Ballinasloe GAA), receive their Mayor's Award award. Eamon Fagan (Dubarry) receives his Mayor's Award award.



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Gardening Club Still Blooming

Writes Jackie Eastwood

This Club, which has been in existence for around 18 years, provides regular flower arranging demonstrations and gardening talks in Gullane's Hotel on the second Wednesday of each month.

Ballinasloe Flower and Garden Club recently enjoyed a flower arranging demonstration by the internationally renowned flower arranger Richard Haslam. Richard from Birr, who regularly travels all over the world, talked about his lifetime experience with flower arranging and produced both traditional and contemporary arrangements to inspire his audience.

The club will be looking forward to starting up again after their summer recess on Wednesday, 12th September at 8pm with a demonstration by AOIFAs Diane Gallagher from Rathfarnham.

Each month there is an arranger's competition for members and a grower's competition for the gardeners of the Club. Beginners, intermediate and advanced arrangers are encouraged to participate and this year the Club organised flower arranging classes for beginners which were very successful and great fun for participants.

Every year the Club arranges an outing which has, over the years, taken members all over the country to visit rare plant fairs, gardens and garden centres. Last year a large group visited Helen Dillon's garden in Dublin where



they enjoyed excellent hospitality and a personal tour of the garden by Helen and her husband Val. The coach party then went on to Powerscourt to visit the panoramic gardens and tearooms.

This year the outing will take place in June and will include a visit to Tom Sheedy's garden in Turtulla, Thurles. Tom, an enthusiastic gardener and his wife Kathleen, an AOIFA flower arranger, have both given talks and demonstrations in Ballinasloe over the last few months and kindly invited members to visit their garden in Thurles. Members will receive plenty of gardening tips during their visit which will be followed by a tour of Dundrum Plantarium, which will no doubt provide an ideal opportunity to

purchase plants and accessories for the avid gardeners on the day trip.

In previous years there has been very little room for passengers on the return journey with the bus being heavily laden with plants, trees, containers and one year even a plastic heron!

Annual membership of the Flower and Garden Club is a very reasonable €25. This covers all Club nights except for the Charity Gala Night which is held in November and in 2012 will be on Wednesday 14th November in Gullane's Hotel. Over the years the Charity Gala Night has raised thousands for local charities and this year's event will be in aid of the Ballinasloe Social Services. It promises to be a good night and the flower arranging demonstration will be by Teresa Collins from Tipperary. The ticket fee of €10 includes a glass of wine and a good evening's entertainment.

Every Club Night there is a raffle of the flower arrangements, or plants at a garden talk and during the spring and autumn there will be a sales table where members are encouraged to bring along and buy plants at very reasonable prices.

New members to the club are always very welcome and if you do not wish to become a member the demonstrations and talks are open to non-members at a cost of just €5.

For further information about the Flower and Garden Club please contact Jackie Eastwood on 087 2341535

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Autumn Activities at The Showgrounds

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Ballinasloe Showgrounds, the oldest Showgrounds in Europe, reaches the age of 173 this year. Throughout the country, it remains one of only three located in a town. Run by a dedicated committee, they are delighted to be hosting Connacht Showjumping Championships as part of the October Show this coming autumn.

The four day event marks the highpoint of the Ballinasloe show jumping season

and is sure to attract show jumpers and spectators from all over the country. The Showgrounds also has all the more reason to celebrate this coming autumn, as it reaches a most historical milestone. The Showgrounds have now been drawing crowds for 173 years, a massive feat for the town! With a colourful, exciting and vibrant history, it's hoped that memories of show jumping times gone by can be celebrated alongside the launch of the revitalised October competition. The Showgrounds



Committee would be delighted if anyone with old pictures of the showgrounds or memorabilia from the past 173 years could make them available for a launch night in the Showgrounds Bar. This will be sure to encourage many stories about enjoyable times spent there. They believe it is important to mark this terrific achievement in town's history and pay tribute to those who have competed in the show grounds and those that have worked to ensure that the show grounds are still here for the future generations to enjoy.

The revival of the October Show really is a marriage of old and new, with the launch of a Family Day incorporating the Harvest Food Village. Taking place on Saturday 6th October, the final day of the festival will see the grounds opening up an appetite while browsing the stalls and sampling the best in local and organic produce and baked goods. For those wishing to compete there will be various culinary competitions taking place on the day, as well as an introduction to beekeeping and advice from a farrier on this highly-skilled area.

Taking place from 4th October to 6th October, the revived October Show will include many new and exciting events to coincide with all the show jumping action, the highlight of which looks set to be the Final of the Connaught Grand Prix Autumn Series.

If you are interested in being a part of this exciting event in Ballinasloe's History are encouraged to contact the Showgrounds Office on Tel: 090 9642266. Those who wish to participate in the Harvest Food Village can contact them by emailing info@beechlawnfarm.org.

Ballinasloe Town Council

Comhairle Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe



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Young People Can Make A Difference!

Congratulations to the Transition Year Young Social Innovator pupils from Ardscoil Mhuire who performed their Speak Out at the YSI annual showcase in Dublin. It was a great day out in Dublin with the president Michael D. Higgins and Mundy making guest appearances. The transition year group's social innovation project, *Ability for Equality*, saw them setting up a mixed ability fun club within the school. Their *Mix it Up* club included pupils from Transition Year, 1st year and the Ardscoil Mhuire and Garbally special needs classes. The club was a huge success with all involved mixing together in a range of ability levels in activities such as sport, music, treasure hunts and picnics. Well done girls!



Scoil Mhuire National finalists in German Debates

For the second year running, Ardscoil Mhuire's German debate team reached the national final of the Goethe Institut German Debating Competition. Guided throughout the competition by mentor Mrs. Stephanie Burke, the team defeated Abbey Secondary School, Tipperary in the first round arguing the philosophical chestnut "Geld macht nicht glücklich (Money doesn't buy happiness)." The second motion interrupted early celebrations and the team were faced with deconstructing the idea that "Popstars are now more influential than politicians." The Ardscoil Mhuire team emerged victorious. The national

semi-final saw the girls battle valiantly against the prestigious Muckross Park College, Dublin debating the motion "School uniforms are outdated." Once again they came out on top and earned a final spot. The challenging motion "The hardworking have the world at their feet" was extensively prepared for the final in the Goethe Institut. With both the German and Swiss ambassadors in attendance along with the C.E.O. of Siemens, Mr Paul Lynam, the team faced tough competition from St. Leo's College, Carlow in a closely contested debate. Unfortunately the girls were narrowly defeated.

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All Systems Go For Connacht Fleadh in Ballinasloe This July

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The first week in July sees all traditional and folk roads of the west leading to the town as Ballinasloe Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann are hosting the 2012 Connacht Fleadh. The town will be a hive of traditional Irish music and dance for a summers weekend 6th, 7th and 8th of July.

The event was secured with tough opposition coming from towns like Sligo and Carrick-on-Shannon, but Ballinasloe came out on top and now will enjoy the spoils of a fest of traditional musicians and dancers looking to book their place in Cavan for the All-Ireland Fleadh. The committee have organised a number of successful fundraising events including a bag Pack in Tesco, Church gate collections in Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Clontuskert, Fohenagh, Kilconnell, Killimor and Kiltormer. A very successful Race Night was also held. With the introduction of a fundraising event called *Celebrity Sean Nós X Factor* competition in Gullane's Hotel in early June, the coffers should be full for an exciting programme.

The celebrities included Timmy Broderick MCC, Tomás Mannion MCC, Noel 'The Fly' Mannion, Caroline Gullane, Hotelier; Publicans Damien Clarke and Marina Downey, Ollie Turner of Galway Bay FM, Senator Lorraine Higgins and Paul Connaughton TD. The competitors took crash courses in Sean-nós dancing for the past few weeks, receiving instruction from Martina Flanagan and other trainers around the County.

The Chamber of Commerce have sponsored a Traditional windows display over the Fleadh weekend and the committee are very grateful to all the retailers for helping promote a festive atmosphere. PRO Michael Cusack stated "Ballinasloe Town Council and our nine Town Councillors have been a huge help to us, and we gratefully acknowledge all they have done. We also are grateful to our main sponsors, Ballinasloe Town Council, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann, Galway County Council and Supermacs who are sponsoring the Music of the Fleadh.

We also acknowledge our advertisers and Race Sponsors without whom there would be no Fleadh." Michael went on to say, "We will have between 150 and 200 music and dancing competitions with over 1500 competitors competing for a place in the All-Ireland Fleadh in Cavan in August. There will be 37 Céilí Bands and Grúpaí Cheoil competing, over the two days as well as Marching Bands on Sunday afternoon."

The week will see build up events like a night of video nostalgia showing videos of Ballinasloe CCE Branch from the 80's and 90's, A Multi-Cultural evening, Ceilí Workshops, Sean Nós Dancing Workshops and Ceilí Workshop, The Singing Circles, Pub Sessions throughout Town and all the Competitions in all the official venues from 10am as well as a a Gig Rig in the Square, featuring live Ceili and group concerts. The Committee consists of Chairman: Michael Cusack, Secretary Phil Whyte, Treasurer Kevin Whyte, Margaret Clarke, Maureen Browne, Martina Flanagan, Bridie Ruane, Annette Hurley, Terry Noone and Kevin McMorrow, plus County and Connacht Board Officials.

To get more information or to get involved in the Connacht Fleadh contact Michael Cusack on 087 4117749.



Pictured at the launch of the Ballinasloe Fleadh Ceoil in the Carlton Shearwater are Back Row (L-R): Michael Cusack, Martina Flanagan, Tom Quinn, Peadar Brick, Bridie Ruane, Kevin McMorrow, Kevin Whyte. Front Row (L-R): Maureen Browne, Vera Barrett, Michael Dolan, Sean Scully, Phil Whyte and Mary Dolan.

Fleadh Cheoil Chonnacht

béal átha na slua / July 2nd - 8th 2012

programme of events

Monday 2nd • Night of video entertainment showing videos of Ballinasloe CCE Branch from the 80's and 90's.
(Venue: Emerald Bar)

Tuesday 3rd • Multi-Cultural evening (Venue: Dunlo Bar)

Wednesday 4th • Ceilí Workshop (Venue: Supper Room, Emerald Ballroom) • Sessiún in An Táin from 9.30pm

Thursday 5th • Sean Nós Dancing Workshops
• Ceilí Workshop Continues in Supper Room
• Singing Circle (Venue: Dunlo Tavern from 9.30pm)



Friday 6th • Opening Concert in Gullane's Hotel 8pm
• A Sessiún in the Emerald Bar
• Sean Nós Dancing Workshops

Saturday 7th • Competitions start at 10am
• Gig Rig in St. Michael's Square
• Fleadh Mass 7pm in St. Michaels
• Pub Sessions throughout Town

Sunday 8th • Competitions in all Venues from 10am
• Gig Rig in Square
• Pub Sessions throughout Town

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Coyote Factor Winner Corcoran Scoops €10000 Prize

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The Corcoran family in Newtown have been renowned for their musical abilities and especially that in the traditional music scene but Sarah tried something a little bit different. The 21 year old was the winner of this Year's *Coyote Factor* Final.

Galway city was the place to be for this final and let's just say Sarah wasn't exactly lacking in support as a supporters bus travelled west to cheer Sarah in the final. Judges Paddy Cullivan from the Late Late Show's house band, promoter Andy Hirst, Carina Carrick from *Oddity*, *Ros na Rún*'s Marcus Seoighe and newly crowned Galway Rose, Anna de Paor all had the difficult task of deciding on one winner from 16 finalists, and let it be preached there was no easy pickings from the 16 finalists. The standard was extremely high and gave a really strong showing of the talent in and around Galway City.

Nicola Coen from Dunmore was announced as the winner of the audience vote, before Sarah Corcoran took the title of winner of *Coyote Factor Four*, winning herself €10,000. Sarah performed Aretha Franklin's *Chain of Fools* and *I Dreamed a Dream* from the hit musical *Les Miserables*. 'Sarah has been consistently outstanding in every stage of this year's competition, so it



Sarah Corcoran pictured with her parents and her *Coyote Factor* winning €10,000 cheque.


was no shock to hear that all of the judges chose her as their winner' said Nicola Kerrigan, one of the competition's organisers.

A three time All-Ireland winner at Sean Nos singing, Sarah is a regular singer at the monthly Ballinasloe Singer's Circle. She is also a member of Ballinasloe Musical Society and played Mrs Potts in this year's production of 'Beauty and the Beast'. She also starred as Princess Rose in this year's 'Ballinasloe Panto's' version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Sarah wanted to thank everyone that supported her on her way to the final but she wanted

to especially thank Marie Power. "Marie is a woman I really have to thank for all her help and guidance down through the years, she has always been not only a great vocal teacher, who has given me so many fantastic opportunities, but a great friend! Also my parents, they have always given me every opportunity to sing, and have brought me around the country for years now to different competitions, lessons etc, and I would like to thank them for all their help throughout the years."

Sarah is starring in a five person musical in Athenry on the 21st and 22nd of June with the *Mad Theatre Company* in their production of *Listen to my Heart, The Songs of David Friedman*.

Sarah commented "I'm really looking forward to this exciting opportunity, to be honest I'm still trying get over my win with the *Coyote Factor*, it's great to be able to perform and enjoy something you really love doing."

The most important question we asked Sarah was, What are you going do with your winnings? "I have no immediate plans for the prize money, although a holiday is definitely in order, I'm considering going to Canada to see a friend for three weeks next year, and would love to put some of it back into my singing career." 

Garbally View Nursing Home

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Relay for Life is Back Again!

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Relay for Life was a very successful fundraising event last year. The towns true community spirit came out in force as everyone came together and raised over €86,500 for the Irish Cancer Society. *Relay for Life* is a Community activity to raise money to fight cancer and to raise awareness of cancer in the locality.

The event honours cancer survivors, and remembers those who have lost their lives to cancer. Teams made up of people from all walks of life in the community come together and commit to keeping a participant walking around the relay course for 24 hours. Hundreds of other activities take place throughout the 24 hours to create a wonderfully festive atmosphere.

In 1985, *Relay for Life* began with one man who walked and ran around a track for 24 hours. *Relay For Life* is a fun overnight community celebration where individuals and teams comes together to take turns walking around a track relay-style to raise funds, while celebrating the lives of those who have had cancer, remembering those lost, and fighting back against a disease that takes too much.

After dark, participants light hundreds of Candles of Hope around the track in a moving ceremony to honour cancer survivors as well as friends and family members lost to the disease. *Relay for*



Life represents hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that one day cancer will be eliminated.

The *Relay for Life* team are inviting everyone in the community and its hinterland to come and join this year's event. Annette McDevitt, event manager for *Relay for Life* said "Please join us to kickoff a celebration of life, *Relay for Life The Fight against Cancer 2012*, we hope for a bigger and better event than last year."

The *Relay for Life* Committee on behalf of The Irish Cancer Society invite individuals who want to honour cancer survivors and caregivers, or pay tribute to those who have lost their battle with

cancer to join the second *Relay for Life* which will be held on the 11th & 12th August 2012 at the old Tesco building, Sarsfield Road, Ballinasloe.

Funds raised for *Relay for Life* 2011 have supported Daffodil Centre UHG, Care to Drive, Portiuncula Hospital, National Cancer Helpline, Cancer Research, Home Nursing Services, Financial Aid, Cancer Awareness & Health Promotion Materials and many more.

To join *Relay for Life* in your community call in or call us on any of the following: Team Chair: Nuala Mitchell 086 0508414, Event Manager: Annette McDevitt 085 1677819, Survivors Chair: Brian Derrane 087 7746203, Candle of Hope Chair: Siobhan Woods 087 6347290 or follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/RelayForLifeBallinasloe](https://www.facebook.com/RelayForLifeBallinasloe)

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Ballinasloe Town AFC Dominate



Right: Ballinasloe AFC First team, Premier Division Cup Winners. Above: U13 ADSL Double Winning Captain Oisín Kelly. Below: First team celebrate Cup victory and U13 Squad ADSL Double Winners.

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Ballinasloe Town AFC have been flexing their muscles for a number of years at all levels and in all competitions they compete in. This trend does not look like it's going to change for some years to come as underage teams are doing just as well as the senior boys in the club.

At all levels they have just completed a hugely successful season on the field of play. At youth level "the Town" have won the ADSL cup competitions at U12, U13 and U15 and league competitions U14 and U15. The clubs U17 team also reached their cup final. At adult level the clubs B Team, managed by Patrick Loughnane and Robert Ronaldson, emerged victorious in their Cup semi-final where they went down by the odd goal to eventual winners Westport United. Club Chairperson Johnny Walsh stated that "This tremendous success was down to the absolute dedication of managers, coaches, players, grounds men and the extremely hard working club committee."

The club also recently hosted the Hailwood Juniors club from Liverpool and competed for the Bob Paisley Cup and the Irish Cup. This is an annual tournament Divisional Cup in the Roscommon and District League. Meanwhile the clubs A Team under team manager Enda Concannon and Coach Noel Lyons have won the double of Roscommon Premier League and Premier Cup. The seniors were also very unlucky in the Connacht Cup tournament.

"The seniors are lucky to have the pick of top class players in the town, it's fantastic but that's down to the hard work that went into these players at youth level." Chairperson Walsh added. A key player to Ballinasloe's success over the last few years, has to be Liam Lynch. The 24-year-old is an out and out striker, strong in the air and on the ball, the St. Brendan's man certainly has an eye for goal. Strength mixed with pace and skill, Liam's abilities have been noticed by other clubs and has spent time at League of Ireland club Longford Town, he has represented Ireland on the colleges' team when he was a student at AIT and has been clinical in the success and efforts in recent years of the Club's senior team.

On the club development front, the club have secured planning permission some time ago for the construction of two additional youth dressing rooms, showers/toilets, referees room, and seated spectator area and have now applied to the Sports Capital Programme 2012 for funding for this purpose.

The Soccer Camp summer programme for boys and girls will once again take place in the weeks of late July. For further information on these or just to book one of the astro turf pitches please contact Chairman johnnywalsh@eircom.net or Find us on Facebook.



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Ardcoil Mhuire TY Spikeball Coaches VAI Award

Congratulations to the Transition Year Spikeball Coaches in Ardcoil Mhuire for completing their Volleyball Association of Ireland (VAI) Spikeball Leader's Coaching Award. 15 Transition Year students attended a Spikeball leaders course and then went on to coach Spikeball in local national schools, finishing off with a very successful blitz for 120 4th, 5th and 6th class pupils. At the end of January the girls attended a coaching session by the Volleyball Association. They learned rules and developed their skill levels as well as learning about how to

teach primary school pupils Spikeball and how to organise coaching sessions. The TY coaches then went out to local National Schools to deliver their 6 weeks of coaching sessions where they taught a new skill every week. When all of the coaching had been delivered the TYs planned and led a hugely successful Spike Blitz in Ardcoil Mhuire for all the national school children involved. 120 pupils attended the blitz on the day. Big congratulations to the Gaelscoil who came first on the day of the blitz.

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Ballinasloe Players Help Connacht Juniors to Victory

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The Connacht Rugby Juniors secured a second successive inter-provincial championship in Castleisland with a win over the mighty Munster. Both sides were unbeaten heading into the contest but Munster were undoubted favourites.

As the saying goes, tries win games and this was to be the case in this contest, with the westerners securing the only try of the game in the second half with Greg Faherty's vital break coming to the joy and delight of the small Connacht support that had gathered in the Kerry town. The sides had been locked together at 6-6 each at half time before Ben Martin kicked Munster ahead but Faherty's intercept try and former Garbally boy Rob O'Beirn's conversion midway through the half proved vital.

The two Ballinasloe players were consistent and acted as real power houses throughout the campaign and especially in the penultimate game. One was the flamboyant attacker and accurate placekicker Robert O'Beirne, the Mountpleasant man is up there with the best when kicking for goal and the agile full-back is not lacking in the pace department, his skill mixed with quick

thought was key to the success of the Connacht campaign. The NUIG student kicked two penalties and one conversion in the game. John Hayes, the other flanker, is not to be messed with to say the least. He is a conditioned unit that was at the heart of the Connacht defence but also has the capability of turning defence into attack very quickly; this was evident when the former Roscrea boarder went over scoring a vital try in round one. Both were key throughout the overall campaign. Both have underage experience in green and have been loyal servants of their club Ballinasloe RFC in Division 1b this year.

Connacht Manager Sean Brennan was proud of his squad, stating "We have a small pick compared to the other provinces in terms of clubs but maybe small is beautiful in one sense, for the

likes of Leinster, with so many clubs it can be difficult to get the selection right. We picked from eight clubs and got a good spread of players, every one of the 22 played their part and we had full confidence in all of them. The work ethic of and the team spirit was brilliant especially considering the short space of time we had to work with."



Rob O'Beirne kicks for goal.



The Victorious 15.



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Kelly Stars For Galway in Roscommon Game

Keith Kelly of Ballinasloe GAA made his championship debut against Roscommon in Dr. Hyde Park in the first round of the Connacht championship. The Derrymullen man started at corner-back and had an excellent first day at the office as his side came out on top with 14 points to spare. Galway 3-15 Roscommon 0-10.

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Ballinasloe GAA Prepare For A Busy Summer Schedule

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Ballinasloe GAA's Adult football team were invited by Dr. Crokes (Killarney) to the home of football (some may argue), the beautiful County Kerry. The Town played Dr. Crokes at their home pitch in a challenge watched by former Kerry football legend and All-Ireland winner Dara Ó Sé and former St. Grellan's great Michael Brennan, who is now based in Tralee.

Ballinasloe won the game 0-14 to 1-7, after the game Dara Ó Sé chatted to the lads, welcomed them to the Kingdom and gave them an insight of what it takes to be a true great. The team enjoyed his knowledge, stories of past football games and the key elements he believes are needed to be an all round great footballer. The team went on for a bonding session in Predator Paintball in Tralee where the lads got to take out a bit of anger on each other which wouldn't be allowed under the regulations of the GAA code. The junior team were presented with a new set of jerseys for this year's championship,

sponsored by the Carlton Shearwater Hotel. Ballinasloe play Milltown in the first round of the Junior Championship. The junior team have several challenge games played against some top teams.

Ballinasloe GAA's Keith Kelly recently made his first Championship start, against Roscommon, at corner back on the Galway Senior team, putting in a solid display. Paul Whelehan was selected on the Galway Junior football panel. James Shaughnessy, Darragh McCormack and Padraig Cunningham were members of the Galway Under 21 team. The future looks bright and the junior team will be looking for a good run this year's championship.

Pride of place must go to Ballinasloe Under 14 Hurlers who after winning County Under 13 Final last year, are playing very well in the Under 14 Championship to date, winning against Ballinderreen, losing to Tommy Larkins and getting a draw against St. Thomas's, after an epic game. They now play Killimordaly in the last group game. Minor hurlers have 3 games played in the

'B' championship, winning all 3 games and now take a break for exams. This is an exciting, strong and skilful team. It is hoped after the exam break that they will resume their previous form in the championship.

Not to be undone, the ladies footballers have had success already this season with the U16 Girls beating Glenamaddy in the County league final. Junior and Minor are progressing into final stages of championship and it is hoped results will go their way this summer.

The GAA Cúl camps are back again and will be held in the club grounds for two weeks, 9th to 13th July (Hurling) and 16th to 20th July (Football). The hurling coach will be the renowned Christy Kenny and the contact number to book a place is 087 7994352. Cost per child is €55, discounted 2nd child at €45, 3rd and 4th child at €40.

Ballinasloe GAA now have a new look Facebook page www.facebook.com/ballinasloegaa, which will carry full up to date details of the football Cúl Camp, so go on and 'Like' the page also have a new website www.ballinasloe.gaa.ie

3 in-a-row for Walsh in Billiards Final

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The traditional game of billiards showed that it was alive and well in this part of the country with an excellent display of the game, with the Willie Divilly Cup final at stake contested by Alfie Walsh and Thomas Glynn.

The two had battled hard to get to the final and neither were going to give up easy, an interesting twist to this final was that the 6 times previous champion Walsh was heavily handicapped with a -120 start while the new comer Glynn appearing in his first final had a +30 lead on the old guard.

Walsh didn't seemed to be phased by the huge gap in handicaps that he'd have to claim back and from the very start it was evident the St. Brendan's native had been around a billiards table more than a few times before and started to eat away at Glynn's hefty lead. The experience of the talented veteran shone through in

this final, as his dominance and clinical finishing when getting on the table was consistent. But he didn't have it all his way as the young Taughmaconell man battled hard to hold on to his lead with some stunning shots, but in the end the experience of Walsh came to the fore and he clinched the final with a fist pump to the air. Alfie joyfully stated "This is a three in a row and I have to say I'm delighted with it, now I'm going push on and go for the four in a row."

Barry O'Connor, Chairperson of the club, congratulated the finalists on a quality game of billiards and welcomed the Divilly family for attending the final and thanked the continued sponsorship of Carryout Off Licence.

Domnic Divilly spoke on behalf of the Divilly family and said "there were some great games throughout this tournament, some were so close, even in the final, and this shows the standard of billiards in the town is quite high." He added "Alfie is at the top of his game and to be still winning at his high handicap is some



Dominic Divilly presents Alfie Walsh with the Willie Divilly trophy

achievement." He went on to praise the club committee and the efforts of the caretaker Damien Carey, "the club is in good hands and is well looked after, a credit to all involved."

Opening times for the club are Monday - Friday and 6 - 10pm, Saturday and Sunday 6 - 8pm or contact 086-8427576 to get involved in Billiards.

Golf Club Host Second Pro-Am

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

In 2011, the first ever Pro-Am was held in Ballinasloe Golf Club, sponsored by Corrib Oil. It was the brainchild of PGA Pro Mark Staunton and Club Treasurer Barry Flanagan. The event turned out to be a great success. Club Pros from all over Ireland took part and apart from the weather, a great day was had by all.

On 19th May 2012, the Golf Club's second Pro-Am took place, again sponsored by Corrib Oil. A lot of work goes into organising this event. With Mark and Barry leading the way, many who offered their help were seen in ditches, bunkers, rough and flower beds in the weeks leading up!! 16 teams took part, and with great support from the committee and club members and a huge improvement in the weather from the previous year, the day was a great success. Local Pro Mark Staunton, newly attached to Ballinasloe Golf Club, brought home the winning team of Cyril Dunne, Clive Carrick and Joseph Dunne.

The Ballinasloe Golf Club, is open for membership and welcomes beginners to join us Monday evenings from 6pm. Juveniles also welcome and summer camps will run this July. More details will be available from our website www.ballinasloegolfclub.ie



*Above: J. Howley, Barry Flanagan, R. Carroll and M. Staunton
Below: Cyril Dunne, Clive Carrick, Joseph Dunne and Pro Mark Staunton.*



Special Olympics Swimming Team Snap up The Medals

Writes Maria Cahill

Special Olympics Ireland provide year round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic type sports, for children and adults with an intellectual disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

The Ballinasloe Eagles Special Olympics offer different activities to the local community including Golf on a Monday morning, horse riding at Carey's on a Monday from 6-7pm and swimming on a Saturday 4-5pm. The Ballinasloe Eagles



offers their athletes the opportunity to develop their sporting talents and through the consistent dedication of their volunteers and coaches our athletes have experienced great success. There were 49 contestants from all over Connacht, our local athletes in the Eagles team achieved Gold, silver and Bronze medals and a great day was had by all.

The Ballinasloe Eagles Special Olympics swimming team did their families and their town proud recently as they won

a total of 12 medals at the Connacht competition in Galway City. The team of six swimmers: Amy Clark, Katie Dillon, Bláithnaid Hurley, Claire Madden, Derek Kelly and Conor Flaherty rose to the occasion in the various events including a thrilling 25 metre front crawl relay to swim some of their best times. Coaches Jody O'Neill and Aiden Shortall and Ballinasloe Eagles Special Olympics Treasurer Theresa Kelly cheered them on as this inspirational bunch of young people swam their hearts out to a packed Leisureland arena.

Training continues every Saturday at 4pm at the Kingfisher Club Ballinasloe and all new members welcome. To get in contact with the Eagles Special Olympics Club email mmcahill82@yahoo.com

A Hectic Finish to the Year For Gaelscoil Úi Chéarnaigh



Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh is finishing up a very hectic year. This Irish school has come a long way from its humble beginnings on Society Street, founded in 1990 and nurtured by the watchful eye and caring prescience of then Principal Carmel Farrell.

I personally enjoyed some of the best years of my life in the converted commercial premises to class rooms and Town Hall theatre as our playground (literally). They were different times but we still received every opportunity, educationally, through the arts and sport *agus anois tá cupla focal agam ó shin.*

Nowadays the school has moved on to a state of the art facility located in Garbally Drive with 10 classrooms, a Learning Support Room, Resource Room, library, computer room, a large hall, offices and a staff room. The school has over 160 students and teach all subjects through Irish. There is an onsite pre-school "Tir na nÓg" and Principal Ruairí Ó hÁnluainn told us "Every child deserves the best opportunity to life possible, we aim to give those opportunities here, the motto we go by is "Molanoige agus Tiocsaídh" which simply means "praise the youth and they will achieve."

This term the school had some new arrivals with chicks hatching, Book fairs, vegetable gardening, a visit from the Music Matters Junior Youth orchestra, Connacht Fleadh Finalists and an Irish team selection all lead to an eventful final term in Gaelscoil Úi Chéarnaigh. As the news spread through the school about the new arrivals breaking their way through their eggshells. The chirping was celebrated along with the news that 6th class student Aoife de Graoin had been selected for the Tetrathlon team chosen to represent Ireland

at the European championships in Scotland in the coming months. "There is so much happening - blink and you would miss something" says Principal Ruairí Ó hÁnluainn. "All this happening after so many of our students got through to the final of the Connacht Fleadh for their Comhra Gaeilge, to have someone make an Irish team is just amazing."

The final clutch of chicks broke out recently into the vegetable garden of the Gaelscoil under a CCTV camera displaying all that's happening direct to the I.T room. "It's a fascinating way to do science." says fifth class student Cillian Ryan. "Each day we monitor the nest, check temperature and feed the hens doing all the work." An exciting project coming to a close with a raffle to name the new arrivals, the new chicks were named at assembly as Lilly, Fluffy, Rose, Lisa, Tika, Shamrock and Won-Ton.

Another project coming to a close was the hugely popular Book fair 2012 which saw all proceeds go to the children's ward of Portiuncula Hospital. Opened by Dr. Pádraig Ó Curraoin, the book fair saw the school raise over €700 for a wonderful cause. Pupils and parents of the Gaelscoil bought books throughout the week and even had a day where all students (and some teachers) arrived in dressed as a character from their favourite book. Poster competitions, creative writing competitions and even outside visitors coming to read some stories to the junior classes were the flavour of the week and all this as one by one the chicks chirped their way into the vegetable garden. "It's been such a busy term so far and now we all have our tour dates to look forward to. June will be a welcome sight for teachers, students and parents alike" says Principal Ruairí.

To get in contact with Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh contact 090 9644347 or visit www.bealathanaslua.com



Aonach na Leabhar participants



Aoife de Graoin, Team Ireland Tetrathlon with Principal Ruairí Ó hÁnluainn

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Scoil an Chroí Naofa – Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day

Writes Barra Ó Crofaigh

The motto of Scoil an Chroí Naofa is “Every child, Every Chance, Every Day.” This is the motto the school lives by. It more than adequately captures the essence and spirit of the school which caters for over 270 children in the centre of the town.

In these days of cutbacks and tightening of purse strings, it is heartening to see a school with such a low pupil-teacher so as to allow for 20 pupils in each room. In addition, every single national literacy and numeracy training initiative has been undertaken by various members of staff: Reading recovery, Maths Recovery, Ready-Set-Go Maths, First Steps Reading and Writing. Luckily for the school, a number of members of staff have also been involved in delivering this training to teachers in schools across the country.

Since the amalgamation of St. Joseph’s and St. Grellan’s NS in 1996, the school has also grown in terms of extra curricular interests. A motivated and dedicated staff are at the heart of this school and it is due to that dedication that the daily life of all students is one which manages to encompass, not only the highly important literacy and numeracy curriculum, but also include Camogie, hurling, football, spikeball, choir, drama, K’nex young engineering, incredible edibles, yoga and hip-hop to name but a few.

Drama and the arts play an important role in life at Scoil an Chroí Naofa. Performances are enjoyed from various classes at Christmas and at summer. Every child in Scoil an Chroí Naofa has an opportunity to perform on stage or be part of the back stage crew; thus boosting self confidence and attaining a huge amount of joy from the experience. The annual Junior Infant Nativity is now a well-known local favourite as are our

especially written senior plays which at times make a well informed humorous inference to the current affairs of the day. More recently, there have been a number of winners in the Community Games Art modeling competition. This is becoming an annual tradition in the school as there have also been a number of winners in previous years.

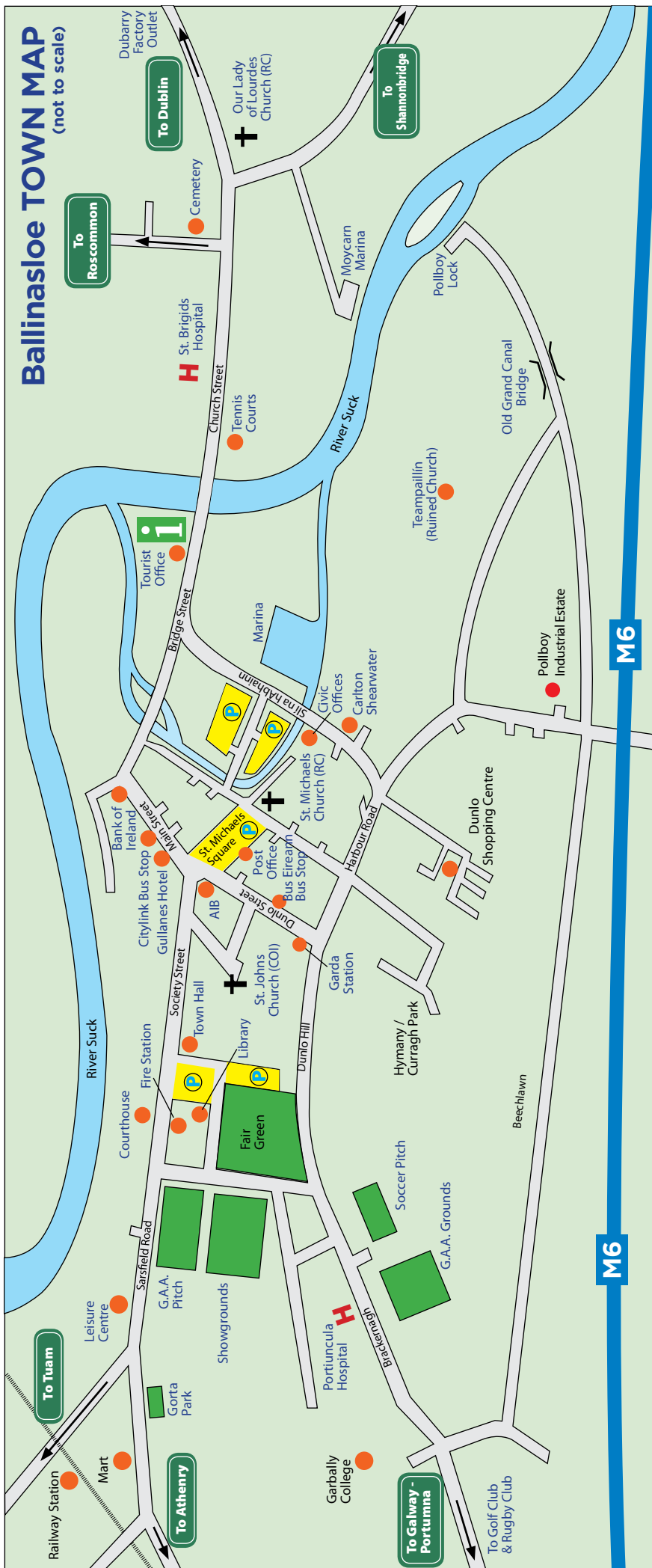
The musical ethos of the school has been enhanced this year by inclusion in the Peace Proms Concert. This was a wonderful achievement as the school was involved with the All-Ireland Cross Border Orchestra who went on to perform in Carnegie Hall. The concert in NUIG was a resounding success and an event that the school was very proud of.

Life in Scoil an Chroí Naofa is busy but the calm atmosphere which greets you at the door welcomes you into the warm environment. As a young Junior Infant recently remarked “This is just like being at home, only bigger!”



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 windows. 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 Barracks. The Barracks are 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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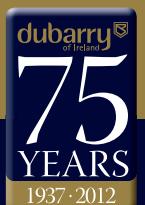
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