

# *Annagh* 2011



*Ballyhaunis  
Railway  
Station  
1861 to 2011*



# Christmas Greetings

FR. STEPHEN FARRAGHER, P.P.

On May 28th last, following ten years ministering in the cathedral parish of Tuam, Archbishop Neary informed me that I would be included in this year's diocesan changes and that he was appointing me as Parish Priest of Ballyhaunis, to succeed Canon Joe Cooney who was retiring after eighteen years of sterling service here in Ballyhaunis. He also informed me that because of the shortage of priests, the diocese could no longer afford two priests here in the parish and that I would be the only priest serving in the parish. On Friday, July 16th, having said my goodbyes to the people of Tuam, Cortoon and Lavally, I arrived here in Ballyhaunis to take up duty as parish priest. I would like to take this opportunity first and foremost to thank Canon Joe Cooney, Fr. Benny McHale and the Parish Pastoral Council for making my transition from Tuam to Ballyhaunis so smooth and relatively painless. Secondly, I wish to thank you the people of the parish for the welcome I have received



which helped me settle in well, and for being so patient as I try to learn the names of people and places in the parish. Thankfully it wasn't totally foreign territory for me as I had ministered in the neighbouring parish of Knock for two years and have a number of close friends who were boarders in St. Jarlath's College when I was a boarder there myself and later when I served as Dean there for six years after ordination.

I think I was only a day or two here when John Halpin arrived at my door with a copy of last year's Annagh under his arm as a gift. Since then Fr. Kieran Waldron has given me further back issues along with other material that has enabled me to get some sense of the rich history of the parish and locality. I have been very impressed with the quality of the articles and indeed the quality of the production. I'm also conscious of how much a treasure this is for our emigrants, the Ballyhaunis diaspora, all over the world and the way in which it helps them to keep in touch with their roots and gives them a vignette of all that has happened here during the past year.

Finally, I wish you and your families a joyful and meaningful Christmas and every blessing for 2012.

*Stephen Farragher*

## Editorial

### CHANGES.

One of the things that is constant about life is that it is always changing for us. At the end of another year, as we look back, some of us experienced the birth of a new life in our families; some of us had dramatic changes in our work or lifestyles; sadly, some of us lost a family member or friend who passed away. All changes.

At Parish level too there were many changes. Canon Joe Cooney P.P., having celebrated his Golden Jubilee here, retired as Parish Priest. He was our Parish Priest since 1993. His contribution to the Parish has been immense as he energised the parish community in so many ways. His outstanding legacy is no doubt the Millennium Spire which completed St. Patrick's Parish Church in 2000. He is wished a very happy retirement.

Fr. Benny McHale C.C. moved to Athenry having spent three fruitful years here in the Parish and facilitating many retreats, pilgrimages and vigils throughout the Diocese. Both men were greatly appreciated. These changes brought another change, as for the foreseeable future Ballyhaunis will only have one priest.

We welcome Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P. who joined us in July having been the Administrator in Tuam. Already, he has settled in and, in fact, we include a few of his station photographs in this issue. He is wished every success and happiness here.

Ballyhaunis Railway Station was opened on 9th September 1861, one hundred and fifty years ago. What

changes have taken place since then in Ballyhaunis and elsewhere! We include many contributions from people at home and abroad about the Railway Station and the lives around it.

Annagh magazine is thirty four years old and we are also changing. Our website [www.annaghmag.ie](http://www.annaghmag.ie) contains all the editions 1978 – 2009 which can be downloaded free. This year too we went on Facebook. We are considering producing a digital edition (disc format) in the future.

Yet, as well as all the changes around us we value the consistent support that we get from our Patrons. Also, only for the contributions of articles old and new and poems from our varied contributors we would not be able to continue. Amazingly, every year we receive hundreds of photographs old and new for inclusion which is a great pictorial record of the life of the Parish.

Finally, a sincere word of thanks to our Annagh readers at home and abroad – people from Ballyhaunis or people that are connected with Ballyhaunis. Your support has never changed. Wherever you read this we hope that 2012 will be a good year for you and yours.

Go mbeirimíd Beo ag am seo arís!

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# Review of the Year 2011

BY MIKE BYRNE

## NOVEMBER 2010:

Carol Freeley wins the Credit Union Talent Competition at Ballyhaunis Community School. With over 200 contestants taking part, Carol takes the top prize with a wonderful version of Michael Jackson's 'Ben'. Carol is daughter of Pat and Laurena Freeley, Hazelhill... Ballyhaunis & District Coarse Angling Club established in the local district... Community School pupils Dean Glavey and Suha Riyal submit the winning entries in the Ballyhaunis Soccer Club Crest art competition. The combined work submitted by Dean and Suha forms the new crest for the newly formed Ballyhaunis club... Great sadness on Main Street and throughout the Ballyhaunis community as pharmacist and businessman Hugh Curley dies suddenly, at the age of 69 years... Sr. Assumpta Flannery, who gave over fifty years of service to education in Ballyhaunis, celebrates her ninetieth birthday in Cuan Chaitriona nursing home in Castlebar... Scoil Íosa primary school gets government approval for the long awaited school extension plan... Sean and Nancy Jordan from Lecarrow celebrate their sixtieth wedding anniversary... Foxford native John Dempsey is appointed Manager at Ulster Bank, Ballyhaunis... Annagh Magazine goes on the world wide web.

## DECEMBER 2010:

Tommy Waldron from Cave is voted Ballyhaunis GAA Clubman of the Year... Mrs. Eileen Cribbin from Lecarrow celebrates her ninetieth birthday at the Ave Maria Nursing Home in Tooreen. Eileen's son, Fr. Jimmy, presides at the special celebration of Holy Mass at the Tooreen home to mark the happy event... Eileen Lynch from Holywell wins the Ballyhaunis Christmas shopping prize as 'VIP For a Day', comprising of a shopping spree around the town of Ballyhaunis... The Dee family from Began, Michael and his wife Anne and his sister, Georgina, take over the popular business Newsround on Main Street... For the second year in a row Ireland experiences a long, cold spell, with several weeks of sub-zero temperatures and a deep covering of snow.

## JANUARY:

The year begins with extensive changes at Ballyhaunis GAA Club as a whole group of new officers are elected. New committee for the coming year is comprised of:



**The Square, Ballyhaunis, Christmas Night 2010.**  
**Photo by Áine Cribbin.**

Chairman: Mike Webb; Secretary: Vinnie Caulfield; and Treasurer: Derek Walsh... One of the oldest native citizens of Ballyhaunis, Joe Waldron (92) from Knox Street, is laid to rest... Political unrest at Leinster House as Brian Cowan and his government are forced into announcing a General Election... Abbey Male Choir celebrate twenty years together with a function in Val's, Main St.

## FEBRUARY:

Ballyhaunis native son Pat Benson is honoured by BBC West Midlands for a lifetime of service to boxing in Birmingham. Pat, a member of a famous sporting family from Ballyhaunis, established the Small Heath Amateur Boxing Club in the city over fifty years ago... Ballyhaunis resident Leigh Maitland is appointed PRO of the Irish Angling Development Alliance... Dail member John O'Mahony is greeted by the party faithful at an election campaign launch at The Hazel, Main St... Sentinel Fuels Ltd and Major Equipment Ltd win Ulster Bank Business Achievers Awards... As the results of the General Election are counted (February 26th), Fianna Fail receive their lowest vote since the foundation of the state, while Fine Gael and Labour sweep to victory as the count is completed.

## MARCH:

Councillor John Cribbin announces that the green light has been given for the provision of a pedestrian crossing at Abbey Street. The work is to be completed before the end of the year. Celebrity chef Kevin Dundon makes a guest appearance at Ryan's Supervalu. A well known TV





personality, Kevin is proprietor of the award winning Dunbrody Country House Hotel in Wexford... A new working committee is established with a view to collecting and preserving the historical and spiritual culture of the Augustinian Abbey... Pat Feeney leads his team to win the Winter League which has been running at the Golf Club since November, 2010. The winning team is comprised of Tom Prenty, Barry Freeman, Tim Lavin, Siobhán Herr, Ivan Freeley, John Mooney, Gary Smyth and Tony Greenan... Castlebar native Enda Kenny is installed as Taoiseach on March 9th, following the February General Election. Kenny, just four weeks short of his sixtieth birthday, forms the new coalition government with Labour leader Eamonn Gilmore as Tanaiste.

#### APRIL:

Ballyhaunis community is saddened to learn of the passing of Martin Connery from Bohogue on Good Friday. Limerick native Martin was a founding member of the Annagh Wheelers Cycling Club, with Bernard Jennings and Mike Cleary... By coincidence, another Limerick native, who served for a time in Ballyhaunis, also died on Good Friday: Fr. Timmy Walsh, OSA, passed to his eternal reward in Ballyboden, Dublin. Fr. Timmy served at the Augustinian Abbey from the mid 1990's until 2001... First cousins George Delaney, Abbey Street and Coolnaha, and Austin Biesty of Pattenspark, celebrate the occasion of their eightieth birthday, within a couple of days of each other... Adrian Brennan from Gurteen is appointed PRO of the Ballyhaunis GAA Club.



**It was celebrations all the way earlier this year for George Delaney and Austin Biesty, first cousins and life-long friends, when they reached that great milestone of their 80th birthday, within a couple of days of each other. On Saturday evening, 30th April, close friends and many relatives who travelled across the Irish Sea, joined with Austin, his wife Joan, and their family for an evening of celebration at Pattenspark, marking the special occasion in great style. While, on Sunday, 1st May, it was George's turn to celebrate with his wife, Marie and their family and friends, as they marked the momentous day also in great style at the family home in Coolnaha.**

#### MAY:

Former publican Jim McKermitt dies following a brief illness. Jim, who was a native of Downpatrick, Co. Down, came to Ballyhaunis in 1982, when he acquired the Silver Dollar, on Bridge Street... Ballyhaunis Community School is ablaze with fanfare and colour as the academy celebrates its unique multi-cultural status. A total of twenty-two different cultures, from Afghanistan to Australia, make this school rather special among all others around the country. Cathaoirleach of Mayo County Council, Michael Burke, opens the one day multi-cultural celebration event... local ladies choral group Gracenotes take second prize in the All Female Premier category at the Cork International Choral Festival. The ladies were under the baton of Laura Brogan... St. Patrick's Church is packed to capacity on Sunday, May 22nd, for the funeral Mass of Tim Lavin, from Lavallyroe. Tim (26), who died following a courageous battle with cancer, won the Winter League competition at the local golf club just three months before his untimely death... The long awaited extension to Scoil Íosa primary school gets underway. The €2 million building programme is expected to be completed by July, 2012.

#### JUNE:

The Bank Holiday festival is once again a great success; despite rather mixed weather for the three day event, it proved to be a great commercial success for the town and the organising committee. The inter pub quiz competition, held in conjunction with the festival, was won by Phillips' Bar, Main St... Fears are expressed by Abbey Pattern committee that this year's event could be the final one. Lack of volunteers and new members coming forward to assist with the running of the pattern is the main reason cited for the concern... Mayo County Council give their approval for the lease of a premises on Upper Main Street for use by the Family Resource Centre. The premises is the former property of D.H. Burke's Supermarket, across from the parish church... Archbishop Michael Neary attends the Golden Jubilee Mass at St. Patrick's Church, marking the Golden Jubilee of the ordination of Canon Joe Cooney to the priesthood.

#### JULY:

For the first time ever, Ballyhaunis parish is reduced to just one priest. Canon Joe Cooney, Parish Priest of the parish since 1993, retires to Knock, while Fr. Benny McHale, CC, is transferred to Athenry in Co. Galway. Fr. Stephen Farragher, a native of The Neale, takes up duty as Parish Priest. Fr. Farragher comes to the parish from Tuam, where he has been Administrator for the past nine years... The community is shocked to learn of the death of Michael Waldron from Cave, on his sixty-eighth birthday. Known far and wide as 'The Minister', Michael had given a life of sterling service to both the GAA and to the Fianna





Fail party in the region... On the last Friday of July, popular Ballyhaunis G.P. Dr. Alan Delaney retires from the practice which he served for forty-three years. The vacancy left by Dr. Delaney's retirement is filled by Donegal native, Dr. Glen Lecky. Doctor Lecky is no stranger to Ballyhaunis, however, as he is husband of the former Áine Murphy, daughter of John and Frances Murphy of Coolnaha.



**The Final Blessing. Fr. Benny McHale (left) and Canon Joe Cooney, pictured after their final Mass together in Ballyhaunis Cemetery, July 2011.**

### AUGUST:

Kevin Henry wins Tommy Grogan's Captain's Prize at the Golf Club... Fr. Francis McMyler dies after a brief illness at his home town of Louisburgh. Fr. McMyler, who retired as Parish Priest of Balla in 2009, is fondly remembered as a dedicated member of the teaching staff at St. Patrick's College, where he served for many years in the 1960's and '70's. He joined the ranks of 'St. Pat's' in the late 1960's, just a few years after the formation of that school, in 1961. Later he served as Vice-Principal of the Ballyhaunis Community School before retiring from education to take up pastoral duties in Westport... Eddie Murphy's Menswear, Main Street wins a major award at the JCI presentations ceremony in Castlebar. Eddie Murphy Jnr. received the award on behalf of the company at the presentation ceremony... Ballyhaunis Gaelic footballers, under the stewardship of Frank Browne, reach the semi-final of the Mayo County Intermediate Football Championship... The fundraising committee of the Scoil Íosa building project launch their 'Buy A Brick' campaign at the 2011 Abbey Pattern. Ballyhaunis and Mayo footballer, Keith Higgins, buys the first ticket for the campaign.

### SEPTEMBER:

The first staging of the Martin Connery Memorial Cycle is held in Ballyhaunis. Organised by members of the Annagh Wheelers Cycling Club, in memory of their colleague Martin Connery from Bohogue, who helped to establish the cycling club in the town... Knock native Christy McGrath is laid to rest in his native parish. Christy was a



**Eddie Murphy Jnr. proudly displays the JCI Friendly Business Award, presented at a special ceremony in Castlebar on Friday, 26th August 2011. Eddie Murphy's Menswear, Main Street, won first prize in the 'Shop Layout and Design' category of the competition.**

was the most successful to date. A large number of competitors from various parts of the country participate in the event.

### OCTOBER:

Mrs. Mary Dillon-Leech of Main Street celebrates her 100th birthday at Brookvale Manor Nursing Home. An Taoiseach Enda Kenny pays a visit to the Hazelhill nursing home for the happy occasion. Local golfer Pat Curley wins the Dillon-Leech Memorial Cup at Coolnaha. The cup is presented to Pat by Mrs. Mary Dillon-Leech at Brookvale Nursing Home, on the day of her 100th... Local lady Paula Donnellan and her colleagues on the news

team at Midwest Radio win the top prize at the PPI Radio Awards in Kilkenny... Long serving petrol attendant Joe Hosty leaves Rochford Motors after twenty-seven years as a forecourt attendant at the Knock Road business... Kathleen Lyons from Began retires from Scoil Íosa Primary School, having given thirty-eight years of dedicated service at the Ballyhaunis school... Chamber of Commerce launch their new website, [www.ballyhaunislife.com](http://www.ballyhaunislife.com). The site is a most impressive display of all that is good in and around the parish of Ballyhaunis. The new site gives a list of every business and organisation in Ballyhaunis, details and contact numbers. The site is linked into BBC News and The Western People for up to date news and sport. Also, details of what's on in Ballyhaunis in the days and weeks ahead. A great new website, supported and funded by Mayo North East Leader Partnership.





# 150th Anniversary of Ballyhaunis Railway Station

## The Railway Comes West

BY SINÉAD FREYNE

The coming of the railway to Ballyhaunis and Ireland must have been a momentous occasion for the people. It opened up the West to economic development especially with the exporting of livestock. It was also a major vehicle in exporting something else – our people. Hundreds and thousands of people travelled by train and onward to the emigrant ships.

The expansion of the railway system in Ireland was at its height in the 1840's and 50's. In 1853 alone there was 130 miles of track opened, bringing the total in Ireland to 840 miles. This rose to 3,044 in 1894 and reached a maximum of 3,442 miles in 1920. Following the massive cull of 1963, the amount of track by 1971 had contracted to 1,550 miles.

Some history of the line from Dublin to Athlone as operated by the Midland Great Western Railway (also known as 'the Midland' or the MGWR) is needed as is some background on Lord Lucan, Earl of Castlebar. Firstly, the line from Dublin to Athlone was started on 8th June 1846 and quickly completed in 1851. The Midland would go on to operate the three major lines to the West - Dublin to Sligo, Galway and to Westport with the Ballina branch - thus providing infrastructure right across Ireland from east to west.

### Lord Lucan's Railway

Lord Lucan, the third Earl, was born George Bingham in 1800. He was a landlord, soldier and 19th Century doyen of entrepreneurship. In those days the Mayo line (from Athlone to Westport) became known as "Lord Lucan's Railway". His family owned vast acres of land in County Mayo and regarded their estates as a mere source of money. Castlebar House remained empty most of the time, with the family preferring to reside in London. Lord Lucan didn't even visit Castlebar until 1826, but in 1831 he resigned his army command and came to Castlebar to improve the family property.

In the West of Ireland in the 1830s wages and employment were virtually non-existent and few towns had any industrial or commercial activity. Others lived on small farms which were not big enough to be viable. A lot of the native Irish lived in huts in small patches of holdings. Lord Lucan was a ruthless landlord and had no qualms clearing his land of tenants to make way for herds of cattle.

The Earl became a railway promoter. He and other

landlords wanted the railway to reach their lands to further develop their estates. He wanted to connect with the Dublin – Galway line at Athlone. He presided over a meeting in Castlebar on 28th September 1855 with other interested parties. The Great Northern and Western (of Ireland) Railway (GN&WR) was incorporated in 1857 and had its offices at Parliament Street, Westminster, London. Lord Lucan was the Chairman of the company.

### The Deal is Done

After a major battle for positioning between the Midland and another company called the Great Southern and Western Railway (GS&WR, formerly the Waterford Limerick and Western Line WLWR) for further territory, Lord Lucan played the two railway companies off each other masterfully. The GN&WR was given the authority to connect with the Midland line at Athlone and construct further track to Castlerea. The Midland had to subscribe capital of £85,000 in 1858 and would be allowed to work the line to Castlerea.

Fredrick Barry was the engineer for the project. Contractors Smith and Knight made great progress with the official opening of Roscommon station on 13th February 1860. The 16½ miles to Castlerea involved the deployment of 1,904 workers – the second highest number at that time that was involved in a railway construction project.

### Castlerea to Castlebar

An 1859 Act of parliament paved the way for further development of the line to Castlebar with Midland providing their share of the investment for the extension from Castlerea of £73,000 for the right to work the line. The Telegraph/Connaught Ranger of Wednesday, March 13th, 1861 reported from the Grand Jury at the Mayo Spring Assizes, 1861. Here is an extract of a report by Mr Henry Brewster the County Surveyor for North Mayo. "The recent opening of the railway to Castlerea has brought a great stream of traffic on the roads leading to it; and I am sorry to say that the main line from Claremorris to the county boundary, beyond Ballyhaunis, in the Barony of Costello has been in a shocking state all the winter; and the contractors, utterly disregarding my repeated instructions, continued to put out a mixture of fine sand and large paving-stones thereby putting the public to great loss and inconvenience... The only other matter which I consider





it my duty to report on is, that the Great Northern and Western Railway have lockspitted their lines in the Barony of Costello; and on examination of the Parliamentary plans in the office of the Clerk of the Peace, I find very considerable deviations in the proposed crossings of the public road – at Ballyhaunis, in particular, where they dispense with one bridge entirely, and totally alter the curves and levels of the proposed road crossings.”

The paper of July 3rd gave notice of the “appointment of an arbitrator by the commissioners of public works in Ireland pursuant to ‘The Railways Act (Ireland) of 1851’” to deal with what compensation would be paid to landowners in “... the townland of Cloonbullig, in the Parish of Annagh, the townlands of Bellesker, Cuilbeg and Cultycreaghan, in the Parish of Began ...”

Also in the Connaught Ranger of August 14th, 1861 was a report on the half yearly meeting of the GN&WR Co., which was held in London on Tuesday 6th August. In it the Engineers Report, as given by John Fowler stated, “... The next section of your railway, from Castlerea to Ballyhaunis, a distance of about twelve miles, is practically completed, and the usual ten days’ notice has been given to the Board of Trade for an inspection of the line during the second week in August, and on the 15th August the line may be opened for public traffic”.

#### First Station in Mayo

The 1,900 strong workforce continued their progress to Ballyhaunis and did indeed reach there by August 1861 having drained various bogs in the previous twelve miles and also having crossed the River Suck. However the station didn’t open until 9th September 1861.

Incidentally, a platform for Ballinlough station wasn’t built until much later and opened on 1st January 1880.

Again, from John Fowler’s Engineers Report - “From Ballyhaunis to Claremorris, a distance of eleven miles, the works are in active progress, and may be expected to be ready for public traffic at the end of the present year”. However, due to bad weather and difficult bog crossings, track laying was delayed until the spring of 1862. Claremorris opened on the 19th May.

The following extract is taken from “The Mayo Branch – 2” by N.J. McAdams which was published a few ago: “... Just past the Carrick crossing, near Ballinlough, the Ballyhaunis bank commences about mile-post 120½ with a climb at 1 in 102 for a mile, decreasing to 1 in 270 before reaching the summit just before mile-post 122. This summit is the highest on the Branch, and the prevailing gradient onwards falls towards Westport. Straight ahead may be seen the peak of Croagh Patrick, and the line passes the site of a former ballast pit on the up side, and descends to Ballyhaunis (124¼).” “Ballyhaunis is another of the larger centres on the line. The station is situated on a curve, the buildings being on the up side. Evidence of the decline in the funds available for buildings may be noted here and at all stations beyond; little protection in bad weather was provided for passengers, except in open ended booking halls. Many improvements have, however, been carried out by CIE in recent years”.

#### Hannon and Fahy Sidings

“The down loop has a long siding with a forward headshunt into a dock at the end of the platform. The signal cabin, a small wooden structure, is on the down platform and there is a water tank at the Westport end.

TIME AND FARE TABLE.									
DOWN TRAINS.			Week Days.		Sundays.	Fares to Dublin.			
			A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.	Parliamentary.
Leave Dublin	...	...	7 0	4 0	10 30	S. D.	S. D.	S. D.	S. D.
" Athlone	...	...	10 50	7 5	2 6	14 0	11 0	7 3	6 6
" Roscommon	...	...	11 45	8 0	2 50	17 4	13 6	8 11	8 0
" Castlerea	...	...	12 40	8 45	3 32	20 6	15 6	10 4	9 4
Arrive at Ballyhaunis	...	...	1 5	9 10	3 55	22 8	17 0	11 4	10 3
UP TRAINS.			Week Days.		Sundays.	Fares from Ballyhaunis.			
			P. M.	P. M.	P. M.	1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.	Parliamentary.
Leave Ballyhaunis	...	...	12 15	3 50	4 5	S. D.	S. D.	S. D.	S. D.
" Castlerea	...	...	12 40	4 15	4 28	2 2	1 8	1 0	0 11
" Roscommon	...	...	1 20	4 56	5 10	5 2	3 10	2 6	2 3
" Athlone	...	...	2 30	6 5	6 5	8 6	6 4	4 2	3 9
Arrive in Dublin	...	...	5 30	10 0	10 0	22 8	17 0	11 4	10 3

W. FORBES, Manager.  
Broadstone, Dublin, 4th Sept., 1861.  
Rates for the conveyance of Goods and Cattle can be ascertained at the Stations.

This is a published train timetable from ‘The Telegraph or Connaught Ranger’ for Wednesday, 11th September 1861.





On the up side, a siding off the loop extends back towards the old ballast pit, ½ml in the Athlone direction, and at the station end of this siding a short siding branches off to a cattle bank and goods store. Further along the ballast pit siding, another siding turns out and trails back towards the station. At the Westport end of the station a private siding on the up side serves Messrs. Hannon's store, but is now disused".

"The present layout has been arrived at after considerable changes over the years. Up to 1934 the loop was considerably shorter, and at the Westport end of it there was a siding off it on the down side, known as Fahey's siding, and this was incorporated into the loop when the latter was extended. The main difference was, however, at the Athlone end. Prior to the alterations of 1934 there was another siding off the down loop, trailing back in the Athlone direction, and there was a direct crossing from the ballast pit siding, across the up line to connect into the down loop – this crossover was moved out in the Athlone direction, and outside of the loop, so that it led only from the ballast pit siding onto the running road. The extension to the loop at that time may have been motivated by the use of Ballyhaunis as the railhead for pilgrimage traffic to Knock which was growing since 1930; but 1935 proved to be the last season for Ballyhaunis in this role, and from 1936 onwards Claremorris has been the railhead. Entry to the cattle bank and goods store road was facing Athlone, but the present arrangement is the reverse of this; the grain siding at the back of the cattle bank did not then exist".

### **Claremorris – once the railway crossroads of Connaught**

Two signal gates follow Ballyhaunis at Hazelhill (125) and Holywell (125¼). Began station, opened on 1st January 1909 is reached at 128¾. Claremorris station is reached at 135 mile-post. It is interesting to note that for the first thirty years of its existence, Claremorris was the same as Castlerea and Ballyhaunis stations. It then became a busy junction in 1894 when the station was connected to Tuam and Athenry by the WLWR and later to Sligo (this route is now referred to as the Western Rail Corridor). The light rail to Ballinrobe had also opened in 1892. Claremorris became the most important station on the Mayo Branch and became the railway crossroads of North Connaught. This was further confirmed with the taking over from Ballyhaunis of the Knock Pilgrimage traffic.

That's the story of how the railway reached Ballyhaunis.



**A Steam Train passing through Ballyhaunis many years ago.**

But of course the line didn't stop there or in Claremorris. It went through Balla and onward to Castlebar which opened in December 1862. Financial difficulties and boardroom strife arose at this stage and Westport station didn't open until 24th January 1866 with an extension to the Quay in 1874. The line continued through Newport, Mulranny and Achill, which was reached in May 1895. The line northwards to Ballina, facilitated by a junction at Manulla, opened in Foxford in 1868 and Ballina in 1873. An extension to Killala opened in 1893.

### **Some other interesting facts:-**

- Up until 1865, a fourth class fare, known as "Parliamentary" had been tried as an experiment, for the benefit of harvestmen. First, Second and Third Class fares were charged on the Midland until 1914. Two classes were provided for until 1965. See the advertisement on previous page from The Telegraph/Connaught Ranger Castlebar of Wednesday, 11th September 1861, as taken out by the Midland Great Western and Great Northern and Western Railways. It shows the 'Time and Fare Table' dated 4th September, for the first time showing Ballyhaunis Station.
- Steam working was reduced drastically in 1961 with the arrival of new diesel engines from General Motors in the US. Steam use came to an end entirely in 1965. The Republic of Ireland became the first country in Europe to be completely dieselised.
- Closure of the Goods Store at Ballyhaunis occurred on 3rd November 1975.

### **References :-**

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# The Railway in Ballyhaunis and My Family

BY NOEL ARMSTRONG

The first public railway was opened in Ireland in 1834. This was the line between Dublin and Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire). The next thirty years saw the spread of the rail system across the country to connect all major centres of population. Some smaller towns and villages were also connected to the system.

The first train from Dublin to Galway was operated by the Midland Great Western Railway in 1851. The Great Northern and Western Railway opened the line from Athlone to Westport in stages connecting major towns along the route between 1860 and 1865. Castlerea to Ballyhaunis opened on the 9th September 1861.

As can be seen from the dates the line was built, this was the period of time just after the Great Famine. The census of 1841 recorded the population of Ireland as just over eight million. In the following decade the population dropped by 1½ million to just over 6½ million in 1851. By 1881 the population had dropped to just over five million. The British Government response to the famine

in the 1840's was very slow resulting in great hardship for the population. The following decades saw a change in British Government policy towards Ireland perhaps out of a sense of guilt of its inactions during the Famine. Railway

construction was one of a number of strategies used to improve economic conditions especially in the west of Ireland. At that time Grand Juries were in place who administered the affairs of the counties. These were unelected bodies dominated by landlords. The counties were subdivided into districts or baronies. If a railway scheme met with the approval of the Grand Jury they would decide which barony would benefit from its construction. The Grand Jury system was replaced by County and District councils in 1898.

## Ballyhaunis

The arrival of the railway in Ballyhaunis was a major development at the time. It linked the town to other centres giving the people of the area access to markets that were not available to them prior to its arrival. Farming was the major activity in the area at the time

and the railway provided transport for livestock to the Port at Dublin for export. This gave farmers better opportunities to sell their produce and to improve the local economy.

While the railway improved the links for the farming community to sell their produce it also gave access to the bigger manufacturers to sell their produce in the Ballyhaunis area. Items such as light engineering that would have been produced by local blacksmiths could now be purchased from centres of mass production and eventually led to the demise of some local producers.

The railway gave people the opportunity to purchase items that would not have been available to them before the railway arrived in the town. The people were now able to travel with ease to the bigger centres to purchase items that were not available locally. Sadly, it also provided the means by which so many people emigrated and left our country for far off lands: some of these people never returned again.



Willie Armstrong at Holywell level crossing in 1958.

The Railway Station at Ballyhaunis provided a lot of employment down through the years. At the height of its time there was as many as twenty people permanently employed at the Station: Signalmen, Station Porters, Store Staff, Gatekeepers, Permanent Way Staff.

The Permanent Way Staff were employed maintaining the track. There were four people in a gang on every 3½ miles length of track. Each gate

crossing with white gates had a gatekeeper to open and close the gates for the safe passage of the trains and the safety of people using the crossings.

My connection with the railway started on the day that I was born. I was born and reared in Holywell gate house at Holywell level crossing. It was there that I lived for the first nineteen years of my life until I emigrated to London in 1973 where I worked in building construction for eighteen months.

My father came to Holywell in 1953 to work as a member of the railway maintenance gang on the length of track that included Ballyhaunis Yard. He was married at the time with three young boys. The Company gave him and







**Holywell 1957. Mary Armstrong with her four sons, L-R: Willie, Noel, John (RIP) and Pat.**

his family accommodation in the railway cottage at Holywell level crossing as part of the employment conditions for him at the time. My mother was appointed as gatekeeper at the crossing as part of the deal. I was born in the cottage the following year. My father worked in the gang for twenty-two years until he passed away unexpectedly in 1975. I came back from London two weeks prior to his death and I started work on the railway three weeks later. I worked for the Railway Company for over thirty-five years, from February 1975 to the end of August 2010.

During that time I have seen many changes at Ballyhaunis Station and a big reduction in the number of people employed there. There is now only one person employed there on a full time basis. This person is employed in the capacity of Haltkeeper. The title indeed points to the fact that Irish Rail no longer regard it as a station rather a halt for the picking up and setting down of passengers only. It is now passenger only - no goods service.

The signaling system for the trains has all been modernised and centralised and is operated remotely from a centre in Athlone. The Signal Cabin is still in place but no longer in use. Gone are the days when there were three signalmen employed to operate the points and signals for the safe passage of trains: this is done now remotely at a centre in Athlone.

### **Goods Service**

In the past when there was a goods service in place at the station the Signal Cabin was a centre of activity. The signalmen would be busy pulling the levers in the cabin, that were connected to the rails and signals, to direct the goods trains into the sidings so that they could be loaded and unloaded.



**Photo taken in 1957 at Holywell. Back, L-R: Willie Armstrong, John Armstrong, Pat Armstrong, Patrick Healy. Front: Noel Armstrong, Kevin Healy.**

Fair days in Ballyhaunis were very busy. Cattle purchased at the fair by the cattle dealers were herded to the station where they were loaded onto special trains for transport to Dublin Port and exported by boat to England. These boats were used to bring people also to get work in England. I often heard people talk about how they had travelled on the cattle boat to England to find work there.

The goods store was a hive of activity with all the goods coming in for the local shops and businesses. Everything that was sold locally came first to the station and was then distributed locally by lorry from the station. This would have been done by horse and cart in the early years. In later years two lorries were used. There were two lorry drivers and helpers employed to do this work. Some local people collected the goods themselves. Goods such as tea, sugar, bacon, jam and other items came by train, also new cars, tractors machinery - everything that was needed locally came through the station. The station was very important to the local area and the most important development in local infrastructure in its time.

The station was a great attraction for the local people. The cabin was like a visiting house. Several of the local residents spent many happy hours visiting and talking with the signalmen that were on duty at the time. There was a great connection with the locals and all who worked there. The men who worked in the track maintenance gangs had their own hut there at the station. The hut was used for storing their tools and also as a canteen to have their meals. It was a simple hut made from railway sleepers, with a basic fireplace in it. Whenever they were working in or near the station they would boil the kettle on the fire for their lunch. I remember going down to the hut to see my father at







**Mary Armstrong and Noel Armstrong (her son) taken at Holywell level crossing in 1974.**

lunchtime from the boys' school. I would be given a cup of tea and sometimes a piece of the fish or meat they were having for their lunch. The fish or meat was fried on the shovel as they had no frying pan. The local children spent many hours out on the track with the maintenance gang, especially during summer holiday time. This would not be allowed today for obvious safety reasons.

The maintenance gang had very close contact with the local farmers also. The farmers would be looking to get boundary fences repaired to stop their livestock from coming onto the line. As previously stated I started work on the railway in February 1975, as a platelayer, and worked on my father's length for a while. In 1976 I got married and moved into the gate house at Hazelhill level crossing. My wife Teresa was appointed gatekeeper there, she also came from a railway background as her mother was the gatekeeper at Garryedmond level crossing at that time. We lived at Hazelhill level crossing until 1981. My first three children were born during this time, so the railway connection continues.

### Changes

In the early 1970's the railway company introduced cost saving measures. As part of this the number of men in the track maintenance gangs was reduced from four down to two men and the lengths of track increased from 3½ to 5 miles. They set up a mobile gang of men in Claremorris, supplied with a van, to attend to the larger jobs that two men would not be able to handle on their own. In 1978 they introduced further measures and reduced the two man gangs down to a single man whose job it was to patrol the track. This man patrols 7½ miles of track weekly and reports any faults. The faults are then rectified by the mobile gang. This system still remains in place. In 1979 I was appointed to the mobile gang at Claremorris. In 1982 I was appointed Patrol Ganger on the length of track that included Ballyhaunis yard and worked there until 1989. This length of track included my father's old length. I spent many a happy day in Ballyhaunis Station working with Con Fahey, Willie



**Mary Armstrong feeding her turkeys at Holywell in the 1960s.**



**Teresa Armstrong opening the gates at Garryedmond level crossing in 1975.**



**Hazelhill level crossing cottage in 1978.**







**1980 at Hazelhill Level Crossing. Teresa Armstrong (back, right) with her three children, Liam, Adrian and Natalie. On the left at back is Mary Quigley.**

Sheridan and Eanie Kelly - all signalmen. I left the length in 1989 to take up the job of Mobile Ganger in Claremorris. In 1990 I was promoted to the position of Class A Inspector. As part of my duties I had to stand in for the Divisional Inspectors when they were off ill or on annual leave. In 1992 I was promoted to the position of Divisional Inspector in Claremorris. My duties were the supervision of the maintenance and renewal of the track from Knockcroghery to Claremorris, from the 88 mile post to the 136 mile post on the Mayo Line - 48 miles of track. I also had responsibility for seven miles on the Tuam to Claremorris line. During this period of time there was a major lack of investment in the track by government. The condition of the track deteriorated and the speed of trains was reduced for safety reasons. In the late 90's a very serious accident occurred between Knockcroghery and Roscommon when a passenger train derailed on a straight section of track with over 100 people on board. Nobody received any serious injury as a result of the accident. The government was very concerned that this could happen on what was one of the best sections of track on the Mayo line at the time. A major investigation was carried out and it became obvious as a result that the situation was so serious that a decision would have to be made to either shut down railway lines or to invest in track renewal. Thankfully, the latter was decided on. I was appointed as Renewals Inspector for the Athlone Area in December 1998 to supervise the renewal of the track throughout this area. The Athlone Area covers roughly one-third of the country, from Portarlinton to Galway, Athlone to Westport/Ballina, Killucan to Sligo and Limerick to Collooney. I worked on that project until it was

completed in June 2004. During that period we re-laid 214 miles of new track, the largest track renewal since the railway was first built.

After that I took up a position of Technical Support with an assets management team for six months in North Wall in Dublin. During this time all the assets in relation to the track were put onto a computer database. In this system all assets such as track, bridges, level crossings, signals etc., are rated for condition and recorded, faults reported and dealt with.

I came back to the Athlone area in January 2005 and supervised the Mini CTC project, this was the central-

isation of traffic control away from the local signal cabins. During this time Ballyhaunis Signal Cabin ceased to operate.

In April 2005 I took up the position of Safety Executive for the Athlone Area. I spent five years in this position and retired in August 2010.

My wife still works for the company and I have one son working for the company in Dublin. The railway link still remains. I have seen many changes during my career with the company. When I started it was all manual labour and very little welfare facilities for the workers, no gloves or boots or safety clothing supplied at that time. The wages were very poor also. These things have all improved but, alas, the reduction of staff is a big loss to the economy.



**Willie Armstrong with Holywell gate crossing in the background, 1972.**







Noel Armstrong and Mary Waldron (Mulrennan), taken at Holywell in 1958.



Mary Armstrong and Nora Fitzpatrick (mother of Teresa Armstrong) at Hazelhill level crossing in 1977.



Noel's children Adrian and Liam Armstrong. Photo taken at Hazelhill level crossing in 1980.

## Ballyhaunis Years

### The Railway Station - September 1963 to March 1967

BY TOM RYAN

Our father Paddy Ryan was a Stationmaster from Doon, Co. Limerick. He worked for 46 years with CIE and lived for the most part in Mayo with our mother Bridie, a Castlebar native. We lived in station houses as children and moved on a regular basis as the closure of railway lines by Todd Andrews in the late 50's and early 60's led to a nomadic life for our family.

#### Warm Welcome

We moved from Fethard to Ballyhaunis in October 1963 following the closure of the Thurles-Clonmel rail line. Our Mam and Dad and the family - Pearse, Una, Tom, Jim and Breda - travelled by train. Our luggage, furniture and worldly goods were in a van attached to the train. All the fragile goods were packed in newspapers and placed in tea chests. Our Mam was delighted to be coming home to Mayo and she gave a fine rendition of 'Goodbye To Tipperary' on the train. We arrived in Ballyhaunis to a warm welcome from the station staff, a roaring fire in the kitchen range, and hot mugs of tea brewed by the always cheerful Johnny Murren, signalman.

The stationhouse was a cut-stone house with very thick walls. The kitchen in the house was enormous. The house comprised of a kitchen, sitting room and three bedrooms. The layout of the house was very poor and it was always cold. The third bedroom to the north was called the 'icebox'. On winter mornings you'd suffer from frost-bite in this bedroom only for the CIE and FCA overcoats on

the bed which were the 1963 duvets in station houses! We attended secondary school and spent our early teenage years in Ballyhaunis and integrated into Ballyhaunis life quickly.

The stationhouse was attached to the stationmaster's office and adjoined the platform. There was no need of clocks in our house as the train vibrations kept the time from dawn to dusk. The trains departed for Dublin on the station side and the trains for Westport/Ballina on the Devlis side, making the station very interesting for all the 'railway children' in the area. The children and teens close to the station included the Connollys, Ryans, Toolins, O'Connells, Coyne, Dempseys, Hannons, Cunninghams, Lyons', Conboys, Morrisseys and many more. Children on the platform were a worry to station staff because young people can be giddy, foolhardy and unaware of the danger. The staff were very genial and kind to all the children and to the public in general, and we have very fond memories of Frank Connolly and Dick Knight, signalmen; Johnny Murren, Con Fahey and Christy Glynn, signalmen/goodsmen; Tommy Conboy and Peter Finn, CIE lorry; Willie Armstrong, Mick Dempsey and Pat Lyons, permanent way.

#### Never a dull moment

Station staff worked very hard for very long hours six days a week and seven days during the summer, and often endured very harsh weather on duty. There was never a dull moment for the staff as the train timetable





scheduled the working day for all. When the goods trains were in the station all were busy shunting. In the mornings and early afternoons, the delivery lorries were loaded. The passenger trains needed all hands on deck in the signal box, ticket sales, preparing passenger goods and keeping the public happy. There was a great brotherhood, loyalty, mutual respect, work ethic and contentment amongst all the CIE staff. The station won many awards for being tidy and Frank Connolly, an expert gardener, loved to tend the flowerbeds.

The signal cabin - a square, elevated wooden building, glazed on three sides - had a commanding view of the platforms, pedestrian bridge, signals and the railway line. It was a magical place for conversation, warmth and good humour, and it was a treat for us to sit there by the



**Brendan Morrissey (Devlis), Genevieve Morrissey (Devlis), Breda Ryan (Station House), Aine Morrissey (Devlis), sitting on the wall at the Old Well, Bridge St., 1960s.**

pot-bellied stove on a winter's evening watching the signalman masterfully pulling the levers that controlled the points, signals and train-staff, and listening to lively conversation on politics and the GAA. The railway telephone was used by signalmen to communicate the progress of the trains and to release the train staff. The telephone was difficult to operate and was very finicky. The phone receiver was similar to a beer glass held to the signalman's ear as he talked into the speaker to communicate with the branch stations. When the train passed Knockcroghery news of the impending time of arrival would be relayed by the signalman to the gathering crowd on the platform as the train passed the nearer stations.

The steam trains had just ceased operating and had been replaced by diesel trains, but the water tank for filling

the steam engines still remained and we put 'brickleens' into the tank and they were regularly inspected as they became young fish.

### Hive of Activity

Eight passenger trains and two goods trains stopped in Ballyhaunis. The station was very busy for both goods and passenger traffic and all goods, e.g. cement, beer and spirits, cigarettes, bacon, pulp cars, sundry goods, etc. arrived by train; even the amusements for the Perks carnival arrived on the train. Cattle wagons were regularly attached to the train and, after the monthly town fair, the station would be very busy as cattle were transported up the country. Dogs, cats and fowl were carried on the passenger trains as were perishable goods and urgent small items. Every day the post office had the post delivered and dispatched by rail.

The hackneys waited on all Dublin trains and Bill Eagney, Tommy Flatley and George O'Malley were at the station every day. The hackney drivers were very busy at Christmas and during summer time. Brod Moran, the CIE bus driver, fuelled the bus at the station. Regular visitors included Tommy Freely and Roger Green, Irish Ales.

The station was very busy on Friday nights and on Monday mornings. It had also very busy holiday periods and the platform was full of people waiting for, and bidding farewell to family. The platform was a very happy place before Christmas as families from all over East Mayo greeted their own kin from over the seas. All Carnaby Street fashions were introduced to Ballyhaunis by those returning. The young men had brylcreamed hair and wore sheepskin coats or donkey jackets, shirts, ties with the Windsor knot, and pointed shoes. The girls wore furs, short skirts, paint, powder and lipstick and had their hair backcombed.

After Christmas the station was packed with people returning to England and it was a very sad time as there was an awkward, tangible silence for such a large gathering and a cloud of blue cigarette smoke wafted in the chilly air as people waited uneasily for the parting. There were promises, tears and hanging onto the train as it slowly left the station, and even as children we could sense the feeling of emptiness and heartbreak in the lonely red-eyed parents as the train departed.

In March 1967 Dad transferred to Castlebar and, while Mam was happy to be returning to her home town, we were all sad to leave the town and we all have very happy memories of the station staff and Ballyhaunis. Una worked for CIE on leaving school and was posted in Ballyhaunis station for a short period. She got married to Declan Shields and returned to the town in the mid 1970's, raised her family in the town and still resides near?... you've guessed it - the Railway Station!





# Railway Cuttings and Embankments

INTRODUCTION BY PAUL WALDRON

The building of the railway network across Ireland in the nineteenth century was a remarkable feat of engineering - not least the branch that runs through Ballyhaunis. While there were no high mountains or wide rivers to be negotiated in east Mayo, the rolling landscape of the Ballyhaunis area presented its own challenges to the railway engineers and navvies of the 1850s. Hills had to be cut through and embankments constructed over low-lying ground to ensure the route of the railway was as level as possible.

A meeting of 'parties interested in bringing the railway to the county' (most of them members of the landed gentry) took place in Castlebar in October 1852, and was chaired by Lord Lucan. They passed a resolution 'that a committee be formed to propose and carry out the most feasible project for the immediate construction of railway accommodation in County Mayo.' They met regularly and a number of different schemes, backed by different companies and with different proposed routes into the county were put forward over the following three years.

Eventually, the Midland Great Western Railway (which had built the railway from Dublin to Athlone and Galway) came to an agreement with the Mayo promoters that the new line would start at Athlone and run as far as Castlerea via Roscommon. The Great Northern and Western (of Ireland) Railway Company was formed in 1857, for the purpose of constructing the railway from Athlone firstly to Castlerea, and eventually to Westport and Ballina. The contract was given to London based railway contractors Smith & Knight at £5,700 a mile. By early 1861, good progress was reported on the Castlerea-Ballyhaunis line despite a shortage of men 'due to it being seed sowing time'. This section finished by late Summer, was inspected by Capt. Henry W. Tyler (Inspecting Officer for Railways) on 20th Aug. 1861 and found to be in order, apart from the provision of lodges 'at several boreen roads'.

According to Land Valuation Office records, the Great Northern & Western (of Ireland) Railway Company obtained their land in the vicinity of Ballyhaunis in 1857. The valuation revision of 1858 lists Benjamin Room (secretary of the Great Northern & Western Railway Company) as the 'lessee' of the narrow strip of land between the Roscommon boundary and the proposed location of Ballyhaunis Railway Station, taking in parts of nine townlands: Coolnafarna, Kiltybo, Scregg, Coolloughra, Skeaghard, Ballinphuill, Clagnagh, Devlis and Cherryfield. This land was part of the vast estate of Viscount Dillon, an absentee living in England. Leaving Ballyhaunis, the railway cut through parts of the following estates in the parishes of Annagh and Began

before reaching the boundary with Kilcolman or Claremorris parish: Dillon (Friarsground, Abbeyquarter and Bracklagh), O'Grady (Hazelhill), Higgins/de Heizler (Cloonbullig), Burke (Holywell and Derreens), Beaclerk (Cloontumper), O'Farrell (Belesker and Cuilbeg), Tighe (Keebagh) and Treston (Cuiltycreaghan).

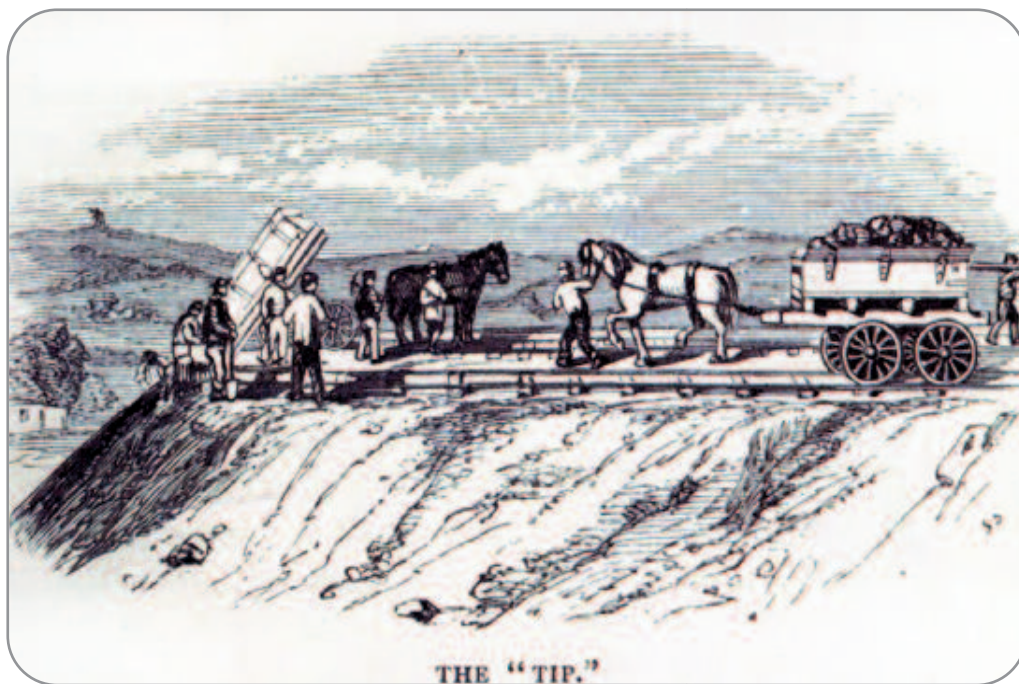
Much of the land here is undulating gravelly ground, with some eskers and sand-hills and intervening stretches of low-lying ground, much of it bog. It must have taken many man hours for the cuttings and embankments to be made, especially when it was all done by pick and shovel, barrow, horse and cart. Frederick S. Williams in his book, "Our Iron Roads, Their History, Construction and Administration" (London 1883) describes how this work was done. The language here may be rather old-fashioned, but what comes across clearly is just how ingenious were the methods used, and how dangerous the whole process must have been.

## Cuttings

"The route of the railway being now determined... the work let to the contractors-in-chief, and underlet to subordinates, the undertaking commences at the part where there is most to be done. The reason of this is that the line has to be completed throughout as nearly as possible simultaneously. Those portions that lie between heavy cuttings and embankments are leveled, and railway laid down, so that the material from the one may be used to form the other. A few score of navvies may now be seen on the face of the hill through which the cutting is to pass; the hill is laid open, and a 'gullet' excavated. This term is applied to a cutting made just large enough to receive a row of wagons that are to bear away the earth; and into the gullet the tramway is run. The wagons can now be brought close alongside the material to be moved, and several men being set to work at each, the soil is flung into them with ease and celerity. Meanwhile, as the stuff is removed the gullet is opened farther and farther into the hill, while earth is showered into the wagons from all sides. When these are filled, they are secured together in a train and, if the inclination of the ground permits it, they run down by their own velocity, being regulated by a breakman, who stands on the last wagon, and who applies his feet to a lever when he wishes the trucks to be stopped.... On reaching his journey's end he consigns the laden trucks to the embankment men, and assists in driving the horses which are to draw the empty trucks back. In the interim a fresh supply of empty wagons has been brought into the cutting, and the men are now filling these as they did the others...."







**"The Tip", showing the end of a railway embankment under construction, in the mid-nineteenth century.**

"When the stuff has been removed, and the gullet can lay a reasonable claim to the appellation of a cutting, the rails are moved so as to bring the wagons immediately alongside the wall of earth on either hand, and thus two trains may be filled at the same time. Meanwhile, barrows, laden with earth are trundled from all directions and the contents overturned into the trucks. Runs, as they are called, are also made, by laying planks up the sides of the cutting, on which barrows may be wheeled. The 'running' is performed by strong men, round the waist of each of whom is a belt, and fastened to it is a rope running up the side of the cutting, turning on a wheel at the top, and at its end is a horse. The barrow being laden, a signal is given, the driver leads the horse quickly out a given distance into the field, and the barrow and man are drawn up the acclivity; the contents of the barrow are emptied, the horse being let back the rope is slackened, and the man runs down the plank again, drawing the empty barrow after him..."

(Williams, Frederick S., *Our Iron Roads, Their History, Construction and Administration*, London, 1883, pp. 106-8).

### Embankments

"When the level of a railway has to be raised, it is usually done by an embankment. The material is generally obtained from a neighbouring cutting - the engineer in laying out the railway, having arranged that the embankments and its cuttings shall in amount about equal one another. The distance along which the stuff is conveyed to the embankment is called 'the lead'. The first thing in the formation of an embankment is the shaving off to the thickness of six inches of turfs, if any, at the base of the intended line, and they are put aside for sodding

down the slopes of the work when finished. By these means a good bottom, free from vegetable matter, is obtained... The culverts being laid in cement are allowed ample time to set before the filling commences. The material of which the embankment is made is conveyed along the lead by different means. If possible, the loaded wagons run down the tramroad, by their own gravity, to the embankment. In some instances, each load has to be drawn along by horses, in other cases by engines...

In the formation of an embankment, it is of much importance that it should be constructed with great firmness, and with due consideration of the nature of the material of which it is composed, and of the probable weight which it is designed to support. To this end the embankment will be made at first to the full intended width, for material subsequently added does not readily unite with the original mass. If additions become necessary the side of the bank is, perhaps, 'stepped'. An embankment is sometimes commenced from two directions, which at last unite in the middle. A train of wagons brought on to the part of the embankment already finished, preparations are made to empty them. A tramroad has already been formed to the end of the bank, and at its extreme verge a stout piece of timber is secured to prevent the wagons when their contents are discharged, from being precipitated over it. One of the trucks is then detached from the train, and being brought within a few hundred yards of the end of the embankment, the horse that draws it is made to trot and then to gallop, so as to give the required impetus to his load. The uninitiated observer fancies that both horse and driver must be killed, or hurled over the embankment; but when they have approached very near to the edge, the driver loosens the horse from the wagon, gives him a signal which he has been taught to obey, both leap aside with the greatest celerity, and the wagon alone rushes on till it is suddenly stopped at the end of the embankment by the piece of timber, and the shock makes the hinder part tip up and discharge the load. The horse is immediately brought up again and hooked on, the truck rights itself, and is drawn away to form part of the empty train which will soon return to the cutting..."

(Williams, Frederick S., *Our Iron Roads, Their History, Construction and Administration*, London, 1883, pp. 127-9).





## The “Rag Parade” in the 1950’s

Photographs taken of a “Rag Parade” in Abbey Street, Ballyhaunis in the 1950s. Sent in by Anne Floyd (nee Hunter) from Lecarrow, now living in England. The Annagh committee would be interested to hear if anyone can identify those in these photographs.







Photographs taken of a "Rag Parade" in Abbey Street, Ballyhaunis in the 1950s. Sent in by Anne Floyd (nee Hunter) from Lecarrow, now living in England.

*Pictured right:* The man in the hat walking on the footpath is Michael Joyce.

The Annagh committee would be interested to hear if anyone can identify others in these photographs.





# A Summer in South Sudan

BY EOIN BUTLER

In July 2011, the photographer Ross McDonnell and I visited the city of Juba in East Africa to witness South Sudan's independence celebrations, after fifty years of civil war. It was a short enough trip. We left the day after I saw Mayo beat Galway in Castlebar. And I was home in time to see us beat Roscommon in a wet and windy Connacht final.



But this was no summer holiday. As a journalist, I visited the Gaza Strip during the Israeli blockade in the summer of 2008. But even Gaza was a holiday camp compared to this place. South Sudan is one of the poorest, hottest, most remote and dangerous places on earth. A place where there are guns on every street corner. A place where a 15 year old girl is more likely to die in childbirth than she is to have finished primary school.

That said, it isn't a bad old spot all the same.

Stepping off the plane in Juba was quite a culture shock. Everyone was so tall. The Dinka and Nuer tribes are the tallest on earth. Plus their skin was so dark. This is something a Nigerian taxi driver back in Dublin had told me about. But I didn't get what he meant until I actually met a few South Sudanese in the flesh.

But by far my most vivid first impression of South Sudan, though, was the smell. It turned out I had accidentally set my bag down outside a malfunctioning toilet. But for a second I thought I'd stumbled upon a terrible secret generations of missionaries were too polite ever to mention: That is, that all of Sub-Saharan Africa smells like wee. Well it doesn't, thanks be to God.

There was a huge baggage scanner in the arrivals hall, into which passengers were queuing to feed their suitcases. On the far side, these same bags were being dumped to the floor. Since I was under strict instructions (from a homesick Irishman with a thirst) to bring two bottles of Powers Irish whiskey along in my bag, I

decided to walk around the whole thing entirely. No one noticed.

The gift shop was selling loose raw eggs and salt. This was, without a shadow of a doubt, the most foreign place I'd been to in my entire life.

## Small World

Our mission in South Sudan was to track down a renegade Irish priest-turned-gunrunner, called Dan Eiffe. I'd read a short piece about him in London's Spectator magazine and was interested in doing a story for the Irish Times. He'd come to Africa in the late 1970s as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. At first he'd simply distributed aid to the victims of the Sudanese civil war. But over time, he came to identify with the rebels aims and began running guns to them from Uganda.

He later married a local woman, the sister-in-law of the rebel leader Salva Kiir (now president of South Sudan), and had two children with her. I suppose, I was half expecting to meet some Colonel Kurtz-type, who had gone into the jungle, gone mad and turned native. But Dan is nothing like that. He is a sincere, honourable man whose actions, however drastic, may well have helped to avert genocide in the region.

And of course, like any two Irish men, anywhere in the world, once we sat down and enjoyed a couple of glasses together, it turned out we had acquaintances in common. Two of Dan's sisters had gone to school in Tubbercurry with my aunt Mary Butler from Kilkelly. The three girls later shared a flat together in Dublin. It is a small world indeed.

Although South Sudan is officially at peace, continuing violence in the countryside made travel overland too dangerous to attempt. (Besides, in a country the size of France, there are less than 50km of paved roads!) So we took to hitching lifts on rickety old aircraft operated by Christian missionaries. These flights were gas altogether. Before we took off, the pilot would come on the intercom saying all the usual stuff. "Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, welcome aboard... Now if you'd just join me in a quick Hail Mary."

It wasn't the Hail Marys I minded, so much as the suspicion that maybe the Hail Mary was in lieu of an actual safety check by qualified engineers. So were we really flying on two wings and a prayer? Well, the missionaries never asked us for airfare. So it seemed a bit rude to ask.

The highlight for me was the Independence Day football friendly between South Sudan and Kenya. There are no





soccer clubs in South Sudan, so the home team was chosen from trials. The Kenyans were highly trained professional athletes. The South Sudanese team, meanwhile, looked like eleven guys who'd just walked out of MacSiúrtáin's. (No disrespect to Macs, you get what I mean!)

On the face of it then, it should have been a total mismatch. But with enormous home support behind them, South Sudan were a goal up within five minutes. On the ten minute mark they went two ahead. If a third goal had gone in, I swear, the stand might have collapsed, so ecstatic were the home crowd. But it couldn't last. After twenty minutes, the home side were knackered. In the end, Kenya ran out easy 6-2 winners.

There were other highlights too: The young men of the SPLA marching band whose enormous red uniforms looked like they were designed to be grown into. The delirious happiness of the ordinary people at midnight, when their homeland officially became the world's 192nd independent nation. (It reminded me a lot of Packie Bonner's famous penalty save in Italia '90, when my mother packed her four small children into the back of the car and drove down the town beeping the car horn!)

There are, of course, some other not so happy memories.



**The SPLA Marching Band**

There were things I saw in South Sudan that I wish I didn't see. Things that really should not exist in the world in the year 2011: extreme poverty, malnutrition and (as the poet wrote) "guns and sharp swords in the hands of small children." We are going through some tough times at the moment here in Ireland, no doubt about that. But as our thoughts turn towards Christmas, consider this: as long as we have security, a clean water supply and the occasional rasher, have we really all that much to complain about?



**Tom Horkan, Lassany,  
on his first day serving Mass.**



**Jim O'Reilly (Woodpark) holding his nephew Tom Horkan (Lassany) as a baby.  
Left to right: Pat Brady, Anne O'Reilly, Thomas O'Reilly (grandparents) and  
Margaret Horkan, nee O'Reilly, Woodpark (mother).**





# Main Street in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

BY RITA MELLY (NÉE MURPHY)

This was a period which, in many respects, has been portrayed as a time of poetry, creativity, invention and industrialisation. It was post-Famine, pre-independence and still Victorian. "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times..". The economic boom experienced at that time has never been experienced before or since until that of the Celtic Tiger years between 1995 and 2007.

## Historical Background

Ireland was under British rule for approximately seven hundred years. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries wars and battles were fought over lands and estates. Ownership of lands changed over the centuries with holdings and large pieces of land inherited through marriage or confiscated by the British Crown.

The size of the landed estate varied from small holdings with hundreds of acres to thousands of acres of land over a county or province. By the mid-nineteenth century, most of Ireland was in the hands of about 8,000 to 10,000 landowners, mainly of a Protestant religious denomination, and perhaps less than 1,000 of these owned in total more than 50% of the land. A number of landed estates which were in existence in the parishes of Annagh and Began in the nineteenth century were those of Knox, Taaffe, Dillon, O'Grady, Burke and More-O'Ferralls.

Main Street in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was in the townland of Carrownluggaun and barony of Costello. Rappa Castle, an old Bourke castle and granted to a Cromwellian soldier named Crofton, passed into Knox ownership through marriage and was the seat of this influential branch of the Knox family throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Occupied by the Knox family until the early twentieth century, the house is now in ruin.

Francis Knox was established at Rappa Castle in the mid-eighteenth century. The estate included six townlands in the parish of Began and one townland in the parish of Aghamore, barony of Costello, and at least three townlands in each of the parishes of Ardagh, Ballysacerry and Kilfian, barony of Tirawley, Co. Mayo. In 1876, Annesley Knox of Rappa Castle held 6,855 acres in Co. Mayo and 724 acres in Co. Galway. In the 1830s, George Knox, a relative of Annesley Knox inherited the lands which included Carrownluggaun and that of Main Street and Tooraree.

Sometime in the mid-nineteenth century the townlands and Main Street with its property and outhouses were leased by Edmund Taaffe of the Taaffe (Kilkelly) estate. Philip Taaffe took over the lease of the property and outhouses in Main Street. The Taaffe estate contained

lands in the parishes of Began, Annagh and Aghamore, barony of Costello, Co. Mayo, and in the parish of Templetogether, barony of Ballymoe, Co. Galway. Philip Taaffe of Kilkelly, Co. Mayo, owned 1,313 acres in Co. Galway.

The Dillon family held a large estate in counties Mayo and Roscommon. Theobald Dillon of Loughglynn was granted over 4,700 acres by patent in December 1680. The main part of their estate was in County Mayo where they owned extensive lands in the parishes of Aghamore, Annagh, Began, Castlemore, Knock, Kilbeagh, Kilcolman and Kilmovee in the barony of Costello.

In 1876, Viscount Dillon owned 83,749 acres in county Mayo; 5,435 in county Roscommon and 136 in county Westmeath. The land and property in part of South Main Street was owned by Viscount Dillon.

## The Town of Ballyhaunis

Ballyhaunis town was at that time a small but compact village in the parishes of Annagh and Began, barony of Costello. It held petty sessions every alternate Tuesday and was a dispensary district in the Claremorris union. The petty sessions took place in the Petty Sessions House near the RC Chapel opposite the Fairgreen and across from the RIC Barracks. The Courthouse was eventually built in its present site in Main Street in 1875 as it is today, but has been refurbished and renovated on a number of occasions since that time.

The town of Ballyhaunis was in the Protestant and Catholic diocese of Tuam and it had the Midland Great Western Railway. It had a large market weekly and six fairs during the year mainly for horses and cattle. The population varied at that time following much emigration and demise in the previous years due mainly to the famine. In 1851, the population in the town was 378; in 1861 it was 608; in 1881 it was 722; in 1891 it was 911 and in 1893 it was 1,030.

The Royal Irish Constabulary police and barracks were originally located near the Fairgreen. The Post Office was located in Main Street and letters from all parts were transported from Claremorris to Ballyhaunis at 8.30 in the morning and were dispatched at 5 o'clock each evening. Later in the nineteenth century it provided a telegraph service. A dispensary doctor was appointed sometime after the Famine, approximately 1848, when the country was divided up into districts and a doctor was appointed to each. Dr. Crean was appointed to the district of Began and Ballyhaunis. Trade had greatly increased in the 1880s and the town became one of the most progressive towns in the west.





## The Streetscape

The landscape of the town has changed little since that time though there has been development of the streets to the north and south. The layout of the town was typical of that which developed from the Cromwellian times where there was one Main Street with a square and two streets extending from it. The streets and roads were not paved or tarred. There was a soft type of gravel on the road and the road on Main Street was up and down hill and broad in width.

The mode of transport for people was by horse and cart, pony and trap, side-car and a more elaborate horse carriage particularly for the people of means or the landed gentry. Bicycles came into existence in the late nineteenth century.

The large houses, property, premises and outhouses on the Main Street were built by the Anglo Irish or agents of the landlords in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The town itself was smaller and had one major street (Main Street) which extended from just above the RC Chapel (Church of the Virgin Mary and St. Patrick) opposite the Fairgreen down to the Square as we know it today. The Church was replaced by St. Patrick's Church at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Upper Main Street had not developed at that time. Beyond the RC Chapel there was only land which was effectively owned by the Dillon or Knox estates. Also opposite the RC Chapel near the Fairgreen was the Royal Constabulary Barracks which was eventually relocated to the site of the present Garda Station in Main Street. Bridge Street was also in existence. The other street was Knox Street in the townland of Pollnacraoghy and whose name is still in existence from that time and takes its name from the Knox estate. Clare Street as we know it today had not developed and was in the townland of Hazelhill.

## The People and Occupations

Some of the people and families who lived in Main Street between the period 1858 and 1890 included Smiths, Regans, Jordans, Kavanaghs, McHughs, Flynns, Englishes, Folliards, Delaneys, Lyons, Caulfields, Rattigans, Harringtons, Murphys, Tighes, Veldons, Walshes, Reillys, Nearys, Byrnes, Biestys, Freeleys.

The history of Main Street is a microcosm of the history of any town in Ireland. The majority of the residents of the town and of Main Street were Roman Catholic though a number of residents in the town who were of Anglo Irish descent were Protestant as well as a number of the Royal Irish Constabulary force.

The businesses were mainly Publicans, Merchants, Tailors, Dressmakers, Victuallers, Butter Merchants, Milliners, Grocers, Spirit Dealers, Drapers, Timber Merchants, Boot Makers, Shoemakers, Chemists,

Hardware and Tailors.

From the middle to the end of the nineteenth century the town grew and developed and there was an increase in population. Business thrived and relative to the time, people were fairly prosperous. This relative prosperity provided much needed work and apprenticeships for young men and women. Even with this development, in contrast to today, there was gender inequality in life and in the workplace.

Women were subservient to men and had no right to vote. Voting rights lay with men who were freehold property owners (generally Protestant) and were over twenty-one years of age. The man was the head of the family and very rarely did women own property unless she was widowed. Women stayed at home on marriage to care for the family and did not go out to work. Marriages were usually arranged and were between families of means, and a dowry was transferred from the bride's father to the prospective husband's family. Sometimes this practice was breached and couples met by introduction or in other ways.

In the mid-nineteenth century it was perceived that only women of a lower class worked outside the home. Irish women looked to the Victorians as role models in behaviour, lifestyle, dress and appearance. The Irish were trying to establish themselves in society. Many of the businesses and households in Main Street employed domestic servants, yard boys and apprentices. The apprenticeship in drapery, tailoring, dressmaking, eggery, butter making, shoemaking, hardware, butchering or in the merchant trade could take any length of time from five to eight years. The apprentice was usually a young man of fourteen years. Sometimes it was an advantage for the apprentice as he was guaranteed work and small wages. For the business owner the work was done cheaply. The apprentice usually lived in with the family or household.

Young girls of fourteen or fifteen years of age who went into domestic service had to adhere to a rigidly defined sphere of domestic and moral duties and restrictions. She also lived-in with the family and could be with the family all her life unless she got married. Women completed their education at thirteen or fourteen years of age. Rarely did girls receive secondary education unless the family had the financial means to send them to boarding school, which at the time were being established by the religious orders in Ireland. It was only children of families with social connections, financial means and status in society who had opportunities to attend university.

Households in Main Street also kept boarders with payment for board and lodgings. Also some outhouses were rented out by the occupier of the property to labourers or workers and their families. In effect, some





houses in Main Street housed a number of families at that time.

### Society, Property and Change

The people who had property in Main Street or indeed anywhere in Ireland at that time did not own the land or property. All property was owned or leased by the Anglo Irish Landlords or landed gentry and rents were paid to the landlords by the Irish people who had the premises or businesses in Main Street. There were designated days when rents were to be paid, referred to as 'Gale Days' – usually in May or November of the year.

Oftentimes there were absentee landlords, and agents were appointed by the landlords to collect the rents. As business improved the rents were increased. As long as business was good and rents were being paid, there was an harmonious landlord-tenant relationship. The situation was very different in rural areas and in other parts of Ireland where the land was poor and rents were increased and the landlord-tenant relationship was not as favourable.

Beneath the surface of this landlord-tenant relationship and within the psyche of all the property dwellers and businesses in Main Street there was the desire to own their property and not to have to continue to pay rents to agents or landlords. In a sense the mindset was similar to that at national level.

The landlord who leased the ground and lands in Main Street and to whom rents were being paid was Philip Taaffe (Kilkelly) estate. He, at times, employed an agent to collect rents from tenants.

At national level saw a vigorous campaign for Irish Home Rule. There were tensions, agitation and social unrest throughout the country against the landowning class. Proponents and leaders who spoke out and led the campaign for justice, equality and land reform were Daniel O'Connell, Michael Davitt, and Charles Stewart Parnell.

The interests of tenant farmers were foremost in the campaign – fair rent, free sale and fixity of tenure. The direct campaign and social unrest did not directly impact on the residents or property dwellers in Main Street. The events and consequences of all the agitation, agrarian violence and unrest led to the landlords of the various estates around the country not being paid the rents by the tenant farmers. This then resulted in increasing debt



### Auction of Philip Taaffe Lands by the Encumbered Estates Court in 1854

for the landlords and their estates.

The Encumbered Estates Court was established in 1849 to oversee the sale of estates burdened with unsustainable levels of debt. Many of the estates continued to own or lease their property right up to the 1880s.

The majority of the landlords and owners of estates had left Ireland by the end of the nineteenth century. When the estates were auctioned off, the agent often purchased the property or lands and in turn leased it to the property dweller in Main Street. Many of the businesses in Main Street continued to be owned by former agents of the landlord and rented out until the end of the nineteenth century until the property dwellers or businesses eventually purchased outright the lands and property. In many cases, the rents were being paid by tenants to the agents right up to the late 1960s or early 1970s.

*"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the Spring of hope, it was the Winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only".*

(Charles Dickens – A Tale of Two Cities)







The 2011 AGM of Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns was held on 9th March last. The officers for the current year were elected as follows: **Chairperson:** Nell Rochford; **Hon. Secretary:** Mary Donnelly; **Hon. Treasurers:** Moyra Patterson and Frances Mulhern.

The Committee met on a monthly basis during the year and activities got under way with National Spring Clean Day on Good Friday, 22nd April. Our thanks to all the volunteers who joined committee members on the day and carried out a comprehensive clean-up, particularly some long-standing black spots.

### Litter Action League

Mayo County Council's Litter Action League began in April kick-starting our twice weekly litter picks, and Mike Griffin embarked on his customary Sunday morning street cleaning. Many members also carried out litter picks more often in their own time as well as flower planting and weeding.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts Ballyhaunis did not reach the semi-final stage of the competition. Street cleaning has been severely cut back by Mayo County Council, and, with the best will in the world, voluntary efforts by Tidy Towns fall short of the standard achieved by full time Council employee John Waldron. His services are sorely missed and this fact is reflected in the National Tidy Towns report where it states that litter control in Ballyhaunis was less good this year than in previous years.

### Summer Flowers

Our Rural Social Scheme workers, T. J. Fallon, Tom McLoughlin and P. J. Higgins provided invaluable assistance throughout the year. Their tasks included planting up all the hanging baskets, window boxes, containers etc. and putting them in place in early June.

They also carried out power washing, landscaping work, planted flowers and shrubs, picked up litter and trimmed grass margins on approach roads and kept the recycle banks area and the riverbank area tidied up. Arrangements were put in place with Rural Social Scheme supervisor Anne Moran whereby John Joe Lyons and P. J. Higgins watered all the floral displays twice monthly in evening time.

### National School Children's Competition

This year we decided to expand the National School Children's competition to include an essay, poem or slogan with environmental and anti-litter themes. Every class in Scoil Iosa participated and the entries were imaginative, creative and interesting. Some of the winning entries formed part of our National Tidy Towns Competition entry. So impressed were the adjudicators that our loss of marks in the Litter Control category was offset by an increase earned by the school children's efforts.

### Wildlife Information Project

The Wildlife Information Project in the Friary grounds and by the river is still a work in progress. A grant of €6,503 was received under the LEADER programme in January of this year for the project. The information panels really

impressed our Tidy Towns adjudicators who described them as 'among the nicest seen anywhere in the country' and awarded us seven extra marks in the Wildlife & Natural Amenities category. We made contact with agencies such as Forest & Wildlife Service and Western Regional Fisheries Board as well as local

sources for information and material to display. We are grateful to Margie Phillips for her assistance in having professionally produced posters prepared, and these will be put in place shortly.





## National Tidy Towns Competition 2011

In the National Tidy Towns Competition adjudicators visited on 3rd July and we received our report in September. Ballyhaunis was awarded 248 marks out of a possible 400 – an increase of 9 marks on last year. The following is a summary of the report:

### Overall Development Approach 40/50

*The adjudicators acknowledged the comprehensive and well illustrated submission which facilitated the adjudication of 'your lovely town Ballyhaunis'. The Committee itself, links with stakeholders in the community and communication methods were favourably noted as was strong local interest in the adjudication report. The report states: 'hopefully no one will be offended; all comments are offered in a spirit of constructive criticism'.*

### The Built Environment 34/50

*Property owners who improved the roadside façade of their premises were commended; special mention was given to E. J. Phillips, The Ribbon, the old National School, Parochial Hall and Moran's shop although this list is not exhaustive and apologies are offered to those not mentioned. Other premises in need of improvements, broken signs and plastic neon fascia were noted. The problem of derelict/vacant premises, particularly those which form a focal point in the streetscape was noted and hope expressed that efforts to deal with them will be successful.*

### Landscaping 32/50

*Container floral displays in Clare Street and many other locations in the town were admired as was the public art in the Square. Other landscaping also admired included the entrance to the Enterprise Centre, SuperValu car park, the church grounds, the area along the river to the swimming pool and the junction with the Ballindine road; again the list is not exhaustive. Arrangements with the Abbey Partnership for the enhancement of the Friary grounds/Town Park were described as fruitful. Certain areas at the name plates on the Charlestown road and Ballindine road were overgrown.*

### Wildlife & Natural Amenities 25/50

*The report states: 'Themed wildlife information panels on the river walk and in the Town Park are among the nicest seen anywhere in the country by your adjudicator and we look forward to the installation of the wildlife information'. Consultations with professional bodies on the design and content of the proposed displays were commended. Plans to liaise with local schools regarding wildlife/nature field trips were encouraged. The Guilers Memorial Park near the swimming pool was admired.*

### Litter Control 32/50

*Litter control was described as 'less good this year than in previous years' with litter noted along Main Street and at the river bank, and an overflowing litter bin at Supermacs. The poor condition and lack of litter bins came in for much criticism; only one nice looking bin was noted on Main Street, and Bridge Street had no bin at all. However the adjudicators expressed the hope that 'this drop in standards is just a temporary lapse, and a loss of marks is offset by an increase earned by the school children for their excellent work on litter control and tidiness in the anti-litter competition'.*

### Waste Minimisation 10/20

*The recycling banks were described as well maintained despite the presence of two old prams! Clothing banks at West Halal Meats and SuperValu were favourably noted as were the National school children's entries in the anti-litter competition on a recycling theme. Use of composters and water harvesting was recommended; emphasis on prevention at source in addition to recycling is necessary in order to improve the performance of Ballyhaunis in this category.*

### Tidiness 15/30

*The adjudicators found the absence of overhead wires in the main thoroughfare of the town pleasing to the eye, and hope that other areas will follow suit. Better enclosure by landscaping or other attractive means was recommended for commercial yards on Claremorris road. Fly-posting and illegal signage was discouraged.*

### Residential Areas 26/40

*Roadside facades and boundary walls in a number of areas were found to be in need of cleaning/painting. The entrance to Manor Brook looked well; Clare Court was described as charming.*

### Roads, Streets and Back Areas 27/50

*The mural to the rear of Finn Footwear and the feature to the rear of Paddy Phillips Bar caught the adjudicators' eye, and street furniture appealed, with the exception of poor looking litter bins and some lamp standards. Road and footpath surfaces were mostly good. Some enhancement was recommended for the extensive stretch of roadside walls at Dawn Ballyhaunis premises.*

### General Impression 7/10

*The report simply states: 'The overall appearance of Ballyhaunis is favourable and public art is an attractive feature'. Copies of the report have been sent to the owners of all premises mentioned, as well as local representatives and County Council officials with responsibility for the Ballyhaunis area.*





## Thanks

We acknowledge the support and generosity of many people throughout the year.

- Everyone who contributed to our church gate collection in May and to our mite boxes.
- Ryan's SuperValu for sponsorship.
- All who pick litter in public areas in their neighbourhood in their own time.
- Mayo County Council Area Engineer Tom Feerick and local Overseer Tommy Freyne, also John Waldron and his colleagues who assisted us in disposing of the bags of litter collected in the Good Friday clean-up and on our weekly picks.

- Anne Moran, supervisor of the Rural Social Scheme and members T. J. Fallon, Tom McLoughlin, P. J. Higgins, John Joe Lyons and Sean Biesty.

## New Members

In addition to the officers mentioned at the beginning of this article, Tidy Towns Committee members include Helen Biesty, Michael Drudy, Mike Griffin, Jeet Grover, Taran Grover, Michael Heffernan, Gabrielle Lyons, Frances Maye and Kieran Timoney.

New members with new ideas are the life blood of any organisation especially Tidy Towns. We appeal to anyone with an interest in our environment to consider joining us and spending an hour or two each week working together for our community.

# Ballyhaunis Community Games

BY STELLA O'NEILL

In January of this year a meeting was held to see if there were any people interested in reviving the Community Games. It was a number of years since Ballyhaunis had taken part. Unfortunately, this meeting saw a very small turn-out, but nevertheless we decided to enter a Girls Under-12 Gaelic Football team and to organise an athletic event. The Girls Football team got to the County semi-final against Charlestown and put in a very good performance, but Charlestown proved too strong. In fact Charlestown went on to win the final and they represented Mayo at the national finals.

On June 19th the County Athletic Finals were held and the following represented Ballyhaunis: Maya Phillips, Niamh O'Neill, Henry Concannon, Patrick Caulfield, Ellen Phillips, Helen Gallagher, and Brian O'Neill. We also entered an Under-14 Boys Relay team, comprising Cathal Carney, Liam Herr, Brian O'Neill and Sean Carrick. All athletes ran very well and we had two medal winners. The Relay team took bronze and Niamh O'Neill took the gold in the 100 metre sprint, and went forward to represent Mayo at the National finals in August. Niamh trained hard over the summer and all the work paid off as she won both her heats and the Semi-final. She took the silver medal in the final. Well done to all involved.



**Niamh O'Neill, Silver Medallist in the National Community Games Final.**



**Ballyhaunis Community Games athletes with Stella O'Neill at the County Athletic Finals.**





# Ballyhaunis Swimming Pool

BY AGATHA HIGGINS, SECRETARY

Ballyhaunis Swimming Pool opened its doors on Saturday, 2nd July. We never open the pool without it being blessed by our local priest, but this time it was different, as it was Fr. Benny McHale's last summer in Ballyhaunis.

This year before the pool opened it needed quite a lot of plumbing work. It was hit very badly by burst pipes over the cold winter, but thanks to Mayo County Council all the work was carried out and replacement of broken items replaced in time for us to open the pool for the summer weeks.

Even though the summer weather never reached high temperatures, or there was no sunshine at all at times, the numbers using the pool daily never diminished. We also ran one Irish Water Safety course in August this year

and it was very well attended. Thanks to Deirdre Donnelly (Irish Water Safety Instructor) for all the effort she put into the course.

We finished our season with the Swimming Gala & Party. The children had a great day. All the gala events were organised by the lifeguards and office staff. They organised a variety of swimming and novelty events, e.g. three-legged race, obstacle course, biggest splash. It guaranteed all children went home with a medal. Our overall trophies, of which there are two, went to Hannah Clarke, for Most Improved Swimmer, and Áine Phillips for Best Attendance. Congratulations to all winners.

We would like to thank our Lifeguards: Lisa Jordan, Maurice Murphy, and our Office Staff. We look forward to seeing you all again next year.



Ballyhaunis Swimming Pool, Summer 2011. Lisa Jordan (Lifeguard), Jenny Cleary, Aoife Conway, Cormac Phillips, Gary Higgins, Cathal Carney, Liam Foody, Aoife Nolan, Aoibhinn Gallagher, Lauren Gallagher, Demi Greally, Kaitlyn Clarke, Maurice Murphy (Lifeguard), Julie Gardner, Aoife Nolan, Emer Kiely, Jessica Carroll, Jack Coyne, Marina Carney, Alannah Nolan, Emma Nolan, Rebecca Bowen, Danielle Coyne, Eimear Murray, Roisín Ní Shuilleabhain, Claire Fahy, Maedhbh Caulfield, Aine Phillips, Hannah Clarke, Siobhán Green, Kasey Clarke, P.J. Greally, Niamh Foody, Deirbhle Finn Richardson, Gemma Foody, Sinéad Kiely.



# Bea's Journey

BY BEA (FINN) BAIRD

My name is Bea (Finn) Baird. I live in the United States of America. I was born in Reisk, Knock, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

Sometime ago, I was approached by my cousin to write an essay about my life after leaving Ireland, as a young child, for Annagh Magazine.

In 1947, I left Ireland and sailed for the U.S.A. I was the fourth of five children born to Catherine Lyons (Carrowkeel, Ballyhaunis) and John Martin Finn of Reisk.

I suppose I could start this writing as far back as I can remember. I vaguely remember my mother as she passed away when I was five years old of cancer. I remember what she looked like and I also remember a little ditty she used to sing around the house. It went as follows. *"I went to bed, me sleepy head and forgot to bolt the door"*. My dear mother was only thirty-nine years old when she died. Six months earlier, she had given birth to my youngest brother, Michael.

My father was a farmer, as most of the men were in Ireland at the time. He tried hard to raise us by himself and took care of us as well as he could. He was a wonderful father and very well liked. We were all happy little kids frolicking around in the garden and fields. We all had chores to do. I would bring the water from the well three days a week. Then it was one of the others that would take over. I also remember being in the bog with my father. I helped him foot the turf.

We went to Larganboy School. I remember walking down on the ditch to school. Mr. Hestor was the principal and Mrs. Prendergast and Miss Farrell were the teachers.

Time went on and I was in the fourth class. I came home from school one day in July and was met by my sister, Mary and my brother, Brian along with my neighbours, John Forde and Peter 'Dev' Waldron. They told me that my father was taken to Castlebar Hospital with severe pain on his right side. The next day, Mary was on her way to the hospital when she was met by Dev Waldron, who had very bad news. My father had died on the operating table of peritonitis. His appendix had burst and infection set in. He was forty-seven. Mary was fourteen, Brian, thirteen years, Pat, eleven years, I was ten years and Michael was five years old.

Only Mary and Brian were allowed to attend my father's funeral at Began church because they were the eldest. I can also remember Pat, myself and Mike standing at the edge of our garden watching the procession. I'm sure there was an adult with us at the time but I don't remember who it was.

After that, we were all separated. Mary went to Cloonbook with my Aunt Margaret Clancy. Pat went to our cousins, John and Delia Guilfoyle, of Greenwood. Brian and Mike went to Carrowkeel to my grandfather and his son, Michael Lyons, our uncle. I went to Largan, to my aunt Nan Morley.

## Sailed from Cobh

We went to the U.S.A about four months later in November to stay with our aunts on our father's side in



Bea (Finn) Baird (left) with her sister Mary (right), and Mrs. Simpson (centre) on board the ship 'The Mauretania', bound for America in 1947.

Philadelphia, PA. Harry Truman was just elected and we had our first Thanksgiving in Philadelphia. My father had five sisters and two brothers who emigrated to the U.S.A. He was the only one who did not leave Ireland.

I remember Mary and I coming back to Reisk to say goodbye to my brothers, friends and our dear neighbours from the village. Many of them were crying as we stood on the ditch that we used to walk on to school. Someone (in the U.S.A.) told someone in Ireland to make sure we got permanent waves as we would not





be able to come into the U.S.A. because the Statue Of Liberty would not let us in. The two of us looked like refugees with curly hair and skinny legs. We did not care as we did not want to leave Ireland and the only people we knew. Mrs. Simpson, who lived in the U.S.A., was visiting her family in Largan and she was returning to the country. She was appointed to be our guardian. We sailed from Cobh to Liverpool and boarded the ship 'The Mauritania'. It took eight days to get to the U.S.A. I was sea-sick the whole trip and that did not go down well with Mrs. Simpson. I think we saw her once after we arrived. I'm sure she is long gone by now.



**Bea (Finn) Baird (right) just before leaving for USA in 1947, with her cousin Dell Morley.**

The ship was very late coming into New York Harbour and I saw many people of different colours and nationalities. I saw some black people and thought they were statues. I never heard of people of a different colour, much less see them.

After arriving, Mary and I were again separated. Mary went to live with my Aunt Winifred Finn and

I went to live with my Aunt Margaret Finn Joyce and her daughter Mary Collussi. Mary Collussi took me to school to be enrolled in the fourth grade. She mentioned to the nun at the school that my name, Bridget should be changed to Beatrice, because Bridget was not a popular name here at the time. I started to use Beatrice and still do, even though Bridget is very popular here now. I'm still Bea to everyone.

I'm sure I was the topic of conversation at the nun's dinner table, especially the first few months. There were eighteen nuns in the convent. Most of them were first generation Irish. I suppose I had a little brogue when I first came and they tried every which way to make me talk. I remember a train station near school and when the train would go by, the whistle would blow (Whoo, Whoo) and I said to one of the nuns that I heard a cow lowing. They had a great laugh at that. Then I used to try to blow out the electric lights and could not understand why they would not go out. The nuns were all very good to me and made me feel special.



**Bea (Finn) Baird on her wedding day in 1964 with her aunt Winifred Finn.**

After finishing seventh grade, Aunt Margaret and Mary Collussi moved quite a few miles away, so I had to go to another school. After that, I went to live with my Uncle Pat and Aunt Julia so that I could attend a business school for two years. My Uncle Pat was a wonderful man, always smiling and pleasant. They had eight children. Their youngest child was Catherine Patricia. We called her Pat and she was the same age as me. We were very close throughout our lives. It broke my heart when she passed away last September, 2010. We were like sisters and I miss her a lot.

After eighth grade, I went to live with my Aunt Winifred and my sister, Mary. I worked for a few different companies along the way and when I was 24, I met my future husband, Joe Baird. Joe's mother was from Co. Armagh, Ireland. I never met her as she had died several years before. Joe was a wonderful man and we married in 1963. We had a daughter, Maureen, who is now happily married and has two boys, aged ten and twelve. Maureen was a great visitor to Ireland in her single days (about eight times). She has visited different parts of Mayo and other counties. She knows many people in Ireland.

### Reunion

We had a family reunion in 1977. It was the first time I had been back since I left. We all had a wonderful time. Some of us stayed at my brother Pat Finn's house in Erriff, Ballyhaunis.





Mary was married to Jim Dugery, from Donegal, so she and her family spent time there. Brian was married to Philomena Duffy, from Sligo and spent some time there. Joe, Maureen and I spent our time with Pat and Mike in Erriff. Everyone eventually ended up in Mayo. It was the first time I had seen Pat in twenty-five years. Mike had visited the U.S.A. a few times, so I saw him more. We had a great time and I remembered all the relatives even though I had not seen them in all those years.

A lot of things have happened since then. My husband died in 1999. He had been sick for two years. Brian died at fifty-seven years old of a heart attack. Mary died of Cancer at age sixty and Pat died in Ireland of Cancer in 2004. So out of all my siblings, it's just Mike and I left.

I'm hoping to go back to Ireland next year and spend some time with my brother and all my good relatives. They are Noreen and Gerry Walsh, Ballyglass, Ballyhaunis, Margaret and Seamus Dempsey of Balla, John and Annette Clancy and the rest of the Clancy family of Cloonbook, the Guilfoyles of Greenwood, Ballyhaunis, Mary Jordan, of Ballyhaunis, and Eileen Morley of Bekan, Claremorris and other relatives. I also want to see more of that beautiful country and its scenery.

I hope you did not find this story too boring, but that's the way it was. We all go through obstacles in life but we survive and go on. I have been in the U.S.A. most of my life and I love it but there will always be a special place in my heart for Ireland. As the song goes, *"My heart is at home in old Ireland in the county of Mayo"* (not Armagh).



**Michael Finn outside the old home in Reisk.**



**Michael Finn and his sister Bea, taken in Philadelphia in recent years.**

## Irish International Ladies U-19 Soccer Captain.



Becky Walsh, Salthill, Co. Galway, and Republic of Ireland International, receives the Women's Under 19 International Player of the Year award from Robert Finnegan, Chief Executive of 3. / FAI International Soccer Awards at the RTÉ Studios, Donnybrook, Dublin, 6th Feb. 2011.

Becky is the Irish International Ladies Under 19 Soccer Captain.

She is granddaughter of the Late Patrick and Delia Regan of Gurteenbeg and 1 Abbey St., Ballyhaunis.

*Picture by David Maher / SPORTSFILE.*





# A Year With Gracenotes 2010-2011

BY MARTINA KELLY

"Art thou troubled? Music will calm thee." These words were immortalised in song by Handel, and the reason I quote them is that they remind me of why we sing! Between the hours of half past eight and half past ten on Thursday nights, the Parochial Hall is filled with the sound of music (with some chat and laughter thrown in of course!) For those two hours, all of our worries and troubles are left at the door, as we learn new pieces and try to remember the old ones. Not only do we enjoy what we do, but our singing also brings enjoyment to the many people who hear us during the year.

The first event in our diary for the 2010-11 season was the launch of our CD, 'Ave Maris Stella', in October 2010. The launch took place where the CD itself was recorded, in the Friary, and we had a great night celebrating with family and friends. We are delighted with the finished product and the manner in which it has been received, in Ballyhaunis and the surrounding areas. Many thanks to all who have supported us in this venture.

Our next performance took us to Curry on December 10th where we received a very warm welcome, despite the arctic conditions! This concert was a fundraiser in aid of the local church. Two days later, we performed our

annual Christmas concert in the Friary. The Ballyhaunis Community School Choir agreed to sing with us. They had been making headlines for their performances in the 'Our School's got Talent' competition at the time, and we were delighted to share the stage with such young talent. Unfortunately, for both the Community School Choir and ourselves, we were in competition with the elements that night, and the bad roads kept many people from venturing out. Nevertheless, all proceeds raised went to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

It was all systems go after the Christmas break. As well as performing in such far flung places as Ballinaheglis (private party in January), Longford (benefit for a local National School) and Dunmore (Choral Festival), we also had to rehearse for the Cork Choral Festival, which is usually the highlight of our year. We knew a big commitment was required from everyone if we were to have any chance in the 'Premier Female Choir' competition, and that is what everyone gave. It certainly paid off when we were awarded 2nd place.

As I said, the Cork Choral Festival is usually the highlight, and indeed the end of our singing year, but this year we went straight back to rehearsing for our trip



**Gracenotes at the Salt Mines, Wieliczka, Poland.**

Front, L-R: Anna Butler, Miriam Winston, Ita Fahey, Mary Patterson, Moira Stratford, Laura Brogan, Maureen Thornton, Eimear Thornton, Nuala Cahill, Mary Dawson.

Back: Ursula Gilhawley, Xanthe Pratt, Anne Lyons, Marayde O'Brien, Claire Larkin, Annamarie Eagney, Moira Delaney, Agatha Higgins, Mary Lanigan, Anna Henry, Marge Hierons, Geraldine Collins and Martina Kelly.



to Krakow, Poland. Early in July twenty of our members (and a few groupies) set off for five days in this beautiful city. The most memorable moments of our trip included two performances in front of very appreciative audiences, a trip to the Salt Mines in Wieliczka where we gave an impromptu performance of Alleluia in the underground chapel, and of course our educational trip to Auschwitz. After this 'holiday', it was time to take a well deserved break.

Even with such a busy schedule, we still found time to sing at many weddings in the locality. We are proud to be able to provide this service and it gives us great pleasure to be such an important part of what will be one

of the most cherished days of a couples' life. If you would like to enquire about this service please contact our very capable musical director, Laura Brogan (086) 8213864 or indeed any member of our committee: Maureen Thornton, Eimear Thornton, Anna Henry, Anna Butler, Xanthe Pratt, Moira Stratford, Una Shields, Mary Lanigan or Martina Kelly.

Finally, if you wish to find out more about our choir, are interested in joining, want to see some photos or even listen to some of our music, why not check out our website [www.gracenoteschoir.com](http://www.gracenoteschoir.com) (Many thanks to Moira Stratford for all her hard work). Also, you can find us on facebook!

## Annagh Wheelers – Day of Cycling for Martin Connery

BY GRAHAME CLEARY

Earlier this year Annagh Wheelers Cycling Club lost a founding member, a true friend and one heck of a cyclist with the untimely death of Martin Connery in April. Martin was a stalwart of the club and had been there from the start. A veteran of many cycling challenges over the years: the pick of the bunch being the arduous cycle from Mizen to Malin in under twenty-four hours in 1998; the countless Tours of Mayo; the various trips to the Alps and Pyrenees; and the Flight of the Earls Cycle in 2008. Apart from his obvious talent as a cyclist, what attracted Martin to cycling was his love of the bike – quite simply, Martin loved cycling. It was with this sole sentiment that we decided to organise a Day of Cycling to celebrate his enthusiasm for and love of cycling.

The raison d'être of the Day of Cycling was that anyone with two wheels could complete as many laps as they wanted of an agreed route. The route chosen was the classic 25 mile loop of Ballyhaunis – Knock – Claremorris (not forgetting Barnacarroll Hill!) and involved a total of six laps (150 miles). With a route and date decided, word began to spread slowly over the summer. Bikes were dusted down, wheels were pumped and arses that hadn't sat on a bicycle saddle since 1985 began to experience a rude awakening. Wednesday evening training spins throughout the summer also helped people to find their cycling legs.

The day itself (September 3rd) saw over fifty cyclists taking part – some cycled one lap; some cycled six; some took their time and had ice-cream in Knock; some cycled on their kid's mountain bikes, some had God on their

side; some ate their weight in sandwiches in Gill's; and above all, most rediscovered their love of cycling. Though I'm sure that many will confess to losing that love as quickly as they had rediscovered it – the windy conditions and saddle soreness not helping matters.

Apart from a cycling event, the day was an occasion for people from as far away as Kilkenny, Donegal and Greenwood to mix and mingle over the vast array of refreshments on offer in Gills, ensuring the calorie count was almost as high as l'Alpe d'Huez itself. It was a day that Martin would have thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed.

### Thanks

An event of this scale does not happen by accident – there is some design in it. Firstly, a big word of thanks to everyone who cycled on the day – no matter how far you pedalled the day wouldn't have been possible without you; to the Connery family for giving their full support to the event; to everyone who supplied us with great grub that helped keep the calorie count high; to Gill's bar for hosting over 50 sweaty lycra-clad cyclists throughout the day and finally, to everyone who contributed to the local St. Vincent de Paul with over €1,000 raised.

The Day of Cycling was designed as a one-off tribute to a very gifted cyclist and a good friend. The overwhelming success of the event means that it has taken a life of its own and will hopefully become an annual event in the Annagh Wheelers calendar. Time to start dusting down that old Raleigh!



Martin Connery





# Ballyhaunis Can Be Your Gateway To The World...

BY DAVID CONNOLLY

David comes from Lecarrow, Ballyhaunis and currently works as an Assistant Professor at Aalborg University in Copenhagen, Denmark. Prior to this, he completed a degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Limerick, and was awarded the President's Gold Medal for outstanding academic achievement, obtaining the highest results in the University for the graduating class of 2007. He then completed a PhD at the University of Limerick, exploring 'The Integration of Renewable Energy in Ireland.' During this time, he received top honours at the Globe Forum 2010 convention on Sustainability, winning the award for 'Best Early Career Researcher', presented by Mary Robinson.

With the foundations of his education beginning in Ballyhaunis, we spoke to David about the key influences, or defining moments throughout his academic journey.

## *Do you recall your first day at school?*

My first day at school was at St. Joseph's Convent. I remember thinking that the building was very old, the roof seemed very high, and there was a strange emptiness in the hallways. My memory of that very first day is pretty vague (although Kieran has the video footage)... but there is one story that does stand out. I sat near the back of the classroom, not far from the door, and, not long after 9am, I began to feel a bit peckish... so, delighted with my very own packed lunch, I started eating my sandwiches!

When I think of primary school, I have almost entirely good memories. I think it was very innocent time and full of enjoyable occasions such as birthday parties, First Communions, Confirmations, and free summers! I never seemed to think more than one day ahead and life was stress-free.

## *What about secondary school?*

Well, we were finally back in a mixed school with the girls, so that was the key focus for the first year or two I suppose! It's certainly a time that you're trying very hard to 'fit in'...and you see a lot of changes in the way people act, and you see a lot of people get a hard time.

Secondary school is a very strange period in everyone's life. You're trying to overcome so many challenges all at



once. You have the challenge of meeting new people, experiencing a new school, getting to know new teachers, a new learning method, going through your teenage years, and after all of these – trying to set up the foundations for your future career. It's only when I look back now, that I see that the decisions I made during that time, about my priorities in life, fundamentally influenced what I did afterwards.

## *Given the impact that secondary school had on your future, what would you say to a student in Ballyhaunis Community School today?*

It can feel like a very pressurised and enforced environment during the secondary school years. You feel like you have so little choice: at home, in school, and socially. At home, you follow the instructions of your parents in terms of waking, eating, sleeping and travelling; in other words, your whole lifestyle is defined for you. At school, your choices feel restricted in terms of where you go to school, the teachers you have, the subjects you learn, and what you wear. Then socially, you are limited in terms of the people you meet on a daily basis; even if you don't get along with someone, you still have to meet with them every day. Considering all of this, it can seem like you can't express your own personality, as well as your own way of learning and living. When I think back to secondary school, I feel this fundamental lack of choice creates the biggest challenge for academic development: peer pressure.

If I could say one thing to a student in Ballyhaunis Community School today, it would be to always remember why you go to school... it is partly to make friends, partly to develop talents, and partly to educate





yourself; but the primary reason you are there is to create choices for your future, not to diminish them. The principal objective when you leave secondary school is to be in a position where you can choose what you want to do with your future, and the safest way to create options for yourself is to make the most of the free education you have been given. Therefore, no matter how difficult it seems and no matter how pointless it all looks, always remember that you are not learning about Christopher Columbus because Hewlett Packard need to know him to make print cartridges, you are learning about him to show that you have a certain level of learning ability. Unfortunately, during my time in secondary school I repeatedly saw my peers, many of whom were more intelligent than me, diminish their options rather than create them. This seemed to happen because people wanted to make their life happier in the short-term and didn't seem to consider the long-term. For example, the priority for many was to play sport, for others it was to be popular, the 'rebel', or the 'joker'. The consequences of these options always seemed to reduce the focus on education and, in my view, education is the biggest creator of choice that we have. Our academic performance in secondary school will typically define how we will spend the rest of their lives. So just make sure that you are in position to decide how to spend the rest of your life, and that you are not limited to a certain path.

Finally, there is one really important point I would like to finish with. Even if you take my advice and leave secondary school with seven A1s in your Leaving Certificate, you still might find that college is not for you. However, at least you will be in a position to decide that it is not for you. I remember when I completed my college application in Leaving Certificate, the course I picked required approximately 450 points, but I was expecting to get approximately 550 points. Many of my friends thought I was crazy to pick a course that required 100 points less than I expected to get, but the reason I picked it wasn't because of the points, it was because I wanted to do it. Similarly, I was also told many times in secondary school that I shouldn't even worry about college because my father had a successful kitchen factory. It might be hard to believe now, but back in the early 2000s, Ireland had a booming construction sector, which made a kitchen factory look like a very attractive option for me. However, even though I always had this option for my future, I always wanted to have the option of doing something else and hence it was the key reason I worked hard in secondary school. Therefore, always remember that even if you believe you will never go to college, try your best to do as well as you can because when you leave Ballyhaunis Community School, you will never regret having options, but you may always regret having none.

Remember, it doesn't matter if you attended Ballyhaunis Community School or Blackrock College, everyone gets the same opportunity to succeed. This is one of the most wonderful things about Ireland: It doesn't matter who you are or where you are from, we are all given the same opportunity to succeed. Although personal circumstances will change from person to person, education is a fantastic opportunity to gain access to the world for anyone who wishes to do so.

### *So after the difficulties of secondary school, is it all plain sailing in college?*

Leaving home at 17 for a new city and a new life is very surreal experience. You know the day is coming, but until you drive out the gate, you never fully appreciate the magnitude of the choice you have just made. I recall it was a very hot sunny day when I moved to the University of Limerick. I arrived in the front door of my new house to discover that my housemate was a model, who would later become Ms. Limerick! Suddenly, I was starting to believe that the 'American Pie' depiction of college life was really true after all... how wrong I was.

The Leaving Certificate is difficult, daunting, and pressurising. Although academic life in college is not as intense, striking a balance between socialising and studying is difficult to manage. Once you arrive in college, you will soon realise a freedom you could only dream about at home. At 17, 18, 19, or whatever age you may be when you first grace the life of third-level, you will no longer only be master of your long-term destiny, you will also be master of your present. If you want to sleep-in... you can, if you want to go-out... you can, if you want to study... you can. As the saying goes, "with great power comes great responsibility" and for most of us, this sudden gift of power does not come with a complimentary gift of responsibility. Herein lays the major additional challenge of college life. Yes, you have just overcome the most pressurising exams of your life, but at least in secondary school you had all the home comforts. Now you have to put the same pressure on yourself to work hard, knowing that at any moment you have the choice to do something else! Therefore, if you do decide to go to college, you will be rewarded with a very satisfying and liberating experience, but remember it also comes with its own challenges (which I felt were more than worthwhile).

### *Do you think you made the right decision, by continuing your education?*

Personally, I absolutely loved my Mechanical Engineering degree at the University of Limerick. I was in a class of approximately 130 people, I made life-long friends, and I knew from the outset that I picked the degree for me. I felt very fortunate to be part of a class which had a 'work-hard, play-hard' attitude. We always







**At the Globe Forum 2010 Convention on Sustainability, David was presented with the award for 'Best Early Career Researcher', by Mary Robinson.**

helped one another and studied for long hours into the night, but when the work was done, we all knew how to enjoy ourselves also! This essential work-life balance, along with a lot of hard work, made my degree very successful, in fact much more successful than I had ever imagined...

I finished my degree in May 2007 and afterwards, I got a job for the summer as a research assistant in the University of Limerick. I arrived home from Limerick one Friday evening and as usual, my first task was to open my post which my father always leaves on the table in my bedroom. One of the letters was from the University of Limerick and it was about my upcoming college graduation in August. I read in the letter that I had received the 'University Gold Medal', so my immediate reaction was, Gold Medal... what's that for? So, I called the number on the letter and enquired. Much to my surprise, the lady I spoke didn't know what it was for either! As a result, it was only on the day of my graduation that I found out that I had achieved the highest results in the college out of approximately 2200 students in the graduating class of 2007. When I look back on this experience, I think it really taught me something very important. Always try to do your best and don't concern yourself about what others are doing. If I had known that my results were so high, I honestly question if I would have continued to try so hard. I simply did so because it was the standard I had set for myself. It was just an added bonus that this standard was also publicly rewarded.

*So, after completing your undergraduate degree, why did you decide to complete a PhD?*

Due to the success of my undergraduate degree, I was offered a 3-year scholarship to do a PhD. It therefore made sense to undertake the PhD given the funding, the fact that it would offer me more opportunities for my future, and I knew that if I didn't do it then, I probably never would. The PhD was a very difficult experience, especially since it was a totally new subject area for me: renewable energy. However, after getting through it, I am very happy

I did it. I had so many unforgettable experiences during those 3.5 years and it all brought to where I am today, Copenhagen.

During my PhD I worked very closely with Aalborg University in Denmark. As people often know, Denmark is the world-leading developer of wind energy. This is thanks to a 40-year history of energy planning, which was the topic of my PhD. Therefore, by working very closely with them I was able to develop a whole new way of thinking, which was a truly enlightening experience. After I finished my PhD, they offered me a job as 'Assistant Professor in Energy Planning' at their Copenhagen campus. Funnily, just like the Gold Medal after my undergraduate degree, I had never anticipated such an exceptional reward for all of the hard work. So, even though leaving Ireland has been a very difficult thing to do for me as well as for those closest to me, I am enjoying this new and inspiring challenge.

*Looking back, what people inspired you along the way?*

The answer to this question is almost endless. However, there are definitely a few people who were instrumental in my life so far. Primarily, my parents (Kieran and Mary) and my girlfriend (Anna-Marie Tighe, also from Ballyhaunis) are a daily support in my life. Without their persistent support (and tolerance with ambitions), I would never have got where I am today. There is nothing I have ever done or achieved which they haven't been involved in. There have also been a number of instrumental teachers along the way: in Ballyhaunis this was particularly true for Mr. (Tom) Grogan and Mr. (Christopher) Ruane, who really suited my style of learning and definitely got the best out of me. Finally, countless other family members, friends, and neighbours



have all contributed to my life-journey to date, so all I can say is a sincere thanks to them all.

### *Has all of the hard work been worthwhile?*

This is a key question which I don't think I can fully answer. People use very different metrics to define the 'worth' of a career: some use money, others use the number of days off, while some want to feel like they are making a difference. This makes it difficult to generalise the 'worth' of my own career. However, I can say that in the last 48 hours I have visited four countries in Europe, which included eating a home-cooked meal of octopus in the Croatian countryside. There have been a few key experiences I have been afforded over the past few years: taking the role of keynote speaker at a conference (aged 23), being presented with an award by Mary Robinson (aged 24), and presenting my research in Dáil Éireann (this year, aged 25). None of these immensely rewarding achievements would have been possible without my education. However, this also required an exceptional amount of hard work, self-discipline, sacrifice, and

support from those around me. For some, this may be worthwhile, for others it may not. For me, I still haven't fully decided as I am only at the very beginning of my career, but so far it is promising! Therefore, I can honestly say that pursuing an education will not necessarily lead to an 'easy' life, but if you work hard enough to create the options you need, then it can most definitely lead to a very satisfying life. Maybe in a few decades I will be in a much better position to add to this one!

### *How do you see Ballyhaunis now?*

I was once told by a friend of mine, that when he meets people from Ballyhaunis and asks them where they are from, they always say Ballyhaunis, and not Mayo. He pointed this out because I had just answered that question with that exact reply! I am immensely proud of where I am from, grateful for the values that it has instilled in me, and sad that I had to leave it. I always keep a watchful eye on events in Ballyhaunis and hopefully, sometime in the future, I can bring home some of the skills I have learned while away.



## Seasonal Photographs by Jimmy Leonard

**A Song Thrush in a Holly Bush,  
December 2010.**

**A Winter's Tale - Snow, Holly and  
Christmas, December 2010.**





# Abbey Pattern Draws the Crowds

BY SUZI OTTEWELL

The sun made its usual appearance for the annual Abbey Pattern on Sunday, 2nd 8th August, which again attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd into Ballyhaunis on the last Sunday of the school holidays.

Following the traditional Friary Mass, hundreds of children flocked into the Abbey Field to make the most of the free monster inflatables, face painters and many other attractions on offer.

The races, including Sprints, Hurdles and Three-legged challenges, attracted hundreds of contestants.

## Race Results:

U-5 Boys:	1st John McDonagh, 2nd James Corry, 3rd Conor Henry.
U-5 Girls:	1st Sophie Walsh, 2nd Leanne Walsh, 3rd Erica Byrne.
U-6 Boys:	1st Tyler Coyne, 2nd Ronan Keane, 3rd Cathal Greally.
U-6 Girls:	1st Mia Phillips, 2nd Eva Henry, 3rd Rachel Fallon.
U-7 Boys:	1st Kian Burke, 2nd Martin McDonagh, 3rd Adam Noone.
U-7 Girls:	1st Erin Murray, 2nd Rebecca Lyons, 3rd Lorna Davis.
U-8 Boys:	1st Simon McDonagh, 2nd Ian Lyons, 3rd Jack Jennings.
U-8 Girls:	1st Teresa Cleary, 2nd Erin Murray, 3rd Amy Mates.
U-9 Boys:	1st Tommy Cleary, 2nd Owen McDonagh, 3rd Stephen Maughan.
U-9 Girls Hurdles:	1st Amy Nevin, 2nd Rebecca Lyons, 3rd Teresa Cleary,
U-9 Boys Hurdles:	1st Tommy Cleary, 2nd Jordan Maughan, 3rd Simon McDonagh
U-11 Girls:	1st Niamh O'Neill, 2nd Chloe Keane, 3rd Marina Carney.
U-11 Boys:	1st Patrick Caulfield, 2nd Cormac Phillips, 3rd Jordan Maughan.
U-11 Boys Hurdles:	1st Patrick Caulfield, 2nd Conal Caulfield, 3rd Cormac Phillips.
U-11 Girls Hurdles:	1st Chloe Keane, 2nd Aoife Conway, 3rd Michelle Grogan.
U-12 Girls:	1st Aibhinn Herr, 2nd Helen Gallagher, 3rd Megan Morley.

U-14 Boys:	1st Seán Carrick, 2nd Brian O'Neill, 3rd Colin Byrne.
U-14 Girls:	1st Aisling Forkan, 2nd Michaela Walsh, 3rd Ciara Keane.
U-14 Boys Hurdles:	1st Brian O'Neill, 2nd Piarais Caulfield, 3rd Seán Carrick.
U-14 Girls Hurdles:	1st Michaela Walsh, 2nd Ciara Keane, 3rd Aibhinn Herr.
Girls U-8 Egg & Spoon	1st Cathy Greally, 2nd Hiba Mroue, 3rd Amy Mates.
Boys U-8 Egg & Spoon	1st Dara Caulfield, 2nd Adam Walsh, 3rd Cian Walsh.
Boys U-11 Egg & Spoon	1st Patrick Caulfield, 2nd Dara Maughan, 3rd Cillian Keane/Conal Caulfield
Girls U-11 Egg & Spoon:	1st Maedhbh Caulfield, 2nd Amy Nevin, 3rd Niamh O'Neill/Laura Walsh.
Sack Race U-11: 1st	Josh Webb, 2nd Holly Browne, 3rd Laura Walsh,
Sack Race U-14:	1st Aisling Forkan, 2nd Patrick Caulfield, 3rd Shauna Lyons.
Three-Legged Race:	David Cunnane and Dara Peyton.
Long Throw:	1st Thomas Maughan.
Tug-o-War:	Corofin.
Ladies Race:	1st Joanna Webb Hunt, 2nd Agatha Clarke Higgins, 3rd Michelle Smith / Paula Jordan Burke.
Mens Race:	1st Christopher Mongan, 2nd Thomas Maughan, 3rd Brian Sweeney.
Best Dressed Lady:	Mrs. Bridie Lyons, Turlough.

A new and extremely popular event this year was the first annual Michael James Brennan Memorial Ball Throw trophy, which was won by Thomas Maughan.

Potato Picking also attracted a large entry, with Lorna Niland taking the event by storm and winning comfortably in the women's competition.





The good weather attracted a record entry for the dog show, too, with plenty of water on hand to keep the canines cool.

Claremorris Red Cross had a large presence this year at the start of a recruitment drive for volunteers as the organisation hopes to open a Ballyhaunis branch in the near future.

For the second year running, the Abbey Pattern finished up with a loud and competitive exhibition of Tug-o-War.

"I'd like to say a big thank you to all our sponsors and helpers on the day. Without them this great event in Ballyhaunis would not happen," said outgoing Abbey Pattern Chair Suzi Ottewell. "It's fantastic to end my time as Abbey Pattern Chair after such a successful day. A huge thank you to my fellow committee members: Anne Lyons, Stephen Grogan, Martin Walsh, Deirdre Moran and Stella Hughes," she added.



The toddlers Under 5's race in full swing.



Claremorris Red Cross gave demonstrations throughout the day.



Pauline Higgins (left) presenting the Potato Picking Trophy to winner, Lorna Niland.



"You'll need a steady hand for this one!"







Thomas Maughan (right), winner of the first annual Michael James Brennan Memorial Ball Throw Trophy, pictured with Gerry Cuddy, Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union.



U-12 Girls Race winners: 1st Aibhinn Herr, 2nd Helen Gallagher, 3rd Megan Morley, with Marie Brennan and Liam Lynskey, Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union.



U-5 Boys Race winners: 1st John McDonagh, 2nd James Corry, 3rd Conor Henry, with Marie Brennan and John Mooney, Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union.



U-6 Boys Race winners: 1st Tyler Coyne, 2nd Ronan Keane, 3rd Cathal Greally, with Marie Brennan and John Mooney, Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union.



Left: U-14 Girls Hurdles winners: 1st Michaela Walsh, 2nd Ciara Keane, 3rd Aibhinn Herr, with Katherine Kilbride and Marie Brennan, Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union.



# Ballyhaunis Town F.C.

Ballyhaunis Town F.C. has been very busy since the last publication of the Annagh Magazine. This time last year we were very proud and pleased to inform you that we were winners in our League and Divisional Cup winners, but that was not the end of our season! Both the FAI Junior Cup and the Connacht Cup continued to be fought out well into the New Year.

January 16th saw our time in the FAI junior cup competition come to an end. On that cold and windy day, our near neighbours, Knock/Kiltimagh Utd. beat us 1-0, leaving us free to concentrate on our chances in the Connacht Cup. We reached

the last sixteen of that competition, but the super league side Westport Utd. were too much for us to handle. And so, on 13th March our season finally came to an end.

Most of this first season was spent lamenting the lack of changing room and showering facilities, and while we were very grateful to the Rugby Club for the use of theirs, we felt it was about time we did something about getting our own. Two small houses were acquired from Mayo County Council. These houses had been vacant for quite some time and were in need of a miracle if they were to be ready for the start of the new season on the 9th of April! Many thanks to the people who gave their time and talent to make this miracle happen. (You know who you are!) The houses were gutted, walls were knocked, others were plastered and tiled and the all important showers were installed. In order to do this work we had to do some fundraising, and so we held a very successful quiz night in The Hazel on March 16th. Many thanks to everyone who attended, and to those who sponsored prizes on the night.

## New Season

Our first game of the season was against Manulla B on April 9th. We got off to a great start beating them 2-0. We continued to do our best every week, some weeks being harder than others! On July 3rd we made our annual pilgrimage to Milebush Park, where we met what proved to be our biggest rivals of the season, Glenhest Rovers, in the final of the McDonnell Cup. Having beaten them two weeks earlier we held out high hopes of coming home with the cup. However, that was not to be. When the League finished at the end of August we found ourselves



**Ballyhaunis Town FC. Back (L-R): Omar Cherbatji, Paul Walsh, Miroslav Rylak, Peter Matuska, Michael Waldron, Aidan Paul Kelly, Daniel Vagenecht, Johnny Kelly, Patrick Keane. Front: Paul Finn, Fergus Coyne, Damien Hurley, Brian Kilcourse, Kieran Gallagher, Jason Kelly and Paul Nolan. Photo taken by Pádraig Kilcourse, at the McDonnell Cup Final, Milebush Park, Castlebar.**

finishing in second place (to Glenhest Rovers), but nevertheless gaining promotion for the second year running.

Many thanks to the players and Franco Marigliano for all their hard work and dedication, to the committee who have kept things going behind the scenes, to our main sponsors Iman Casings for their continued support, to the sponsors who supported us by buying pitch-side signs, to everyone who contributed to our recent bucket collection and scrap metal collection, to Grogan's Concrete, and special 'Thank You' to all the supporters who have braved the elements to cheer us on.

It is envisaged that under age training will begin in the New Year after some much needed maintenance has been carried out on the pitch. Children will be informed through the local schools as to when this will take place. This will be a big undertaking for the club and so for that reason we will be looking for volunteers to assist in the running of this aspect of the club. If interested why not come along when training starts, and make yourself known.

**Panel of players 2011:** Daniel Vagenecht, Brian Kilcourse, Paul Walsh, Michael Waldron, Damien Hurley, Paul Nolan, Paul Finn, Eddie Kilcourse, James Mulrennan, Declan Ward, Fergus Coyne, Michael Marigliano, Daniel Tosniec, Joe Neenan, Omar Cherbatji, Johnny Kelly, Miro Rylak, Peter Matuska, Aidan-Paul Kelly, Fergal Kelly, Fergal Fitzmaurice, Aidan Fitzmaurice, Patrick Keane, Connor Freeley, Ryan Worden, Craig Hughes, Kieran Gallagher, Michael Goulding, Shane Ganley and Alan Egan.





# Ballyhaunis ABC (Aid For Belarusian Children)

BY OLIVE LYONS

Our year started at the end of January with the making of St. Brigid's Crosses. This year, thank God, the bad weather had passed and we were able to get rushes. After that it was time to start looking for host families and begin the long process of paperwork. Eventually we had nine host families in place, some of which were families from other years, and the children were selected in Belarus.

We then had our church gate collection in May and a few weeks after this it was time for the children to arrive. Eight children arrived in Ballyhaunis: six girls and two boys accompanied by an interpreter for a month's stay. The children were part of an overall group of sixty

children to arrive from Belarus organized by Ernan Meenan, Donegal A.B.C. The children spent two weeks with the first host families followed by two weeks with the second host families.

As part of their stay here the children, accompanied by their host families, visited Lough Key Forest and Activity Park where they enjoyed the outdoor and indoor play facilities and a cruise on the Shannon. While in Ballyhaunis they also visited Maghu Park in Kiltimagh and Pots of Fun in Claremorris.

Our year ended with the return of the children home to Belarus on the 16th July after a very enjoyable month's respite in Ballyhaunis.



**Ballyhaunis Aid for Belarusian Children. group making St. Brigid's Crosses.**

**L to r: Frances Mulhern, Ann Folan, Maria Lyons, Emma Lyons, Olive Lyons, Saskia Kirrane, Mary Murphy, Linda Kirrane, Paula Grogan, Eimear Finan, Mary Finan.**



**Belarusian children with their interpreter, Tamara, Olive Lyons and Ulster Bank staff member, Therese, enjoying an afternoon in Pots of Fun, Claremorris, sponsored by the Ulster Bank, Ballyhaunis.**







### BAPTISMS in the Parish of Annagh Nov. 2010 – Oct. 2011

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anna Gretta Kelly</li> <li>• Alexander Tighe</li> <li>• Terry Thomas Collins</li> <li>• Edith Princess Nee</li> <li>• Robert Patrick Gallagher</li> <li>• Jake David Kavanagh McNamara</li> <li>• Karl Patrick Rattigan</li> <li>• Edward Patrick Allen</li> <li>• Davina Olufade</li> <li>• Victoria Olufade</li> <li>• Evan Feeney</li> <li>• Abbie May Gildea</li> <li>• John Pulumu Kareem</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Esther Tobi Kareem</li> <li>• Abraham Hazzan</li> <li>• Benedict Denobis</li> <li>• Brian Elijah Igatto</li> <li>• Vanessa Abigail Igatto</li> <li>• Lauren Michelle Henry</li> <li>• Cian Patrick Murphy</li> <li>• Kate Mairead Squires</li> <li>• Roisin Mary Murphy</li> <li>• Rian Patrick Kelly</li> <li>• Seanam Yao Dzemehia</li> <li>• Aideen Elizabeth Burke</li> <li>• Megan Lucey</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zara Olivia Waldron</li> <li>• Nikita Teresa Webb</li> <li>• Aishat Tolani Rasaq</li> <li>• Aibhe Frances Donnellan</li> <li>• Charlie Thomas Finn</li> <li>• James Michael O'Laighin</li> <li>• Luke Declan Ruane</li> <li>• Ben Martin Gallagher</li> <li>• Evelina Zininaite</li> <li>• Gabriele Zininaite</li> <li>• Karolina Vaitiekus</li> <li>• Daniel Patrick Coyle</li> <li>• Shane William Nolan</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

### DECEASED of the Parish November 2010 – October 2011

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Ronayne, Clagnagh</li> <li>• Willie Larkin, Station Rise</li> <li>• Michael Lyons, Classaghroe</li> <li>• Joseph Waldron, Knox St.</li> <li>• Kathleen Fitzmaurice, Tavnaghmore and Dublin</li> <li>• Agnes Ruane, Bargarriff</li> <li>• Martin Gallagher, Drimbane</li> <li>• Mary Warde, The Maples</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sean Tarpey, Beech Lawn</li> <li>• Kathleen McNamara, Upper Main St.</li> <li>• Thomas Carroll, Ballyhaunis and Manchester</li> <li>• Martin Connery, Bohogue</li> <li>• James McKermitt, Hazelhill</li> <li>• Nancy Hunt, Derrynacong</li> <li>• Timothy Lavin, Levallyroe</li> <li>• John Cruise, Knockbrack</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patrick Regan, Derrynacong</li> <li>• Olive Waldron, Cave</li> <li>• Michael Waldron, Cave</li> <li>• Kathleen Finn, Upper Main St.</li> <li>• Terence McHugh, Main St.</li> <li>• Sr. Helen Regan, Abbey St. and Brazil</li> <li>• Annie Hoban, Lisbane</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|

### MARRIAGES, St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, Nov. 2010 – Oct. 2011

- Mary Margaret Gildea, Johnstown and Joseph McHale, Ballina
- Anne McManus, Holywell and Desmond Gibney, Dublin
- Laura Byrne, Johnstown and David Brogan, Scardaune, Claremorris
- Anne Marie Keane, Doctor's Road and Christopher Heeley, Solihull, England
- Karen Murphy, Bracklaghboy and Sean Cunnane, Tulrahan
- Niamh Gildea, Johnstown and John Thornton, Dublin
- Sinéad Greally, Drimbane and Mark Culliney, Bekan
- Brigitta Burke, Devlis and Michael Freyne, Coolnaha
- John Rushe, Castlereagh and Catriona Boyle, Station Rise
- Emma Dillon Leetch, Annagh and Geoffrey Roache

### MARRIAGES Elsewhere Nov. 2010 – Oct. 2011

- Winifred McDonagh, Castlebar & Thomas McDonagh, Tooraree
- Ciara Nicholson, Esker Pines & Hugh McKermitt, Esker Pines
- Claire Corley, Monivea & Padraic Gildea, Johnstown
- Carol Grady, Lisacul & David Conlon, Abbey St.
- Tanya Ward, Tuam & Christopher Mongan, Stn Rise
- Sinéad Flaherty, Dunmore & Robert Morley, The Maples
- Helen Duffy, Dublin & Edward Webb, Main St.
- Karen Morris, Abbey St. & James Martin, Dublin.





# Wedding Photographs



**Eibhlin Murphy, Coolnaha and Peter Healy, Ballindrehid, married in Mulranny.**  
*Photo by Vincent Fahy (Whitethorn Photography).*



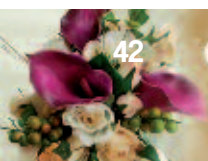
**Caitriona Macken, Lissaniskea, Began and Paul McDermott, Castlebar, married in St. John the Baptist Church, Knock.** *Carmel Williams Photography*



**Fiona Morley, Began and Jason Clarke, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, married in Church of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Began.**  
*Photograph by Stratford Photography*



**Sinead Greally, Drimbane and Mark Culliney, Began married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.**







**Brian Dyer, Cloontumper and Sinéad Prendergast, Culnaclecha, married in Logboy Church on September 2nd, 2011.**



**Karen Morris, Abbey Street and James Martin, Durban, South Africa, married in Ballintubber Abbey.**



**Robert Morley, Ballyhaunis and Sinéad Flaherty, Dunmore, married in St. Nicholas' Church, Dunmore.**



**Edward Webb, Main St. and Helene Duffy, Culmore, Kilkelly, married in Asciano, Tuscany.**





**Joseph Burke, Tullaghane and Regina Lee, Cork**  
married in St. Bartholomew's Church,  
Kildorrery, Co. Cork.



**Laura Byrne, Johnstown**  
and **David Brogan, Ballyglass, Ballindine,**  
married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.



**Karen Murphy, Bracklaghboy and Sean Cunnane, Tulrahan,**  
married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.



**Raymond Prendergast, Carramack, Tulrahan and Annette**  
**Freeman, Kilkelly,** married in St. Celsus' Church, Kilkelly.





**Alan Regan, Killinaugher  
and Sinead O'Neill, Kilnamona, Co. Clare,  
married in St. Joseph's Church, Kilnamona.**



**Niamh Gildea, Johnstown and John Thornton, Dublin,  
married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.  
*Carmel Williams Photography***

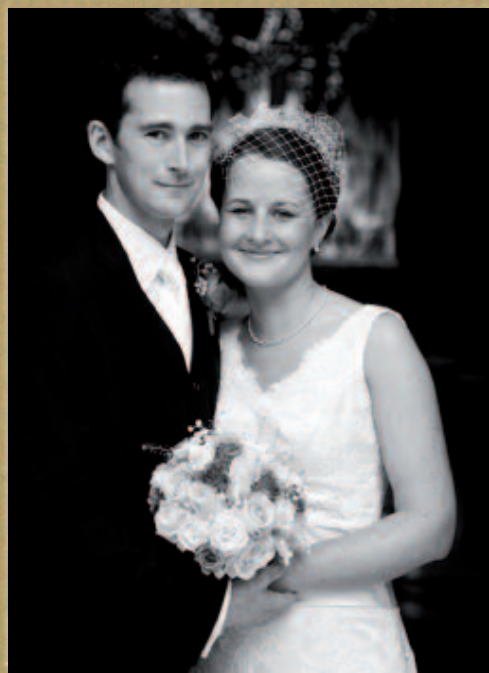


**Bernard Fitzmaurice, Agloragh  
and Caroline Gavin, Murneen, Claremorris,  
married in the Church of Our Lady, Barnacarroll.**



**Suzanne Nolan, Cloonbook and Karol Murray, Clonberne,  
Co. Galway, married in Ballintubber Abbey.  
*Photograph by Stratford Photography, Ballyhaunis.***





**Tara Higgins, Devils  
and Damien Halpenny, Ardee, Co. Louth,  
married in St. Nicholas' Church, Galway.**



**Anne Marie Keane, Doctor's Road  
and Chris Heeley, Solihull, England,  
married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.**



**Anne McManus, Churchpark and Desmond Gibney,  
Glenageary, Co. Dublin,  
married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.**



**Des Lyons, Lecarrow and Teresa Meagh, Coogue,  
married in Knock Church.**





**Catherine Carney, Brickens  
and Philip Hogan, Athlone,  
married in Ballintubber Abbey.**



**John McGuire, Perth, Australia, and Kirsten Ann Harrod,  
Sweden, married in Jukkasjarve, Sweden, in 2009.  
John is son of Brendan McGuire (Ballindrehid) and  
Johanna Tarpey (Chapel St., Ballyhaunis).**



**Padraic Gildea, Johntown and Claire Corley, Ryehill,  
Monivea, Co. Galway, married in the  
Sacred Heart Church, Ryehill, Monivea.**



**David Conlon, Abbey St. and Carol O'Grady,  
Carrowbehy, married in Christ the King Church,  
Lisacul, Co. Roscommon.**





**Yvonne Murphy, Lecarrow and William Reynolds  
Dublin, married in Knock.  
*Glynn's Photography, Castlereagh.***



**Catriona Boyle, Station Rise and John Rushe,  
Cloonbonniffe, Castlereagh,  
married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.**



**Michael Rabbitte, Derrylea and Nichola Maher, Ballycarroll,  
Portlaoise, married in the Church of the Assumption,  
The Heath, Portlaoise**



**Anne Burke, Cloonfad  
and James Ryan, Rathdowney, Co. Laois,  
married in Cloonfad Church**





**Maire Gildea, Johnstown and Joe McHale, Ballina,**  
married in St Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.  
*Carmel Williams Photography*



**Emma Dillon-Leetch, Annagh and Geoff Roche, Ballina,**  
married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.  
*Lisa Daly Photography.*



**Brigitta Burke, Devlis and Michael Freyne, Coolnaha,**  
married in St. Patrick's church, Ballyhaunis.  
*Glynn's Photography, Castlereagh and Ballyhaunis.*



**Jimmy O'Boyle, Carrowkeel**  
and **Anne Marie Tully, Logboy,**  
married in Logboy Church.





**Maria Condon, Castlebar and John O'Reilly, Mullingar, married in the Franciscan Friary, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath. Maria is daughter of the late Teresa Condon, nee Cribbin, Johnstown.**



**Caroline Kirrane, Ballyglass and David Darcy, Castlereagh, married at St. Patrick's Church, Granlahan.**  
*Louis Carr Photography.*



**Mark Godfrey, Ballykilleen and Tzyv Wong, Ohio, married in Beijing.**



**Peter Meenan, Aisling Drive and Ann-Marie Redmond, Kilnahanagh, Dublin, married in St. Patrick's Church, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim.**





**Claire Stratford,  
Larganboy and  
Mark Hudson,  
York, England,  
married in  
St. Patrick's  
Church,  
Ballyhaunis.**

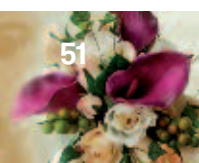
*Photograph by  
Stratford  
photography.*



**Claire Flynn,  
Abbeyquarter  
and  
Cormac Lee,  
Ballyshannon,  
Co. Donegal,  
married in  
Ballisodare  
Church, Co.  
Sligo.**



**Grahame  
Cleary,  
Clare Street  
and Samantha  
Cashman,  
Whitstable,  
England,  
married in  
Ham,  
Sandwich,  
Kent.**







## Graduation

Congratulations to David Connolly who has been awarded his doctorate from the University of Limerick.

David, who completed his Ph.D. in Renewable Energy, is son of Kieran and Mary (RIP) Connolly, Lecarrow, Ballyhaunis.

Top Left:  
Rosaleen  
Curley and  
granddaughter  
Tori, enjoying  
the Spanish  
Theme Night  
in the Cosy  
Cup, Main  
Street.



Left:  
Mary Dadd  
(Nee Glynn,  
Clare Street)  
at an Oakland  
California  
"A's"  
Baseball Game  
04/07/11



L-r: Emmett Keane, Patsy Cunningham, Patsy Keane.



Ballyhaunis in Coventry.  
Photograph taken 17th Aug. 1991.

Back, L-R: Vincent Keane,  
Frankie Dillon, Martin Grogan,  
Kieran Benson, Micky Meehan.  
Centre: Fintan Keane,  
Vincent Keane Jnr.,  
Michael Keane, Tom Forde,  
Reuben Sykes, Tom Glavey,  
Tom Meehan, Bernard Keane  
(hidden), Emmett Keane,  
John 'Doc' Healy, Patrick Keane,  
Sean Waldron, Patsy Keane,  
Kevin Jordan.  
Front: Kevin Meehan.





# Abbey Partnership

2011 has been another noteworthy year for the Ballyhaunis Abbey Partnership and Abbey Trust, building on the work carried out since the withdrawal of the Augustine Order in 2005 and the formal transfer of St. Mary's Augustinian Abbey and Grounds to the Abbey Trust under the 999 year lease.

The Abbey Partnership aims to promote through community development methods, the overall development of the property of the Augustinian Order in Ballyhaunis on behalf of the Abbey Trust and in conjunction with local people to design and implement programmes and projects which will cater for the social, cultural, economic, educational and environmental needs of all people living in the Ballyhaunis area, particularly of those who are socially excluded.

## Abbey Grounds and River walk

During 2011 the Friary grounds continued to attract people of all ages and backgrounds to avail of this invaluable community amenity with the attractive woodland / river walkway along with the Children's Playground and new Multi-sports facility being used on a daily basis.

Great credit is due to the Rural Social Scheme staff whose dedication and hard work keeps the friary grounds in their impressive state, with our appreciation going to Sean Biesty and John Joe Lyons for all their hard work in maintaining the grounds over the last year.

A major development during 2011 was undertaken by Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns Committee who took the initiative to construct a number of notice / display boards which have been located throughout the abbey grounds containing interesting information and pictures about our natural plant and wildlife. This addition to the woodland / river walkway signage has proven very popular with children and their families and the partnership hopes it will foster a better sense of appreciation for our natural environment and the importance of keeping the park clean and tidy, for all to enjoy within the local community.

Mayo County Council also continue to make a significant contribution ensuring the property is insured, the playground area inspected on a regular basis and taking responsibility for the maintenance of both St. Mary's Abbey and the Friary House.

## St. Mary's Abbey

St. Mary's Abbey continues to be used to host a number of social and cultural events throughout the year. The Mayo County Council Summer Music programme

continued in 2011 with an excellent performance from Irish fiddle player, Zoë Conway & well known electric guitarist with indie band The Revs, John McIntyre.

The Gracenotes Choir group also continue to use the Abbey building for their performances and events as well as the Ballyhaunis Artists Group who hold their exhibitions in the Abbey.

The annual Graveyard Mass also continued in 2011 marking the feast of St. Augustine held in conjunction with the Abbey Pattern on the last Sunday of August.

The Abbey was also used to host a number of other musical events during the year in conjunction with Scoil Iosa, making use of the new seating which is now installed in the abbey.

## Friary House

The Abbey Partnership continues to rent out the Friary House to the Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre and to Mayo VEC Further Education Centre. Both organisations work to provide opportunities and supports to the entire community, with a focus on those most disadvantaged and socially excluded - in keeping with the ethos given to us by the Augustinians

## Childcare

The Abbey Partnership continues to work with the Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre who operate the Ballyhaunis Community Preschool in the friary grounds. Employing seven local Childcare Workers, it caters for twenty-eight children over the age of three years and three months, attending each day under the governments 'Free Childcare Year' programme.

## Multi-Purpose Sport Facilities

Last year marked the completion of a significant project for the Abbey Partnership with the construction of the new Multi Sport Games Area - otherwise known as MUGA which is located in the front field of the Abbey Grounds.

Use of the multi-sports facility has been growing over the last year with Scoil Iosa National School holding some of their physical education classes in the facility and on the grounds. The Family Resource Centre and Ballyhaunis Chamber have also organised sporting / physical activities in the facility on the grounds - with a woman's basketball group and meet & train group getting starting during the year. The MUGA facility is also used daily by a wide range of people - young and old and the partnership remains open to requests from other groups to use this facility.





## Abbey Pattern Sports Day

The tradition of the Abbey Pattern continued in 2011 with another very successful Pattern being held. Once again full credit goes to the organisers, the Abbey Pattern Committee.

## Conclusion and Plans for 2012

The Partnership still hopes to go ahead with the construction of a new foot bridge linking the River walk to the new Soccer Pitch near the Station Rise / Cherry Vale housing estates. Discussions have also taken place this year which may see the Scouts Den being developed as a centre for the Boxing Club. Some discussion and initial work has also taken place regarding the history and heritage of the Abbey as well as various ideas to develop tree planting and flower gardens, on the grounds.

The Abbey Partnership welcomes new ideas, suggestions

and proposals to develop the grounds into the future and is especially keen to encourage all people, especially young people, to use the facilities and amenities that the grounds offer and take pride in keeping them clean, safe and a welcoming place.

## Abbey Partnership Board

Is composed of Chairperson: John Coll (Mayo County Council), Vice-Chairperson: Peter Cunnane (Ballyhaunis Chamber), Treasurers: Mary Donnelly (Community Council) and Anne Cunnane (Ballyhaunis Chamber), Secretary: Stephen Grogan (Family Resource Centre), Cllr. John Cribbin, (Mayo County Council), Pádraic Flanagan (Mayo County Council), Pat Higgins (Community Council), Michael Kelly (Community Council) Fr. Michael Mernagh (OSA), Cllr. Damien Ryan (Mayo County Council). The partnership also welcomed Nell Rochford onto its board during 2011 on behalf of the Community Council.

## Ballyhaunis-Manchester Connection in Lourdes

Photo taken in August 2010 of a group from St. Joseph's Parish, Heywood and St. Peter's Parish in the Salford Diocese in Manchester who went to Lourdes as assistants. All those in the photo have Ballyhaunis connections and most of the children are cousins.



Back, L-R: Sam Walsh, Fr. Mullarkey, Kieran Duignan. Middle: David Walsh, James Gyves, James O'Gara, Mairead Stockdale. Front. Eamon Walsh, Claire Gyves, Roisin Walsh and Joseph O'Gara. The Walsh and Gyves boys and girls are grandchildren of Kathleen Gyves nee Finn of Holywell. The O'Gara boys and Mairead Stockdale are grandchildren of Kathleen O'Gara nee Biesty and Helen Stockdale nee Biesty from Pattenspark. Kieran Duignan is the grandson of Kit Duignan nee Tarmey from Holywell. Fr. Mullarkey is a regular visitor to Ballyhaunis and is a nephew of Johnny Mullarkey, Bohogue, Ballyhaunis.

### Guidelines for Submitting Digital Photographs for next year's issue:

Digital images must be at least 1 MB in size, with a resolution of 300 dpi or larger. For example, if your photo is less than 1 MB, it will appear as a KB (1000 KB = 1 MB), therefore an image of 700 KB would be too small. The more MB (megabytes) your photo has, the better it will reproduce. Unlike photos used on the Web, which look fine at 72 dpi, photos used in the offset printing process require a resolution of at least 300 dpi in order to reproduce correctly. If we printed small / low resolution photographs, they would appear pixellated and out of focus.

## 30th Wedding Anniversary



**Liam and Brigid Lynskey, Gurteen, who celebrated their Thirtieth Wedding Anniversary earlier this year.**



# Ballyhaunis District Community Council

BY MARY DONNELLY

Ballyhaunis & District Community Council is a legal entity that acts as an umbrella body for a wide range of social and community development activities undertaken by a number of sub-committees or working groups. These include:

- Community Representation on the Abbey Partnership and Abbey Trust
- Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- Tidy Towns Committee
- Defibrillator Project
- Historical Features & Walks

The Community Council is also a forum for members of the community interested in developing new projects as well as assisting existing voluntary groups where possible.

The present Management Board was elected at the AGM in November 2010. Officers are as follows: Chairman: Jarlath Fahey, Hon. Secretary: Mary Donnelly, Treasurers: Marie Cribbin and Jarlath Fahey. Committee: Manar Cherbatji, Anne Cunnane, John Durkan, Mike Griffin, Paula Grogan, Pat Higgins, Michael Kelly, Gabrielle Lyons, Patricia Plunkett.

The Management Board meets on a monthly basis to review ongoing projects and to consider and implement if possible, any new initiatives or ideas that would be beneficial to the community. Sub-committees submit reports on their activities at each meeting, keeping the Management Board up-to-date on their successes or difficulties.

During the past year a proposal to bring together all the cultural and historical information about the Augustinian Friary was agreed. An appeal was made for interested parties to form a working group that would compile and present the story of the Friary, by locating and making accessible in the Friary, all primary and secondary material and memorabilia. A number of meetings have taken place and work is progressing on this project. Anyone wishing to assist or who may have material to contribute is welcome to join the group.

The feasibility of carrying out a review of the Community Action Plan for Ballyhaunis is currently under discussion. This plan was compiled by Mayo Community Futures under the auspices of Mayo County Council, and involved extensive community consultation and engagement in its preparation. The much changed economic climate now indicates that some of the priorities outlined in the plan may have to be reconsidered and revised.

At the time of writing, preliminary discussions have taken place between representatives of Community Council and Ballyhaunis Chamber, the aim being to explore how their respective resources can be combined to raise awareness of local services both social and commercial.

The following is a brief snapshot of the activities of the various sub-committees and working groups; more detailed and informative reports have been submitted by each individual group, and are published elsewhere in the pages of this magazine.

## Abbey Trust & Abbey Partnership

There are four members of the Community Council on the Abbey Trust which holds the entire Augustinian Abbey buildings and grounds under a 999 year lease.

The Community Council also has four representatives on the Abbey Partnership which is the organisation responsible for managing and maintaining the Friary property. These members attend all meetings and are part of the decision-making process in the management of the property.

The Abbey grounds are open to the public as a community amenity and host numerous events of a family and sporting nature. The Friary House is occupied jointly by the Family Resource Centre and Mayo VEC providing a range of educational opportunities and supports for families, individuals and organisations. The Abbey building hosts a number of social and cultural events such as art exhibitions, choral recitals and school concerts. The traditional Abbey Pattern Mass is celebrated annually on the last Sunday in August.

## Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

This group caters for the safety and security needs of those who may be isolated and vulnerable in our community by providing socially monitored alarms and other security products at reasonable cost. Information and advice on good practice in ensuring security and safety in the home is also available. This scheme is registered with the Dept. of Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs, where grant aid is available to subsidise costs.

We extend sincere sympathy to the wife and family of Martin Connery, former Chairman and dedicated member of this group who died during the year. May he rest in peace

## Tidy Towns

Activities of the Tidy Towns Committee include





provision of hanging baskets and floral displays throughout the town, landscaping and planting of flowers and shrubs and dealing with the ever present problem of litter. They organise participation in the National Tidy Towns Competition and other initiatives in their efforts to create awareness of environmental issues in our community. The wildlife information panels in the Friary grounds containing interesting displays of local flora and fauna were provided by Tidy Towns with the assistance of LEADER funding.

### Defibrillator Project

This group works to ensure that the twelve defibrillators located in various areas throughout the parish are inspected on a regular basis and maintained to a high standard. They organise training in CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and defibrillator use

for beginners and also revalidation training which enables those already trained to refresh their skills and techniques.

### Historical Features & Walks

The aim of this group is to have local area maps prepared which will show major historical/archaeological features with a little background information as well as local quiet rural walks.

The work of the Community Council embraces the social, cultural and environmental aspects of our community and it depends on the support and goodwill of local people. Membership is open to everyone for a nominal fee of €5. It has something to offer everyone whatever their area of interest might be. New members with new ideas and proposals are welcome to join at any time.

## Ballyhaunis Community School Ladies Football Team



Ballyhaunis Community School Ladies football team enjoyed a very successful season in their first full term at Top Flight Colleges Football. The girls are pictured with their coaches Ms. Gibbons (left) and Ms.Keane. Back (L-R): Kelly McKay, Michelle Neenan, Niamh Cunnane, Sinead Garvey, Joanne Cregg, Aisling Kenny, Andrea Morris, Jennifer Lilly. Centre: Ms. Shellie Gibbons, Lisa O'Connell, Rona Burke, Aisling Tarpey, Sharron Lynskey, Sarah Staunton, Marie Staunton, Niamh Kilkenny, Ms. Anne Grogan. Front: Ashling Lynskey, Sheila Brady, Shauna Morley, Anne O'Gara, Sonia Henry, Riona Joyce.



# Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union

Ballyhaunis & District Credit Union was established in 1983 with a handful of members and endless possibilities. Since then it has grown to become one of the most successful credit unions in the country. We have built a strong, successful relationship with our members and the community over the last twenty-eight years. Today, when you pass the premises on Clare Street you may not think of it as anything more than a fine building, but it represents the triumph of a vision and the dedication of some extraordinary "ordinary people".

Many years ago a wise woman stated "if it was good enough to re-build America after the Great Depression, then the Credit Union is good enough for Ireland". As we look to the future aware of the financial challenges facing many people we believe being a member of the Credit Union offers hope for a brighter future. We will be a vital part of the rebuilding of Ireland after this economic depression and we welcome the opportunity to help you with advice on budgeting, saving and responsible borrowing.

- **You can save as little as €2.00 a week.**
- **We consider all loan applications for all purposes. For example: Car loans, student loans, home improvements, holidays, weddings, winter fuel, Christmas expenses.**
- **You can borrow from €100 upwards.**
- **Twenty-two will do – with €22 per week you can borrow €1000 and pay it back in just over a year.**

Remember, you are not just a customer; you are a



**Credit Union International Day: Hamper Prize winners at the International Credit Union Day event. From left: Teresa Kearns and Colette Waldron-Jennings, with Mary Henry, Manager, Ballyhaunis & District Credit Union.**

member of a successful financial co-operative. Call in anytime and talk to us; see you at your place; see you at your Credit Union.

In line with the recent changes in the financial world regarding compliance, Ballyhaunis Credit Union has continued on its path of up-skilling and training both employees and Directors, all employees satisfy regulatory competency requirements and continue to participate in a continuous professional development programmes.

The Board of Directors this year have five members who have achieved the ACCUP (Advanced Certificate in Credit Union Practices) through the University of Ulster, a year-long course specifically designed for financial institutions. This has provided the credit union with the skills set necessary to provide a professional and competent service to our members.



Alcoholics Anonymous meetings held in Scoil Íosa Junior School (formerly St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy Primary School): Sunday nights at 8.30pm (Winter) and 9.00pm (Summer).

Al-Anon and Al-Ateen meet in Scoil Íosa Senior School, Abbeyquarter at the same times.

Anybody who feels they may have a problem with alcohol would be most welcome.

[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

## Annagh 2012

***The deadline for contributing articles and photographs for Annagh 2012 is Friday, October 19th, 2012.***

***Email: [info@annaghmag.ie](mailto:info@annaghmag.ie)***

*Annagh would like to thank all its patrons, past and present. Please support local business and industry.*





# The Railway Men

BY AUSTIN BOYLE

As we talked about the 150th anniversary of the railway in Ballyhaunis and the many men who worked there in our lifetime, my sister Mary asked me for a few memories of the linesmen.

My mind goes back to the late 50s and early 60s to a group of men who worked to keep the trains running smoothly between Ballyhaunis and Ballinlough. The maintenance crew or 'Railway Men', as we knew them, who maintained the track and fences between the two towns consisted of four men: the ganger, Pat Moran, with Pat Hunt, John McGreal and Martin Geraghty, all of whom have passed to their eternal reward. May they rest in peace. They all lived in the Ballinlough area. The Hunt, McGreal and Geraghty families still reside in the locality. Pat Moran came originally from the Achill area, as far as I know, and was somewhat of an enigma to me, a schoolboy at the time. He was a big man who walked with an unusual gait and wore a long raincoat and hat in wet weather. He mostly cycled along the path beside the track, and would have a variety of tools and his lunch bag tied to the bike. As we lived close to the railway the men came to our house to have the kettle boiled for their tea.

In bad weather they came into the house to eat. There was always some good-humoured banter about something or other, and at times the meeting adjourned to the forge, where, chaired by my father or our neighbour Pat Lyons, a lively debate took place and national or local events were discussed at length as the

clock ticked by and the boys were dry! Libel laws and the passage of time prevent me from elaborating, but it is a pity they were not recorded as they would leave some of today's current affairs programmes in the shade.

An amusing incident or two about Pat Moran. On one occasion he found a nest of wild ducklings on the railway banks. He caught some of them and put them in his hat, and came to my mother for a box to put them in as he wanted to bring them home and rear them. Unfortunately, they all died within a few days.

One stormy, wet day as Pat cycled along the path beside the track between Judge's and Hurley's gates, the wind blew Pat, bike and baggage down the steep bank!

A great innovator, Pat made fencing staples out of bull wire and brought bits of iron to my father to repair things rather than wait for supplies from central stores. Pat and his three staff cycled to and from work in all weathers and worked in all weathers. They were always jovial and had a joke or some story – true or false! They kept the track and fences in first class condition with a few simple hand tools, at a time when there were four or five trains a day each way. There were none of the machines we see today in those days - they knew their job!

I thought when I started writing this that I would not get twenty lines, but as the mind strayed the memories came back. For those of us who remember 'The Railway Men', it brings memories of an Ireland not a lifetime ago but so different from the Ireland of today. It's time to stop.



Taken at the Railway Station in the early 1980s,  
Left to Right - Mary Kelly, Fr. Tommy McEllin, Tina Carney  
(with Julian), Paul Carney and Fr. Ned McEllin.



Raymond Hannan (Bridge St.) and George Delaney (Abbey St.) get their photo taken with the steam train "Slieve Gullion" at Ballyhaunis Railway Station, c.1973. Also in the background are Frank Connolly and Peter Hannon.





# The Train to School

BY MURT HUNT

When I heard that Annagh Magazine committee were inviting contributions for an article on the CIE station in Ballyhaunis it brought back memories of my daily travels on the train, from 1960 to 1965, to school in Castlerea. I won a scholarship from the Boys National School in Ballyhaunis 1960 to Mean Scoil Iosaf Naofa in Castlerea (popularly known as Mary Os) and run through the medium of Irish by Miss Mary O'Flanagan (a strict disciplinarian). I also won a scholarship to St. Nathy's in Ballaghaderreen and Mr. Mulligan, who was Principal at the BNS Ballyhaunis, was very insistent on my going there. However, I was as stubborn then as I am now and I decided on Castlerea. People asked me why I did not go to St. Pat's in Ballyhaunis, but the reason was that it did not open until the next year and I did not want to transfer (stubbornness again).

## Friendly Staff

My poor parents had to scrape every penny they could muster to get me rigged out for secondary school and to pay for my season train ticket, and cocoa and cheese and brown bread etc. for the lunch, and I often got the last three-penny bit that my Dad had to his name. I have often wondered since how I would have fared had I gone to either Nathy's or St. Pat's, or what career I would have followed, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor, Rich man, Poor man, Beggarman, Thief. I know I missed a few days through injury and sickness but I can guarantee I would have missed a lot more only for the friendly staff of CIE at Ballyhaunis station. I used to cycle the one and a half miles from home to the station, invariably late, and usually heard the train blowing as it passed the gatehouses on the Claremorris side of town. I can vouch for the fact that neither Sean Kelly or Stephen Roche ever put on a spurt of speed like I used to on my old BSA bicycle in my dash each morning. I got to know all the staff at the station and, may God give them all the light of Heaven for the sacrifices they made for me to get me to school. They were all like parents to me and they were, to a man, so thoughtful. There was Mr. P. Ryan (Stationmaster), Pat Lyons, Dick Knight, Mattie Tighe, Thady Corcoran, Con Fahey, Frank Connolly, Johnny Murren at the station, all with different jobs but all determined to get me to school. The train was often held over several minutes for me as I dismounted from my trusty rothar and jumped onto the railway line in front of the stationary train and up onto the platform the other side with a big red face from my exertions. This would not be entertained under any circumstances in the present times and the bridge would have to be used to cross the railway line. The train drivers invariably knew

why the train was being held back and I usually got a big wave or a blow of the horn from them.

I got to know all the ticket collectors on the trains, especially a man named Ring who would be a relation of Michael Ring T.D., and if one had neglected to renew the season ticket Mr. Ring would not take much notice or put one off the train or anything. A regular on the train would be Myra Healy from Johnstown who worked at the telephone exchange at Castlerea, and she would come talking to me and encourage me to study. There was also another regular named Curry from Knock who used to go to all the horse racing at the Curragh, and he would greet me with the same phrase all the time, "Good morning Professor". He had only one hand and I used to think at first he was the man that was being looked for by "The Fugitive" on television. I loved to go into the signal cabin when I returned in the evenings from school and have a chat with Frank Connolly, who was signal man. I would read his newspapers and would have all the news for my parents when I arrived home.

Of course I would meet some members of the staff at the back sidings at the station where my Dad and I would load cattle that we had sold at the fairs, and I was heart-broken to have to say goodbye to my favourite horse Diamond and load him in a wagon. I was never told where he was going to but I cried bitter tears after him. How it must have been for parents saying goodbye to their children at the station whom they would probably never see again, and there was I crying over a horse. I got to know the staff at Castlerea station very well also, especially P.J. Browne who is still hale and hearty in Boyle (I think). A lady asked him one morning why the train was late and he replied without hesitating, "Sure wasn't Mr. Hunt late again in Ballyhaunis and they could not go without him".

## Hard Case

As I got older I got to be a little better on my timekeeping but then another catastrophe struck. John Lyons, a mate of mine, was working at Jim Connell's Furniture at the time and he saw me one day with my big satchel of schoolbooks and took pity on me, so he decided to make me a wooden suitcase. It was lovely with a big handle and two locks and painted black. I looked like a college lecturer as I went to school each day, only I had a wooden box instead of a briefcase. Now, the two locks did a great job for a while until I lost the key one day and usually finished up in my mad rush for the train with the locks opening and all the consignment of schoolbooks strewn around the platform. I remember Johnny Murren helping me to pick them all up and even though he was not





pleased he never said a word. A band tied around the case solved the problem for a while until I finally discarded the suitcase and went more modern with a rucksack.

The train used to stop at Ballinlough station at the time and several boys and girls got on there for school in Mary Os, Castlerea convent and Roscommon CBS. The three Geraghtys from Clooncrim - Junior, Tommy and Dom - went to Mary Os with me as did Martin Hannon and Pearse Ryan (R.I.P.) from Ballyhaunis, son of the Stationmaster.

I broke my hand jig-acting on the train with some mates, my parents were told I broke it playing football, and I went to school with my arm in plaster for a while and was excused homework. The station staff really came into their own at this stage as I was handicapped in cycling and getting on the train and off, but I was pampered by one and sundry at the station, and to get me on that train was their aim daily.

### Debbie

I vividly remember Hurricane Debbie in September 1961 as I was stuck in Castlerea. It was a Saturday and I was to be playing football for the school on that day, but the hurricane hit and the match was postponed. When I made my way to the station, frantically trying to avoid slates and other foreign objects, I was informed by P.J. Browne that the train was blocked and that there was trees on the line, and he did not know when the train would arrive, if at all. I borrowed a bike from John Hunt's bicycle shop ( the only reason I got it was that my name was Hunt) and tried to cycle to Ballyhaunis, but

had to walk half the journey on account of fallen trees. My parents were frantic at home: no phones or mobiles that time. I remember a rick of hay turned over onto our road, and our acre of stooked barley stuck in a barbed wire fence a half mile away. My poor father had to fork every bit of the hay onto the horse cart and rebuild the rick. As for the barley, it was beyond redemption. Ireland and the west in particular suffered that day.

Anyway, to make a long story short I continued on my train journeys to Mary Os for five years, got my Leaving cert., through the medium of Irish, and captained the school team to win a Connacht Colleges title in 1965. I spent some time in England, taught school for a year, did hire work with a tractor and machinery, and spent thirty-one happy years in Guinness Group Sales, and did five years advertising with The Western People, and I am semi-retired now. Would I have done differently had I gone to St. Nathy's? No, I don't think so as I was happy with my lot. I very seldom use the train now but when I have occasion to do so my favourite journey is from Ballyhaunis to Castlerea, when I have time to reminisce on the old days, and watch with awe all the changes made along the route. The trains now are like moving hotels compared with the old rickety wagons of my day, but I don't know many of the staff now like in the old days when I knew them all, and they all knew me, and to a man were so kind and considerate in making sure that Mr. Hunt got to school every day, whether it be on time or not. Pleasant memories indeed of times gone by at Ballyhaunis Railway Station and the lovely, obliging people that worked there.

Ní Bheidh A Leithéid Ann Arís.



**Taken at Ballyhaunis Railway Station, August 1925. Martin Forde of Island is pictured bidding farewell to his family and friends on his way to the U.S.A.**

**He spent eleven years there, and returned home in 1936.**





# Con Fahey - Signalman

BY VINCENT FAHY

When I was a pup, my father, Con Fahey, would sometimes bring me to work with him on a Sunday morning. No doubt my mother, Mary, would have appreciated the few hours of peace, but for me it was always a treat. The filter of thirty-odd years means that I remember those days as being perpetually warm and sunny, and the light through the stained glass at the Friary first Mass was a kaleidoscope.

When the train tickets were being sold, I was allowed into the office under the condition that I was quiet and kept out of sight. I, for my part, kept the bargain for at least 50% of the time. One of the mysteries of the office was the safe. It was an old-style lump of steel that was embedded in the back wall. Access was gained by a special key and the keyhole hid behind a brass shield device. The key was kept well out of my reach, except on one occasion. When my father went to the bathroom, I knew I had a scant few minutes to access the treasures that were sure to dwell within. I imagined stacks of bills, maybe some CIE gold and probably a Colt in case of train robbers. What I found were ticket books and receipts, signed by ghosts from the early days.

I returned dejected to my stool and my father returned, by and by. I remember he looked confused for a minute and then mildly exasperated as he closed the door of the safe and returned the key to his pocket. My early foray into criminality was a resounding failure.

Our journey back to the signal cabin across the bridge was a quiet one but he did pause, on that day, to show me the bullet holes in the iron cladding from the War of Independence. I stuck my finger in one of the jagged .303 holes and wondered if the Tans had hit their man. My father didn't know and so a man may have lived or died on that spot.

## Sanctuary

The signal cabin was the sanctuary. A hot, pot-bellied stove, aided when the briquettes fizzled by a shot of paraffin, warmed the small space. The red and black signal levers stood ready for inspection, each on tilting an arm on an unseen pole further down the line. High windows stood against the wind on three walls and afforded a sentinel's view of the surroundings.

The black Bakelite phone with the crank handle rang when a train was leaving Castlereagh or Clarendon on the other side. When the train was leaving Ballyhaunis, my father would swing the handle to let pass the message to the level crossings: "Hazelhill, Holywell, it's gone out to ye there."

But the cabin was also a site of great fun. I remember



Con Fahey in the signal box

many of his colleagues, especially Willie Sheridan and Anie (Aeneas) Kelly who shared the shifts and would spend time to swap stories and drink tea as they overlapped. The day could also see a stream of line-men and other CIE personnel come through the door as well as the local hackney men. They all seemed to stay for a chat and at times, the walls of the cabin seemed to pulse and swell depending on the crowds and the laughs.

The road home had the occasional detour and it may have been necessary to stop for a chat with Paddy Delaney, George Delaney or Paddy Phillips, depending on the day. A pint of beer and a half-one was the usual prescription and then it was back home to Coogue where my mother, Mary, may or may not have questioned a late arrival. Small matter, as it didn't bother her much anyway. With six children in various stages of dismantling the house and killing each other, she had other distractions.

My father stood at 5' 9", so he was not a tall man. He was however, a giant when it came to kindness, humility and sense of humour. That I could be half as good.

It saddens me that he died on the day he was officially due to retire, but the sadness is alleviated somewhat by the fact that he truly loved his job and all that went with working at the Railway Station in Ballyhaunis.





# Railway Children

BY SEAN WEBB

On a recent visit home to Ballyhaunis with my two young children Lucy and Jack, they asked to see the house where I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. I had previously pointed out our house in Devlis to them as we came into the town from Dublin, but they had forgotten it. We stopped outside the house and I explained to them that their grandparents Rita and Joe Webb raised their nine children (Olive, Edward, Sean, Carol, Joanna, Marita, Joseph, Aisling and Eavan) in this three-bedroom house between the main Dublin-Westport road and the railway line. My economic and safety lesson was lost on them when Jack declared that we must have had great fun! Of course he was right. While we might have had a railway line outside our back door and a busy main road outside our front door, they were not safety hazards to us: they were our playground.

Growing up beside a railway line was very exciting for us as kids. Between the passenger trains and the goods trains and the strange slow trains that went to the Asahi plant in Killala in the middle of the night there was always activity at the station. Devlis, the street we grew up on, had lots of families and lots of kids. There were the Clarkes, the Morans, our cousins the Webbs, but our closest neighbours were the Coyne's. There were seven children in the Coyne family: Joan, Willie, Joey, Tina, Marie, Paul and the character of the family, John. John used to organise soccer matches in the car park of the railway station. Of course to us it was not just a car park, it was Old Trafford. The games were eleven a side and there was little difficulty getting two teams organised. I can still hear the call from the midfield general John Coyne, "Pass it to your daddy", and as John was older than us and an icon, he always got the ball.

Directly behind our house was the hut that was used by the railway maintenance men who located themselves at Ballyhaunis station when they were carrying out repairs on the railway track between Ballyhaunis and Castlerea. These were tough men who worked all hours and in all sorts of weather. They brewed tea in a huge kettle over an open fire and allowed us drink mugs of it when they were

having their break. Noel Armstrong's father from Holywell was the man I remember most from this group and he was always very kind to us. These men operated rail cars like you would see in the Wild West with a big lever in the middle which propelled the buggies to their worksite miles from Ballyhaunis. Of course Noel's father ensured that we got regular spins on the buggy, and it was a sight to behold to see six or eight kids flying along the track heading for Castlerea.

Of the locals who worked in the station Johnny Murren, the father of Hawley, Eamon and Mary of Upper Main Street, was the man who stood out for me. His job was to link up the carriages that made up the goods trains and ensure that they departed Ballyhaunis station on time. Johnny was not a tall man but to us he was fearless; he rode the rail cars standing on the buffers between the cars and jumped off them just as they clattered into each other. We must have been the bane of his life playing in the station and he often used colourful language to tell us to go home or we would be killed by a train. Of course we always returned the next day to our playground. Con Fahey from Coogue was a signaller in the station and he used to let us up into the signal cabin and share the biscuits from his lunch with us. A big part of his job was to pull back the big levers in the signal cabin to open and close the points on the railway tracks. We would also

listen intently when he wound up the telephone and spoke to other signallers in such exotic places as Brackens, Carrick or Holywell.

I have a print in our house in Dublin of emigrants leaving Ballyhaunis station in the 1950s. In these times of economic uncertainty I often think of the young men and women in that photograph who had to leave the parish of Ballyhaunis to find work in England and America. Sadly, there are many people of all ages leaving the Ballyhaunis area again to find work overseas. Today many of these emigrants leave by plane from Knock Airport and by road to Dublin but some still leave from Ballyhaunis station. Hopefully in the next few years the economic situation in the country will improve and these men and women will have



**Breda Ryan and Olive Webb, Devlis, Stationmaster's House, taken around 1964.**







**Double celebrations for the Webb family of Devlis, pictured with celebrity chef Nevin Maguire.**

**At a recent evening out Sean celebrated his 50th birthday, while Eavan celebrated her 40th.**

**Front: Sean, Rita, Carol, Nevin Maguire, Eavan, Olive.  
Centre: Marita, Joanne, Aisling, Joseph. Back: Ted.**

the opportunity to return home to Ballyhaunis. The railway station is a vital part of the social fabric of a town like Ballyhaunis. It can be the scene of sadness with the departure of emigrants, but it is always the scene of joy when they return for an annual holiday.

I have great memories of our father Joe Webb bringing my brother Ted and myself on the train from Ballyhaunis station to Croke Park to see Mayo play. Invariably the "Baa", Michael Morley, and several other characters from the town were in the same carriage as us and there were few 'refreshments' left in the bar of the train by the time we got to Athlone.

While recently attending the sad funeral of the "Minister" Michael Waldron in Ballyhaunis his sister told me that when their mother and father were returning by train from their honeymoon in 1936, the Mayo team was returning home on the same train with the Sam Maguire Cup. Her parents thought at the time that it was a great sign of the success to come for Mayo football. Sadly, that did not turn out to be the case. I look forward however to the prospect of the Sam Maguire returning to Mayo in the not too distant future and the team stopping at Ballyhaunis, the first station inside the Mayo border.



**Ballyhaunis Railway Station in 2011**



**Ballyhaunis' only CIE employee, Halt-keeper Shane Hughes and his son Jamie, taken in 2011.**





# 'Flying High'

BY M.J. NOLAN, FLIGHT PARAMEDIC – LONDON'S AIR AMBULANCE

London, August 2011. With the influx of workers the city has swollen to ten million people. In London's ambulance service control room (the busiest in the world) 999 calls are coming in thick and fast. A Paramedic sits in the corner scanning all the calls looking for the most critical. It's not long before he spots one that warrants our response so he rings the activation bell. A woman has run into the path of a Double Decker bus in the north west of the city and her life hangs in the balance. But from a portacabin on a hospital roof help is on its way and it's time for us to spring into action. In the thirty seconds it's taken to me to climb the stairs to the helipad the pilot has already fired the engines and within three minutes we're flying over central London at a lighting speed to bring

assistance twenty-four hours a day all year round.

## Life Threatening Injuries

I've been working with London's air ambulance as a Flight Paramedic since 2010 and been exposed to vast amounts of trauma and had the opportunity to work with fantastic Doctors and Paramedics from all over the world. I can definitely use the old cliché 'you name it I've seen it' since my time working on the helicopter, as every mission involves life threatening injuries. On a daily basis we would typically attend seven missions over a twenty-four hour period with two teams working twelve hour shifts. The teams can anaesthetise and even perform life saving



**M. J. Nolan with Aidan Paul Kelly on his birthday, 2010, getting a surprise spin around London. He forgot to mention he dislikes flying.**



**Christmas Day 2010. Showing the other pilots and fire-crew how to play hurling. The helicopter is a MD902 Explorer, commonly used for Air Ambulances due to its design and safety.**

advanced life-saving treatment to the injured person. Whether it's a serious car accident, a fall from height, serious trauma involving weapons, or any other serious accident; London has a trauma team on constant alert, and when you're a Flight paramedic on London's Air Ambulance this is what you face on a daily basis.

London's Air Ambulance began its operations in 1990 from a temporary base outside Central London. There was a great deal of competition from hospitals in London to have the helicopter based at their hospital. The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, East London was successful in its bid as it was the only multi-disciplinary hospital with a site where it would be safe to build a roof top helipad. London's Air Ambulance began to fly from the rooftop at the Royal London on 30th August 1991 and serve up to ten million people within the M25 (London's orbital motorway which encircles Greater London). The helicopter has a team of four, a senior trauma Doctor, a specially trained Paramedic and two pilots. When it's dark (unsafe to land the helicopter in urban environment) we respond by car (a fast one) with the Paramedic driving and the Doctor navigating which enables us to provide senior medical

surgery before reaching hospital (unlike the ground ambulance crew). We effectively bring the A&E to the patient in the most critical phase of their injuries and perform procedures that would normally only be seen in the hospital emergency room.

London's Air Ambulance is a charity and relies on donations from the public and other corporate sponsorship and in March 2011 we completed our 25,000 mission. It has an international reputation for clinical excellence and delivers pioneering procedures, which have been adopted, across the world. It is a cutting edge service and saves lives of people in London on a daily basis and I'm extremely proud to be a part of that service.

So next time your in London and you see a big red helicopter flying low over the city be sure a give us a wave!

*(M.J. Nolan is a son of Michael and Rose Nolan, Grallaghgarden, Ballyhaunis).*





# Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre

2011 marked the seventh year for the Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre in operation as a community organisation, providing a range of activities and opportunities in the local community from its office at St. Mary's Abbey.

The Family Resource Centre was started in 2004 and is based in the Friary House at St. Mary's Abbey. The Family Resource Centre is focused on providing practical support, information and opportunities to all families and people in our community and works with other organisations and state agencies to improve the quality and range of services available in the Ballyhaunis Area.

One of the major areas of the Family Resource Centre's work over the last year has been to secure a building and access funding to open a Youth Café in the town for our young people. Working with Foirge, the No Name club and other interested people from the community, Mayo County Council were lobbied to secure the lease on the old DH Burke Supermarket site on Main Street across from the Parish Church. A survey of young people in the Community School was taken to ask what the Youth Café should offer and provide as well as undertaking a number of visits to other youth cafés in the western region to better understand how to provide such a service in Ballyhaunis. Agreement on the lease with Mayo County Council was finally reached after the summer and a funding application to equip and furnish the Youth Café submitted to Mayo North East who administer the LEADER Rural Development Programme. It is now planned to begin operating the Youth Café as soon as the funding has been secured and the building made ready.

2011 marked the third year of our Community Pre-School Service which is based next to our office at St. Mary's Augustinian Abbey. The Community Pre-school caters for children aged over three years and three months providing a free Monday to Friday childcare service during school term time under the Governments National Free Preschool Year Scheme. Twenty-eight children are enrolled and the Community Pre-school has proven extremely popular with local parents and the quality of the service provided by it's dedicated staff which has been recognised at both county and national levels.

The Family Resource Centre now operates two childcare services in the town - with the other "Greater Tomorrow" service based in the Old Convent Asylum Accommodation Centre, funded by the HSE West. Both services provide over sixty-two childcare places each week, employ seven local childcare staff and operate the "High Scope" system of quality childcare provision. Courses in parenting and children's development are now also being offered by the Family Resource Centre's Childcare Staff, following on the success of running the first ones last year.

Some of the other activities which have taken place this year include courses in digital media, a computer summer camp for children, a jobs club course for unemployed people, crochet classes as well as those courses which we have been

successfully running over a number of years; computers for beginners and improvers, which have proven popular with adults and older people and are provided free or for a small charge. Over 130 people took part in these fourteen courses which were run in morning and evening times during the last year, while our Community Internet Service - which provides a free Internet Café during weekdays, was used by over 2,431 visitors during the year. Funding was secured from Mayo North East LEADER Partnership during the year to replace the Family Resource Centre's ten laptop computers with brand new computers allowing us to keep up to date in this digital age.

The Family Resource Centre continues to provide an outreach office to Mayo Citizens Information who attend once per month to answer questions and help people find out about their entitlements and rights.

Efforts were also made during the year to start a Family Support Group for families affected by drug and alcohol addiction and to run a living with addiction course as a support for family members living with someone who has an addiction, with assistance from the Western Regional Drug Taskforce.

The centre continues its work with the international community in Ballyhaunis, trying to improve contacts and working together to provide a mix of activities for children and families. A new afterschool service for Polish children to help them improve their Polish language skills, was started by their parents during 2011 and takes place in the Family Resource Centre. A successful women's basketball activity was started this summer and summer swimming club organised with the help of the Mayo Sports Partnership. A great deal of the work of the Family Resource Centre depends on the participation of volunteers in both our management committee and in the activities themselves.

The Family Resource Centre is an active member of the Abbey Partnership, Community Council and Abbey Pattern Committee, contributing to the work of these organisations and taking an active part in their activities held in the town. It is also interested in working with as broad a range of community groups and organisations in the town and willing to help out in as many ways as possible.

The Family Resource Centre is controlled by a board of directors made up of people living in the Ballyhaunis community, in 2011 the officers were: Chairperson - Seamus Grogan, Company Secretary - Tracey McDermott, Treasurer - Manar Cherbatji. The other members are Christina Concannon, Talib Chaudhry, Stephen Grogan, Betty Koinange, Mary Morrissey, Hina Rehman and Aliya Shakoor.

A copy of the annual report is available to anyone interested, just call into the Friary House at St. Mary's Abbey.

The staff are Stephen Grogan and Tracey McDermott in the Friary House along with Childcare Staff Patricia Kelly, Barbara Murphy, Liz Ward, Cliona Mulvaney, Helen Kiely, Nicola Ryan, Edel Quinn and Maura O'Dowd.





# Irish Roots

BY RAYMOND H. MURPHY JR.

I am an American. Some of my ancestors came from Ballyhaunis. Some left during the Famine; others later. But all for the same reason - the desire for a better life for themselves and their families. It takes a lot to dislodge a person from their homeland where their ancestors lived for millennia - leaving the friends, and the rest of their family to go into exile to a strange new land. But that is exactly what Patrick Manion and his wife Maria McHugh Manion and their children did in 1845 or 46. They eventually came to settle in Bethel, Connecticut, along with others from County Mayo, and some "cousins" from the Ballyhaunis area. Located about sixty miles northeast of New York City, Bethel, in 1846, was a small town south of the medium-sized city of Danbury, then the center of the growing felt hat manufacturing trade.

It was said that before the Irish arrived in America, they thought the streets were paved with gold. On arrival, they learned three things:

1. The streets were not paved with gold
2. The streets weren't paved at all, and,
3. They were the ones to pave them!

So it was that Bernie Dolan bought a horse and wagon, and got the town contract to pave the roads with gravel. The next year, he got two more wagons, and hired a few more lads to assist. Eventually, Dolan Construction became one of the largest construction companies in the area. Others, such as Patrick Manion's sons became hatters, working in the factories, and doing a little farming on the side. Others worked in the tannery, machine shops, or the railway. They were bouyed by their faith, and their social organisations like the Knights of Columbus, the Hibernians, and trade unions. They became active in the community - the volunteer fire department and, of course, town politics.

Some came later. Manions arriving after the American Civil War (1861-1865) spelled their names Mannion for

some unknown reason. Even later arrivals, around the cusp of the century, one of the daughters of Henry O'Flaherty and Eliza Biesty of Pattens Park, Anne, married William Manion, who was a first generation American.

When I visited the graveyard in Ballyhaunis, I was struck by an eerie feeling - many of the family names were same as those in St. Mary's cemetery in Bethel, and St. Peter's cemeteries in Danbury. Mannions, Biestys, Carrolls, Prendergasts, Clearys, Ganleys, Flahertys, Houlihans and McHughs and others - just as in the US.

The children of the immigrants were known as Irish-Americans, as were their children - at least until 1960, since, with the inauguration of John F. Kennedy, they became Americans of Irish descent. Even so, they still carried a strong feeling for Ireland in their hearts. Certainly, things had changed. Their children married children of other immigrants - Italian, Greek, Polish, and Czech, and so on to become part of the "American Melting Pot. What do you call someone who's ancestry is Irish, Italian, Polish, and Dutch, with possibly a bit of American Indian? An American.

Why am I writing this? To let my kin, and "cousins" in Ballyhaunis, that your "cousins" in America have been transplanted successfully and have thrived in the soil of the New World. We are merchants, teachers, doctors, architects, workers of all sorts, clergy, military, and in the thousands of other occupations. We are leaders, and followers. But our common bond is in our common Irish ancestry which has not been forgotten.

*The author, Raymond H. Murphy Jr., Major, US Air Force, retired, is the great great grandson of Patrick Manion of Ballyhaunis (1791-1863) and the grandson of Anne Manion, nee O'Flaherty (1886-1965) of Pattens Park. Raised in Danbury and Bethel Connecticut, he now lives in St. Petersburg, FL with his wife Patricia.*

## Annagh 2012

**The deadline for contributing articles and photographs for Annagh 2012 is Friday, October 19th, 2012.**

**Email: [info@annaghmag.ie](mailto:info@annaghmag.ie)**

*Annagh would like to thank all its patrons, past and present. Please support local business and industry.*

### Notes on photographs for next year's magazine:

All photographs should be fully named and dated, if possible, and the owner's name included on the back. The contributor's name will be published only if this is requested.

Photographs sent digitally, by email or on CD, should be in jpeg format, and scanned at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi, i.e. large size. Small, low-resolution images may not be suitable for publication.

Photos will be returned as soon as possible once the magazine goes to print.





## Healthcare Award Winner

Dr. Michael Freeley is the winner of the first GE Healthcare HCA award. Along with his co-researchers at Trinity College Dublin, Michael investigates how white blood cells (T lymphocytes) move in the body during an immune response. Their research could help in the treatment of diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, Crohn's disease and Rheumatoid Arthritis.



**Dr. Michael Freeley**

High Content Analysis (HCA) can be defined as the automated process of extracting and analysing quantitative data from cell images that have been captured with a high resolution light microscope equipped with a

sensitive camera. This new technology is having an impact across many disciplines including: basic research, toxicity testing, drug development and safety testing.

Tens of thousands of images of genetic material can be captured and analysed in a day, where each image contains many hundreds of cells. On receiving the award late last year Michael said, "We are delighted to receive the first HCA Award. Quite simply, the scale of work that we performed could not have been done by manual means, and we estimate that the HCA approach has increased our throughput at least twenty-fold. Capturing the same number of fields manually would have taken in the region of 400 hours instead of twenty hours".

Dr. Freeley is son of Joe and Rose Freeley of Hazelhill.

## Ballyhaunis Bridge Club

The Ballyhaunis Bridge Club season for 2011/2012 started in September and continues until early May. This year's President is Mrs. Eileen Carney.

The President for 2010/2011 was Mrs. Christina Jordan. The President's Prize was played over two nights in April and the winners were Mrs. Susan Laffey and Mr. Michael Cameron.

Other competitions included: The Murphy Cup, The AIB Cup and The Credit Union Prize. There was a prize every month.

Bridge is played in The Hazel, Main Street, Ballyhaunis, every Tuesday and Thursday night commencing at 8pm. New members are always welcome.



**Christina Jordan (centre) presenting her President's Prizes to Susan Laffey (left) and Michael Cameron (right).**

## Ballyhaunis Cemetery Committee

This year, the committee decided that, due to the severe financial difficulties facing the country, the cemetery collection for 2011 would be deferred to 2012. Nevertheless we have endeavoured to maintain the Cemetery to its usual high standards. The shrubs and plants took a severe beating during the harsh winter, but due to the "green finger" skills of Henry Madden, the floral display was soon rejuvenated.

The committee would like to thank Oliver and Dolores Jordan, Mick and Mary Murray and the Kelly family for their kind donation of seating (situated at the

monument). A plaque was erected on the wall between the new and old cemetery to commemorate "the unbaptised babies" of the Parish of Annagh. This was part funded by private donation.

Once again we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone at home and abroad for their generous contributions to the upkeep of your cemetery.

**Committee:** John Halpin, Walter Cleary, Helen Waldron, Tom Finn, Edward Mulhern, Henry Madden, Seamus O'Boyle, Martin Gavin and Mary Donnelly.





# Home Thoughts from the City

BY FRANK GREALLY Email: editor@irishrunner.ie Tel: 087 2569690

The past year brought back many memories of my early days growing up in Ballyhaunis. I turned sixty on June 1st – a time for some reflection and remembrance of things past, especially those early formative years in Devlis – my heartland just outside the town on the Galway road. My brother Tom arrived home from Australia for a holiday in July and his arrival too evoked memories of early days in Ballyhaunis. We had one great road trip travelling from Dublin to the Achill Half-Marathon – precious times – sharing priceless memories.

I have happy memories of growing up in the house in Devlis, now a broken-down structure that has fallen into sad decay over the past several years. My parents rented that house from the late Luke Maguire from Gurrane – another great character who was a frequent visitor in those days. Some of my earliest memories are of what I call ‘The Well Women’, friends of my mother from the nearby cottages who would, every day, pass our house on their journey up the road to the spring well in John Hunt’s field.

There was no running water in the houses back then and every day Maggie Gilmore, Molly Forbes and Emily Dempsey would make the trip to the well to fill their buckets before stopping off on their return at the Greally residence for tea and conversation.

## Place of Welcome

My mother Kathleen relished those morning meetings with her friends. She was a trusted confidant too and there were many occasions when just one of ‘The Well Women’ would arrive early to share a problem in confidence with my mother and look for some trusted advice too.

Our house was always a place of welcome, a humble abode with its own special charm. My father, Tom Greally, had worked for many years as a plasterer, but when the building trade hit a bad patch in the late 1960s, he found alternative work on the farm at the Augustinian Abbey where I often helped with milking and hay making.

I remember those early days in Ballyhaunis as a time of beautiful innocence when I felt safe and secure and enjoyed lively interaction with my cousins up in



**A Family Get Together. L-R: Thomas Greally, Emer Branigan, Baby Thomas Branigan Greally, Marian Greally, Claire Greally, Frank Greally, Tom Greally, Conor Greally and Tracy Wade.**

Drimbane. My uncle, Jack Greally, recruited me to work on the ‘Custom Gap’ at the Fair Green on fair days when I was about sixteen and I can still remember standing my ground, ash plant in hand, and demanding the levies from cattle dealers and farmers who would have bought or sold stock at the fair. This was a challenging job and I was usually positioned at the smaller exit from the Fair Green where some of the cattle dealers thought they would get a ‘free exit’. I was known for my great tenacity and unyielding stance while working at this job – something that was taught to me by the late Jack Greally, a rare character whose memory I will always cherish.

I remember several cattle-droving episodes working for Sean and Thomas Anthony Tighe, Jack Moran, the Webbs and the Cruise brothers – demanding work too, but always great fun. I remember too, summer Sunday evenings watching all the cattle trucks exit Ballyhaunis on their way south to the Monday morning fairs in Abbeyfeale and Castleisland. The cattle dealer’s life was a hard one; the only hint of glamour was the great wad of banknotes that a dealer would produce from his coat pocket when paying for some bought stock. Tuesday morning saw the cattle dealers returning to the Market Day in Ballyhaunis with truck-loads of suck calves.





I loved the early morning fairs in Ballyhaunis. As a child I would listen to the lowing of cattle passing by the house in Devlis before dawn on Fair mornings. There was something penetratingly lonesome and evocative about that early morning sound and years later I again experienced that feeling in the hills of Tennessee when I listened to the late night wail of a freight train whistle passing through Johnson City where I lived for four years in the early 1970s.

It was my distance running exploits that got me to Tennessee on an athletic scholarship and it was my great friend, the late Pat Cribbin from Lecarrow, who introduced me to running in those early days. My lifelong friend Michael Joyce was always another great source of encouragement in those early days of Ballyhaunis Athletic Club, which was started by the late Michael Nestor. Another great friend to the club in those early days was Michael Curley - known locally as 'Ronnie'.

The wheel came full circle for me in September of this year when I travelled West to take part in the annual Ballyhaunis 8K Road Race - an event that looks set to enjoy increased popularity in coming years. I was greatly looking forward to completing the course in Ballyhaunis and probably did too much training - too soon - in my eagerness to achieve my target. The week before the event I picked up a niggling calf injury and on race day I had to abandon ship at the halfway mark when the injury flared up badly as we hit the hills shortly after Holywell Cross.

But it was a very special day and night for me in Ballyhaunis as I linked up with my great friend Padraig Keane from Clooncrim, Ballinlough, and some great running friends that included three former Olympians: Jerry Kiernan, David Matthews and Noel Berkeley who had travelled to Ballyhaunis for the event - a tribute to Padraig Keane and myself.

Noel Berkeley made the long journey from Middleton in East Cork on his motorbike and came home a winner in the men's race. Berkeley greatly enjoyed a long evening in Ballyhaunis and like his fellow Olympians he has promised to make a return journey to the race in 2012.

The Webb family were out in force too in Ballyhaunis and the sight of Joe, Sean and Teddy Webb on the start line conjured memories of a lovely evening in the Parochial Hall back in the Summer of 1972 when their mother, Rita



**Ballyhaunis 8k Roadrace 2011.**

Webb, organised a farewell party for me as I was about to exit for East Tennessee. That night I shared with my parents, neighbours and friends will always be special to me.

Years later, I now work closely with Joe Webb in Dublin where he has reached the very top of the tree as MD of Independent Newspapers. Joe was hugely supportive of this year's Ballyhaunis 8K event and the 'Run West' advertisements in the Irish Independent gave the race a national identity.

On race day I put up a trophy in memory of the late Michael 'The Minister' Waldron, and it was appropriate that it was Sean Webb - a former Mayo Minor footballer - who picked up the silverware, as the Minister was steeped in the GAA.

It was good also to see Michael Freely win the Pat Cribbin Memorial Trophy awarded to the first Ballyhaunis man to cross the finish line. Michael's father, Joe Freely was a talented sprinter in his youth and together we often travelled with Joe's dad, Mike Freely, to sports meetings across Connacht.

This year marked the 30th Anniversary of Irish Runner - the magazine that I have edited since 1981. I often think about how different my life might have been if Pat Cribbin and Michael Nestor has not helped me to discover my talent for distance running. That talent opened a lot of doors for me and although I never got to run in the Olympics, I did end up working as a journalist at every Games since 1992.

Marian and I have been blessed in recent times with two grandchildren: Hayleigh Bone (Catherine's daughter, three in January) and Thomas Branigan Greally who was born in February this year. Our youngest daughter Claire is now working in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Another





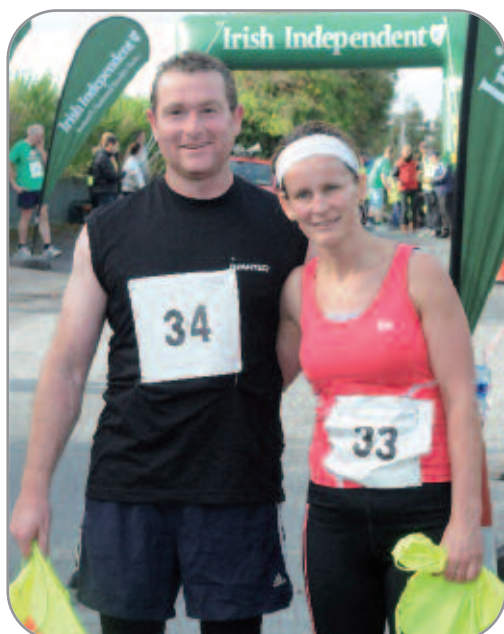
daughter, Laura, is back from a year in Australia and now works in TV production (The Apprentice, etc.). Catherine is back in college and a mother now, and our two sons Tomás and Conor have continued the link with running: Tomás as a sports photographer and Conor now as a fully-fledged marathon runner.

I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to visit my old college stomping ground in Johnson City, Tennessee in 2010 and 2011; first with Tomás and this year with Conor who ran in the Nashville Marathon. Down on Music Row in Nashville I thought back to the days in Ballyhaunis when I used to love to listen to Tony Rattigan singing his country songs in the bars in Ballyhaunis - one more lasting memory.

The older I get, the more I think about my home town. On the night of the Ballyhaunis Road Race I watched Joe and Sean Webb exit Bertie Curley's Bar in Clare Street and head up Main Street towards Paddy Phillips' Cape of Good Hope. It was getting late – near enough to last orders – and the brothers were still in their running gear; Sean still carrying the Michael 'The Minister' Waldron Trophy. They walked quickly up Main Street, chatting and laughing, without a care in the world. It was like they were young lads again and I felt privileged to witness that little late night cameo that told its own story of how good it feels to be home again. No matter how far we may travel, home is really where we start out from. For me, that place will always be Ballyhaunis.



At the Ballyhaunis 8K: L to r: Feidhlim Kelly, Jerry Kiernan, Pdraig Keane, Mick Guilfoyle, Frank Greally, Gerry Duffy and David Matthews. Both Jerry Kiernan and David Matthews are former Olympians.



Husband and wife team, Tracy (Cunnane) and Justin McDonagh, Ballyhaunis, at the finish line.



Eavan Webb-Caulfield, Tom Caulfield, Sean Webb, Séamus Caulfield, Edward (Ted) Webb and Joe Webb Jr.



# Three Score Years – 1951-2011

BY MAURA GRIFFIN

The young and indeed the middle-aged in Ballyhaunis probably think I am a native weed which grew and developed in the good soil of Ballyhaunis! Not so – I was born in North Longford in a small village on the Longford – Cavan border. This is the less fertile but the more picturesque part of that county. As I walked up to school as a child, if I looked behind, I could see a lake, Lough Gowna, surrounded by beautiful woodland. It is as lovely as Killarney except for the absence of mountains. Incidentally, Lough Gowna is the source of the River Erne which eventually flows into Donegal Bay. I arrived in Ballyhaunis on a bus which travelled from Dublin to Westport. I unloaded my couple of suitcases and my bicycle. I propped the bike against the wall of Curley's in Clare Street which was then the bus stop. A couple of young boys carried my luggage to the Central Hotel. That week passed in a whirl of activity in the Convent Secondary School. There were then about 120 pupils, all girls. My job was to set up the teaching of Latin which was then a subject required for going to University. This was the second year since St. Joseph's Secondary School was founded in 1950. When Saturday arrived I decided to take my bicycle and see the area. To

my dismay I realised I had forgotten to take it from Curley's wall. I went to look and to my joy and amazement I found it exactly where I had left it five days earlier! I must have been impressed by the honesty of the citizens because I've been here ever since.

## Light Moments

There were lots of light moments during my teaching career in this town. In those times we had a written exam in Christian Doctrine on the first Tuesday in May each year. I remember once when reading through a script and the question was to relate the story of the Presentation in the Temple. This little girl decided Mary and Joseph would make the appropriate gift – “two purple gloves”. Rita was a sensible girl so two “purple gloves” was a more practical gift than two turtle doves (whatever they are!). Some years later I remember two girls decided to take the day off during the religion exam. They went to the graveyard to spend the nice sunny day there. Unfortunately, the news of their escapade leaked back to the school. The poor girls were in trouble. One of the girls said she would take any punishment but not to tell her mother. However, of course, her mother heard of it and



An aerial view of Ballyhaunis in the early 1970s, showing Clare Street (at top), Bridge St. (right), St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy, Secondary and Primary Schools, and the Swimming Pool under construction.





the school punishment turned out to be the lesser. On another occasion that I cannot remember what the misdemeanour was, a girl's parents were called in. A Tribunal of Enquiry was set up. The guilty party was a beautiful girl – the only girl in a family of boys – and the apple of her father's eye. The poor man in defending his daughter said "It wasn't enough for ye to shtick the knife in the little girl's heart but ye twishted it as well". That man could give John B. Keane a run for his money. Great fun! Sitting across the table it was hard to keep a straight face.

In the early days St. Joseph's Secondary School taught everything through the medium of Irish. Very patriotic but educationally it was a disaster. In Latin I started by teaching a bit of basic English and Irish grammar. Nouns in Latin have six cases and three genders and the verbs have six tenses in the Indicative and four in the Subjunctive mood. Imagine trying to teach the Pluperfect and the Future Perfect tenses in Irish? And then one of the books for the Leaving Cert was Cicero's "De Senectute" – his essay on old age. Pity the poor teenagers trying to see the beauty and precision of the language in that. Strangely, I still loved teaching it. I remember in marking Inter Cert Latin - the official exam - there was a question "Describe the events that led up to the death of Julius Caesar." One imaginative boy wrote that Caesar wasn't feeling well, his wife gave him some Aspirin and packed him off to bed. Then, she sent for the doctor but too late, alas the poor man died. I felt that he deserved marks for a good story but the Department of Education might not have agreed.

Like many teachers in hard-pressed schools I was a Jack of all trades but master of none. In the variety I taught Irish, English, History and Geography. That often entailed an English text book from which we had to make out notes in Irish and have the kids write them down. What a waste of time? I found this really difficult in Leaving Cert History.

### Amalgamation

In 1977 the three post-primary schools in the town were amalgamated. During the previous year the boys from St. Patrick's College were coming to the Convent for some classes while girls were going up to the College and to the Vocational School for other classes. The transition took place at 11 am each day and a bus was provided for the pupils. The integration of the schools went smoothly and everybody settled into a span-new premises with more space and much better facilities than any of the smaller schools could provide.

The population of the town has changed enormously in sixty years. Except for a few English born people who had married Irish spouses and come to live in Ballyhaunis the people were exclusively Irish. There are people of about 20-30 different nationalities living here now. It will be interesting to see how the population develops in the next 50 years.

Finally, I would like to say that my life in Ballyhaunis has been good despite lots of ups and downs. Sometimes I quite forget that I ever lived anywhere else!!

## St. Joseph's Primary School 1982

### 5th Class:

Back, L-R: Marie Byrne (teacher), Deirdre Murphy, Jacintya Dyer, Eileen McDonagh, Meave McManus, Margaret Ruane, Mary Tarpey, Sinead Loughran.  
Third row: Eavan Webb, Louise Cribben, Maria Conway, Triona Morley, Bronagh Doherty, Cathy Phillips, Michelle Smyth.  
Second row: Caroline Leneghan, Patricia Coen, Vicky Fitzgerald, Olivia Higgins, Sharon Greene, Siobhan Byrne, Imelda Waldron.  
Front: Martina Freyne, Cathy Jordan, Ann Marie Sloyan, Deborah Biesty.





# Ground-Breakers in Education

## St. Patrick's College, Ballyhaunis, 1961

BY FR. KIERAN WALDRON

As I write this piece, I received the sad news that Fr. Francis McMyler, one of the three 'founding fathers' of the new Secondary School for boys in Ballyhaunis, fifty years ago, passed away in Galway Hospice. May he Rest in Peace. In 1961, with another priest of his own age, Fr. John Kennedy, and an older priest, Fr. Paddy Costelloe as Rector, Fr. Francis, on short notice from Archbishop Walsh, moved from Leenane, to start St. Patrick's College, a new adventure in Ballyhaunis history.

St Patrick's College was to become the location and the genesis of the much enlarged 'Ballyhaunis Community School' into which pupils of the three Ballyhaunis post-primary schools, St. Patrick's College, the Vocational School and the Convent School merged in 1977, sixteen years later. The foundation of St. Patrick's, however, fifty years ago this year, was the event which made all this possible.

### Ground-breakers

The first thirty-nine pupils in the new St. Patrick's College, Ballyhaunis were certainly the true ground-breakers. In this present age when most Leaving Cert students go on to third level education, we find it hard to realise that, prior to 1960, the hope of boys from Ballyhaunis being in school past the age of fourteen was virtually impossible. I went to boarding school in Tuam in 1949 and just four others from the parish - William Byrne, John Waldron, Bernie Lyons and Pat Ruane - joined me there. One or two more went to other boarding schools where their parents could afford such a luxury. The Ballyhaunis Vocational School then offered only a two-year course leading to what was called the 'Group Certificate'. But the Irish economy then was largely an agricultural economy. Ground-breaking was not in the direction of education but rather in the bog, the corn-field or the potato ridge.

Girls were somewhat luckier. The Sisters of Mercy had been providing what was called a 'Secondary-top' attached to their National School since 1938, up to Intermediate Certificate. St. Joseph's offered a full-scale secondary school to Leaving Certificate only from 1950. Until 1961, however, the lads were consigned to odd jobs on the land, in the shops around town perhaps for a year or two and they were later consigned to building-sites or factories in England.

### Hectic Pace

The Ballyhaunis school had been conceived, planned,

built, and officially recognised, all at a hectic pace in just one year, originating from a local delegation to the Archbishop of Tuam on 24th July 1960. The school opened on target on 8th September 1961. Those were the days when the Department of Education had no say, or indeed no interest, in deciding where secondary schools were to be set up in Ireland. They merely checked whatever application they received, to ensure that a few requirements were fulfilled for official recognition. They



**Staff of St. Patrick's College 1962.**  
**L-R: Frs. Kieran Waldron, Francis McMyler, Patrick Costelloe (Headmaster) and John Kennedy.**

had no budget to pay for building secondary schools. So, in effect, they had had no part in the planning or provision of St. Patrick's College.

Fr. Costelloe was the only qualified teacher and he would be paid a teacher's salary. A capitation grant would be paid for each recognised pupil from State funds, but not for the first year. The two younger priests, then following the required Higher Diploma in Education course in UCG, would exist on a nominal salary of less than £2 per week from a bank loan to the school, supplemented by whatever Mass stipends they might be given. After they had completed the course in Galway a year later the 'basic salary' from the school would be reduced to £50, but as 'provisional teachers' they would qualify only for a £200 supplementary allowance from the Department of Education. It was all a matter of hair-shirt existence. No wonder that so few lay people were willing to set up voluntary secondary schools!

The building for the new college was the simplest and cheapest on offer - a 'Bantile' pre-fabricated structure





which was to be financed from parish funds and some local fund-raising. The contact price was just £9,010 - a sizeable sum, nevertheless in those days all to be raised locally. There were no State grants for the site or the building. An elderly Parish Priest might easily have shied away from the prospect but in 1960 Ballyhaunis was without an official Parish Priest - it had, however, two progressive curates, Frs. Tom Rushe and Tommy Heraty who were totally supportive of the school project. Fr. Rushe was responsible for the building and he did not delay. Nothing stopped the onward progress. Those were the days before good projects could be stymied, blocked or delayed by endless bureaucracy whenever a State grant is involved.

### The First Thirty-Nine

And who were the thirty-nine ground-breakers? A few years ago, Fr. Costelloe, the first Headmaster, kindly entrusted me with three copy-books incorporating some school records. Hopefully, we will have these suitably archived later. It is appropriate then to list here the names of the first entrants to the new endeavour on 8th September 1961 - 'the Feast of Our Lady's Birthday' - as Fr. Costelloe entered it in the roll book. They were as follows:

Brian Byrne, Clare St.  
 Patrick Gerard Carney, Coogue  
 Patrick Fitzmaurice, Cloonfad  
 John Freeman, Tubber, Aghamore  
 Thomas Glynn, Upper Main St.  
 Kevin Henry, Tooreen  
 Michael Herr, Knox St.  
 John Higgins, Devlis  
 Thomas Judge, Clooncrim, Ballinlough  
 Aidan Kelly, Upper Main St.  
 Brendan Lyons, Ballinacostello, Aghamore.  
 Desmond Lyons, Kiltaboe  
 Thomas Lyons, Greenwood  
 Kieran McLoughlin, Coogue  
 John Austin Murphy, Lecarrow  
 Enda O'Brien, Shanvaghera, Knock  
 Val Rattigan, Knox St.  
 Donal Sammon, Knock  
 Patrick Sloyan, Reisk, Began  
 James Joseph Byrne, Bruff, Aghamore.  
 Eugene Caulfield, Bruff  
 Walter Cleary, Logboy  
 Thomas Cribbin, Main St.  
 Michael Feely, Curhawnagh, Aghamore  
 John Joe Fitzmaurice, Forthill  
 Michael Forde, Moneymore  
 Peter Gallagher, Derrintogher  
 Patrick Joseph Glynn, Devilish, Kiltimagh  
 Michael Timothy Healy, Holywell  
 Seán Henry, Tooreen

Thomas Andrew Kelly, Cappagh, Tooreen  
 James Morley, Knox St.  
 Martin Murphy, Lisaniska, Began  
 Patrick Joseph Nestor, Tooreen  
 Michael Travers, Kilbeg, Bricksens  
 James Martin Tighe, Acres, Aghamore  
 Mark Jordan, Cummer, Tooreen  
 Paddy Judge, Coolnaha  
 John Kelly, Cloonbuliban, Began

A closer look at the details from the original roll-book reveals that, of the thirty-nine first-years, five of them were fifteen years of age on entry and a further fifteen were over fourteen. These had obviously been long waiting for such an opportunity.

The list of addresses underlines the hunger which existed for secondary education. Enormous sacrifices had to be made by the students cycling from far-flung villages - from Shanvaghera, Knock, Ballinacostello, Aghamore, Tooreen, to Ballinlough and to Lisaniska, several miles past Began. Some of the students had a round-trip of over fifteen miles each day in hail wind and snow.

### Opportunity

Conscious of the age-pattern of the boys, Fr. Costelloe gave the older ones a chance to move on as quickly as possible to Leaving Certificate by arranging that some of them would sit for the Intermediate Certificate after two years instead of the customary three. This also gave an opportunity to some of the brighter students to move with them by joining this Intermediate Certificate class, even if they had to repeat the examination in the school year 1963-64. The experiment certainly stretched the younger students but it was for their ultimate good and, no doubt, contributed to success in their later careers.

Having completed the Intermediate Certificate in 1963 the older members of the class were joined by a number of local boys who had attended other schools like St. Jarlath's Tuam, CBS Roscommon, St. Nathy's Ballaghaderreen and Gormanston College, all of whom had gone there before secondary education was available in Ballyhaunis. These included: John Conway, Dermot Eagney, Patrick Halpin, Michael McQueeney, Edward Mulhern, Peter Sweeney, John Hoban, James Joseph Fitzmaurice and Martin Regan, all from Annagh parish and from other surrounding parishes were James Cunningham, Eamonn Freeman, Brendan McGrath, Michael Joseph Robinson and Christy Freyne. Most of those went on to become the first Leaving Certificate class of 1965. (See photographs taken in May 1964.)

As in all secondary schools of the day the operation was run on a shoe-string. The modest fee to be paid by each student's parents was £15 per year for the first child, payable in two instalments. Those fees began to be funded by the State from 1967. For the first year the total





**St. Patrick's College  
First Leaving  
Certificate Class -  
June 1964.**

**Back (L-R):**  
John Hoban,  
Donal Sammon,  
Brendan Lyons,  
Eamon Freeman,  
Edward Mulhern,  
John Kelly,  
James Cunningham,  
Peter Sweeney.  
**Front:** Martin Regan,  
John Joe Fitzmaurice,  
Michael Joseph  
Robinson,  
Kieran McLoughlin,  
Patrick Sloyan,  
Patrick Halpin,  
Dermot Eagney.



fees of £527 was the only source of income for the school as the State capitation grant of £469 did not become payable until the second year of operation as it was based on the enrolment in the previous year (source: Tuam Diocesan Archive, p13/4/3).

My own particular thrill at its beginning grew from my Ballyhaunis roots but also from my regular contact with my two contemporaries, Frs. McMyler and Kennedy, as we journeyed together to UCG in that first year of its existence a few evenings each week for the H.Dip in Ed. Course. It was a major surprise to me, but indeed a privilege when I, a Ballyhaunis native, was appointed to join them on the staff in the second year of the school's history where I was destined to spend eight happy years from 1962-70. The subsequent history of the school is for another time and other contributors.

*Kieran Waldron*

## **A past-pupil's account...**

*The following piece was written as an addendum to this article by one of the above-named first pupils of St Patrick's. Paddy Judge from Coolnaha, who spent a lifetime as an Aer Lingus pilot and currently is a member of the Air Accidents Investigation Team attached to the Department of Transport.*

Fr. Kieran's article and the names he mentions bring back many memories. I remember cycling towards the new secondary school in Ballyhaunis in early September 1961 and not quite sure exactly where or what it was. At the time the school was still unfinished; there was no front gate, just an iron pipe across the gateway. Bicycles were kept in the shed out the back. The science hall was locked and a mystery. We peeped through the windows and

could see pipes sticking up out of the counters - waiting for taps as we later discovered.

Fr. Costelloe was in charge with initially, Fr. Kennedy (whom we called 'Big John' behind his back) and Fr. McMyler. It must have been tough on them as they taught us during the day and I remember that they had night classes afterwards. They served us a diet of Irish, English, Latin, Science, Geography, History and Maths - no options in those days. There were just two classes, one doing the Inter Cert in two years and one in three. I was in the first Inter Cert exam class of 1963 when I was thirteen but some of the lads were much older, the first of my two Inter Certs and two Leaving Certs in my six years in St. Pats.

Lunch was sandwiches from home with hot tea from a Burco boiler in the bicycle shed/gym, presided over by one of the priests. A quick bite to eat and then out to the football pitch for a quick game if it was not raining. After class I cycled home, usually with Bernie Glavey and Christy Freyne, to work on the farm with homework afterwards. We country kids envied the town lads who could put their feet up after school.

I have very fond memories of my fellow pupils and our teachers who tried to put a little education into the lot of us, sometimes the hard way! Had it not been for new St. Patrick's many of us would not have had a secondary education as even the £15 a year school fee was very hard for our parents to find in those days. Unfortunately, St. Pat's went but it would be nice to meet up again. If others are interested send me an email and we can organise something.

*Paddy Judge.  
paddyjudge@eircom.net*





**St. Patrick's College  
Second Leaving  
Certificate Class -  
June 1965.**

**Back (L-R):**  
Thomas Kelly,  
Christy Freyne,  
Tommy Lyons,  
Eugene Caulfield,  
Peter Gallagher,  
Martin Murphy.  
**Centre:** John Austin  
Murphy, Val Rattigan,  
Brian Byrne,  
John Higgins,  
Michael Travers,  
Michael Herr,  
Bernard Glavey,  
Tommy Judge.  
**Front:** Des Lyons,  
Eamonn Curley, Enda  
O'Brien, Tommy Glynn,  
Mark Jordan,  
Paddy Judge.



**St. Patrick's College Students and Teachers 1976.**

**Back, L-R:** John Campbell, Brendan Niland, Sean Byrne, John Morris, Michael Ganley, Sean Healy, James Naughton, Rory O'Connor, Paul Cunnane. **Third Row:** Pat Morris, John Kelly, James McGivern, Unidentified, Gearoid Conroy, Sean Phillips, Cathal Carroll.

**Second row:** John Fitzgerald, Michael Conboy, Eamon Kenny, Michael Byrne, Tommy Prenty, Pdraig Waldron, Nicholas Freyne, Sean Connolly (RIP), Liam McDonald, John Toolan, Jimmy Duggan, Brendan Kenny, Dermot Murray, Chris Barry. **Front:** Michael Glynn (RIP), Morgan Jennings, Fr. Patrick Costelloe (RIP), Jarlath Fahey, Fr. Des Walsh, John Cleary, Fr. Francis McMyler (RIP), Terry Coleman.





# St. Patrick's Dramatic Society

St. Patrick's Drama Society (Ballyhaunis) was started in the 1950's and is still going strong. At present the group are rehearsing a play by Sam Cree, a comedy called "Cupid wore Skirts", which they hope to stage in late March 2012.



**Standing (L-R):** Stella O'Neill (Costume), Michael Kelly, Mike Griffin (Sound), John Caulfield (Stage Manager), Katrina Sweeney, Pat Doyle and Conor Freeman. **Seated:** Margaret O'Connor, Lydia Beisty, Norma Jean Folliard, Jackie Caulfield and Tom Collieran. **Cast members missing from photograph:** Angela Heaney and Michael Goulding. *Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlereagh.*



**The cast of Sharon's Grave which was staged by St. Patrick's Drama Society in the 1990s.**  
**Back, L-R:** Jimmy Fleming, Frank Leonard, John Gunnigan, Jack Greene, Seamus O'Boyle, Joe Greene, Tony Carney, Padraic Lyons, Pat Doyle. **Centre:** Noel Lyons, Moira Noone, Margaret Niland, Bernie Jordan, Mary Walsh, Maura O'Neill. **Front (in the bed):** Mike Daly. *Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlereagh.*





# They're off!

BY EAMON MURREN

In the 1970 edition of "Lorica", a magazine published by the students of St. Patrick's College, Ballyhaunis, two of my late and dear friends namely Ted Webb and Eamon Healy both wrote articles. Ted wrote about the old Ballyhaunis Racecourse, while Eamon wrote about the Racecourse in Holywell. The following is a synopsis of both articles.

The last race run in the old Ballyhaunis Racecourse was on the 7th September 1916. The winner of the last race was a horse called 'Scotch Wolf'. On the final day there were six races. The first race of the day was won by 'Nelly Mac', while the biggest race of the day, worth forty gold sovereigns, was won by 'Happy-Go-Lucky'.

Race day was a big day in Ballyhaunis. Special trains came from all over the country, including Dublin. During the day surrounding the races, the town was full of musicians, trick-of-the-loops and other entertainment.

Those who wanted to go into the grandstands paid five shillings. There were two bars on the course. The grandstand bar was run by Thomas Cunningham while the other bar was run by a Mr. Gilmore.

The racecourse was closed on account of the land being allotted in four acre plots to local farmers. The seventy five acres belonging to Mr. John Crawley was divided by the District Board after they bought it from Mr. Crawley for £1,500.

After the old Racecourse was stripped a new one was built on the far side of Ballindrehid where the cottages are now built. Races were held there in the early 1930's,

but eventually it too closed.

The Acting Stewards at the last meeting of the old Racecourse were Dr. A. J. Crean, A. F. Crean, Arthur Blake, Martin Curran, Edward Webb and H. L. Fitzpatrick. The Stewards were: E. C. Kelly, F. T. Flynn, T. F. French, E. W. Kelly, M. B. Costello and L. P. Yates. The Secretary was John J. Waldron, Main Street. The Treasurer was the Ulster Bank. The Starter was Mr. A. Blennerhasset. The Handicapper was Col. Waldron. Stakeholder and Receiver of Entries was Mr. C. Brindley. The Clerk of Scales J.P. Hartigan and Judge of Clerk of Scales was Mr. W. Rutledge from Hollymount.

The first races were held in Holywell on the 26th July 1894. A crowd of 6,000 people attended. A new stand was erected that seated 300 people. The first race on the card was won by a three year old called 'Sir Isaac'. Other winners on the day were 'Weird Cooper' and 'Pickwick paper'.

The next meeting was held on the 24th June 1895. Two thousand people attended this meeting. 'Sir Isaac' won the first race again. The second race was won by 'Holywell Cottage'. The prize money for this race was £60. This horse was owned by a local and as he passed the post a huge cheer went up. It was reported that the owner refused a bid of £180 for the horse.

The final race run at Holywell was won by 'Needle The Fourth' with a local horse 'Mayo The Red' finishing second.

**The winner of the 'Ba Morley Memorial Handicap Hurdle' of €7,000 at Ballinrobe Races in May 2011 was 'Face Facts'.**

**Included in the photograph are friends and family of the late Mike 'Ba' Morley - his niece Joanne Morley and husband Mike Walsh, Ned Murren, Adrian Murray, Tom Glynn and Shay Walsh presenting the prize to Anne and Jim O'Neill (owners).**

**Also pictured is race committee Chairman John Staunton.**

*Photo Courtesy Trish Forde Photography.*

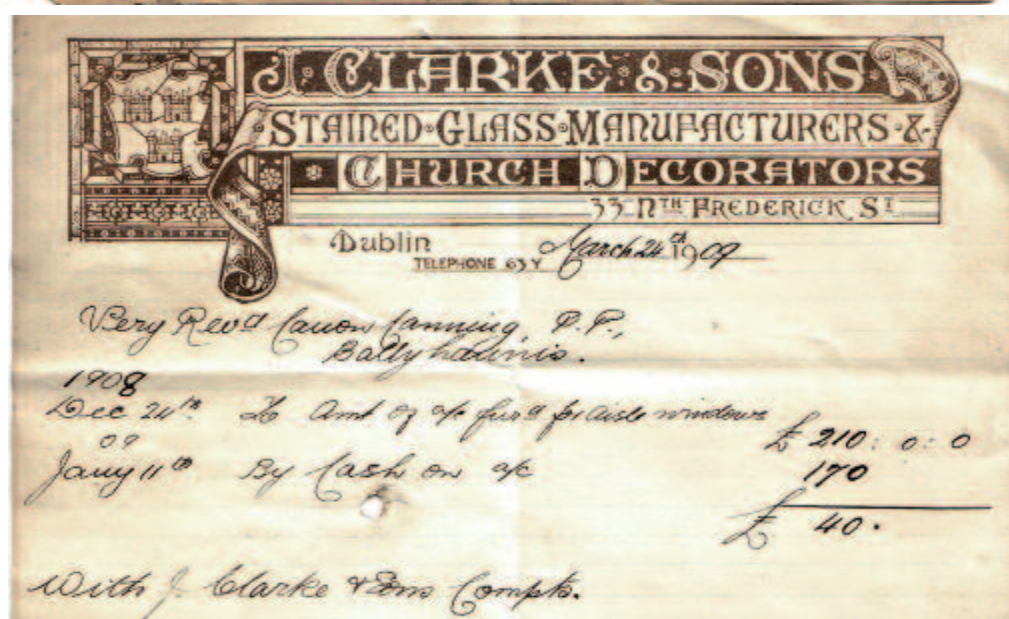




# Joshua Clarke Letter, 1909

This letter was amongst papers discovered in the attic of the Parochial House during renovations earlier this year. It was sent to Canon Canning, the Parish Priest, in 1909 by Joshua Clarke (father of Harry Clarke) the famous stained glass artist. It seems that the total cost of the windows of the Parish Church in 1909 was £210 (valued at €140,000 in 2009) and that Canon Canning had paid £170. This attached letter is a request for payment of the balance of £40. Dated March 24th, 1909, it reads:

"Dear Canon Canning  
You will please excuse me troubling you again for a cheque for a/c but I have some large a/cs to meet before the end of week and I am in hopes of getting a remittance from you to square up same. I would not trouble you only I am in a bad state for money being disappointed with a few a/cs I was expecting.  
Hoping you can see your way to let me have cheque by Friday or Saturday at latest.  
Thanking you in anticipation.  
Yours respectfully,  
J. Clarke."





# Ballyhaunis Memories

BY SEAN FREYNE

After the untimely death of my father in 1940, our family moved from Kilkelly, where I was born, to Tooreen. That was early 1942, at the height of the Second World War. Due to the emergency, private cars were off the road and my mother found the daily cycle to and from Kilkelly to Tooreen school, where she was one of the teachers, too arduous, especially in winter. From then on, Ballyhaunis was the 'big town' for our family, and I was a country boy who approached the metropolis with some trepidation, and yet a sneaking admiration for the style and confidence of the townies! Of course a few Ballyhaunis people - Albert and Enda Lyons and Philip Waldron, as I recall - came to Tooreen school, not just for the fresh air presumably! So one wasn't totally overawed when visiting 'the town'. There must be something good about Tooreen, you felt, when Ballyhaunis people came to our school!

My earliest memories are of a weekly visit, sometimes in Mick Morley's horse and trap, sometimes in Paddy Cosgrove's hackney car and later on my bicycle. I must confess that those early memories are not the most happy ones. They usually involved a visit to Miss O'Reilly for piano lessons (she lived beside the Parochial Hall), or for dancing lessons from Miss Spellman, that were conducted in the Hall, where, incidentally, I saw my first movie, 'The Song of Bernadette'! Being tone deaf and having two left feet meant that neither was a very pleasant experience for me, and in the end my mother agreed to free me from these pursuits and allow me to engage in more manly activities! My sister, Mary, persevered with both the music and the dancing, and won several prizes, especially for her violin playing at the annual Feis that was held in the Friary field every 29th of June.

## Town Connections

Our family had much earlier connections with the town. My father had served his time in Conway's drapery shop

(later McGarry's), and before her marriage my mother stayed in digs with the Cassidy family in Coolnaha. She became the first lady member of the golf club, or so she claimed. I cannot vouch for her golfing abilities, but we inherited a set of golf clubs with wooden shafts and magical names for different clubs, such as mashie and niblock. On more than one occasion we would slip in surreptitiously to the golf club, drive the sheep off the greens and try our hand at hitting the small ball.



**Sean Freyne (right) with Eamon Walsh, Westport 2003. Two Mayo Captains. Westport 50th Reunion of the 1953 Mayo Minor Team, All Ireland Champions. The football is the very one used in the game.**

The late Mrs. McGarry often regaled me with stories of my father's kindness to her as a child, when he served his time in her father's shop. He must have made friends with Frank Glynn of Clare Street also, presumably because of their mutual love of greyhounds. I wrote a letter to Frank once, signing myself only as Sean from Tooreen, asking him if he had any greyhound pups for sale. When he identified whose son the Sean was, he gave me a pup as a present. At the age of 10, I was a signed up member of the Irish Coursing Club in Clonmel, and my dog 'Tooreen Rambler' was registered with them. She was out of Frank's own dog, 'Tooraree Again'. Eventually 'Tooreen Rambler' being true to her name, had to be sold

on, after a brief stay with my classmate, Tony Jordan, in Cummer. There was a rumour that she won a race at Roscommon, but that may have only been for my benefit.

My father had bought a football for me, and as a five-year old I got it from Santa Claus the Christmas after he died. As an Old IRA veteran, he obviously had an interest in Gaelic games, and had been secretary of the Connacht Handball Association in the 1920s. My mother kept one of his minute books. Reading them in later life, I felt that I was meeting him really for the first time in the letters that he wrote to various people, copies of which he had kept, and which were not all about handball business. No matter what I did later in life I always wanted him to be proud of me as an Irishman. That football that he had bought was to start me on my career and sowed the





seeds of my continuing passion for the game and for the GAA. My mother was a keen fan also and she often told us how she threatened a Galway supporter with her umbrella at a Mayo/Galway match, until my father intervened. She was an O'Flaherty and she often repeated, with some pride it must be said, the motto of the rival clan in Galway, the Burkes: "From the fury of the O'Flaherty's good Lord deliver us!"

When we moved to Tooreen a few of us used to gather every evening in the summer time, either in Colm Forkin's field or in Tuohy's Turlough. The late Father Mick Caulfield was our coach in the summer holidays, insisting that we learn to kick with both feet, chip the ball up and solo run at full speed. We were so proud when he played in Croke Park, although Mayo lost to Meath in the 1949 All Ireland semi-final. I got to visit the great stadium for the first time with Mick's brother, John, and his cousins, the Greallys from Kildare. After the match he let me carry his boots from the dressing room behind the old Cusack stand down to Barry's hotel, where the Mayo team was staying. I dreamt even then of making that journey myself one day, hopefully playing a role in bringing Sam back with us! A beautiful stylist on the field, Mick got his All Ireland medal the following year when he came on a sub to replace Billy Kenny, who had suffered a broken leg in the final against Louth.

### A Real Leader

Another boyhood idol was, of course, Sean Flanagan, whose father was my teacher in Tooreen. Sean often visited the school and on one occasion (it must have been 1947) he called to the school the day after Mayo had lost the first round game to Sligo. Sean's Dad told him how upset I was at the loss, and he called me out of the room and pinned a Mayo badge to my jersey, "Today is the day we begin preparing for next year," he said, with chest out in characteristic fashion. Next year, 1948, brought the heartbreak loss by one point to Cavan in the All Ireland final, the one that was cut short by the referee, an O'Flaherty from Offaly. My mother was singularly unimpressed! But Sam did arrive in 1950. Sean, together with some other members of the Mayo team, such as Peter Solan and Mick Flanagan, visited their Alma Mater, St. Jarlath's. Sean asked to see me and referred to what he had said to me in Tooreen school two years earlier. "It



Tooreen, Christmas 1953: Sean with the Tom Markham Cup. About to return to Maynooth that day. Snow on ground!



LOUGHGLYNN (RED and WHITE)			MOYLUGH (RED and WHITE)		
P. LAVIN			J. CUNNIFF		
B. CRAWLEY	J. LYNCH	A. SHARKEY	T. GUNN	M. HIGGINS	G. COLLARD
J. CARNEY	E. DUIGAN	P. DUFFY	J. LORRIS	T. O'DONNELL	T. SPAN
D. FINN J. LAVIN			W. FALLON T. HIGGINS		
F. SARGENT	W. McDERMOTT	F. DOWD	M. HARRISON	G. CORRAN	M. CUNNIFF
J. DUNNE	G. SWEENEY	D. McDERMOTT	G. HARRIS	P. HIGGINS	J. HARRISON
Subs.: F. Freeman, E. Giblin, D. O'Donnell, E. Finn, E. Crowley, C. Kenny.			Subs.: K. Green, J. HARRIS, J. Ryan, T. LORRIS.		
Gl. Pts. Fines 50 Wides			Gl. Pts. Fines 50 Wides		

BALLYHAUNIS (BLUE and WHITE)			BALLYHAUNIS (BLUE and WHITE)		
M. NALLY			E. WALDRON		
T. JORDAN	J. HEALY	J. FORDE	M. HARRIS	S. LYNN	M. EGAN
P. BENSINN	F. FAHEY	A. SMYTH	J. WEE	P. HARRISON	P. JORDAN
D. CURTIS P. HEALY			J. O'DONNELL M. WALDRON		
V. BYRNE	S. FREYNE	H. FORDE	G. HARRIS	M. HARRIS	G. O'NEILL
B. LYONS	A. ROBINSON	S. SMYTH	P. HARRIS	S. HARRIS	C. POLEY
Subs.: W. Byrne, T. Healy, G. Cribbin, J. Flattery, Tom Healy.			Subs.: M. HARRIS, J. LYNN, E. HARRIS.		
Gl. Pts. Fines 50 Wides			Gl. Pts. Fines 50 Wides		

Programme for the Official Opening and Blessing of "Ballyhaunis Town Park" in 1953, with Ballyhaunis Minor and Junior teams playing in two inter county matches.

took us a bit longer" he said, "but we did it." Flanagan was a real leader, and I hope that current Mayo footballers realise their power to influence future generations and their responsibility to pass on the torch. By that time I had entered St. Jarlath's College and got friendly with a number of lads from the town- the Lyons brothers from Knox street, the Byrnes and Waldrons from Main street, and the Faheys from Lavallyroe. Later on there were Mal Nally, a wonderful goalkeeper, Johnny Biesty and Bernie Lyons, both skilful and deadly forwards. Frank Fahey and I were later to soldier together for Jarlath's, Connacht Colleges and the Mayo







**Students from St. Jarlath's College who played on Ballyhaunis Juvenile Team, Brabazon Park, Swinford, 1949. Back, L-R: Bernie Lyons (Ballyhaunis), Tom Morley and Eamon Concannon (Knock), Fintan Lynch (Ballyhaunis), Frank Fahey (Lavallyroe), Tom Kilrairie (Cloonfad). Front: Sean Freyne (Tooreen).**

minors, and are the proud holders of All Ireland minor medals from 1953, as well as several other college awards.

I think it was during my first year in Jarlath's that I was approached by the late Paddy Waldron, that great Ballyhaunis man from Abbey Street. Paddy's father Jack had played for Mayo in the early years of the twentieth century. Paddy was then in his last year in the college and wanted to know if I would play for the Ballyhaunis juveniles that summer. Paddy was cutting his teeth for his future role as the heart and soul of Ballyhaunis football. Was I delighted! That was the beginning of my playing career with Ballyhaunis, one that lasted until I was finished with the minor ranks. In those days Aghamore did not field underage teams and so one could play with the nearest team to your home place. After that the parish rule kicked in. I remember a few great tussles when playing afterwards with Aghamore against my former team-mates from juvenile and minor ranks. Recently I was lecturing in Japan and I visited with Father Willie Byrne. With great nostalgia we recalled those days and the characters and rivalries that shaped our youth.

Paddy Waldron had gathered players from far and wide: Milo Henry from Ballyhaunis, Colm and Hugh Forkin and myself from the Tooreen area, Frank Fahey and Tom Kilrairie from the Cloonfad direction and Doc Healy and others from Knock. County or parish boundaries were no problem if there was a suitable player available and

willing. Nor were birth certificates examined either! To the best of my memory we did not have any success on that first competitive venture, but Paddy persisted, and the Ballyhaunis club emerged with Paddy as the secretary. He was ably assisted by Pat Keane, Mick O'Connell and Mick Tarmey among others.

### Unfazed

A year later I recall Hugh Forkin and myself cycling to Ballyhaunis to play a juvenile game against Charlestown. We had to shelter from a thunderstorm and when it had passed we fairly 'put the pedals around' to get to the game. On reaching the town we discovered that it was being played in Agloragh, which was a few more miles further on. Unfazed, we continued our journey and just made it at half time. We were both introduced for the second half and I encountered for the first of many times the great Eamon Walsh of Charlestown. Eamon and I were team-mates later, with the Mayo minors. He took over the captaincy of the team when I couldn't play in the final, having entered the seminary in Maynooth the week before the game. He was as good 'a piece of stuff' as ever wore the Mayo jersey, and I enjoy visiting with him now to recall our battles on the field and our friendship off it.

By 1950 Ballyhaunis had an excellent minor team that got to the county final (played at Easter of 1951) against a star-studded Ballina team that included the great Willie Casey. There were great celebrations when we won the game, only to lose it subsequently at the County Board on an 'age technicality'. John and Val Byrne, Joe Webb, Martin Carney, Tom Flanagan, Fintan Lynch, George Delaney and Henry Forde were the Ballyhaunis stalwarts. George and Henry went to rugby-playing schools, but were excellent athletes and Gaelic footballers as well, following in the footsteps of their respective fathers, George senior and Tom Forde, both of whom had played for Mayo in the 1920s. A number of years ago I was in Perth in Australia, and somebody mentioned the name Henry Ford. I asked if it was Henry from Ballyhaunis. They called him to find out, and Henry insisted on driving across Perth to meet me. It ended up a very late night indeed, as there was no shortage of topics. Such were the ways in which sport had brought our lives together that we could have talked for a week.

I was just 16 in 1951 and didn't expect to be picked for the final, but I was chosen at left half back to mark a Ballina flyer and county minor, Ignatius McGrath. I must have done a fairly good job, because on my next visit to Pat Keane's shoe repair shop he told me that I had done something he had never seen before. Apparently, I had knocked the ball away with my hand as McGrath was about to kick a goal. Isn't it remarkable how a word of praise to a young person can stay with one for a lifetime?





## How Times Have Changed

Pat Keane's shop was just beside Webb's butcher shop. It was the Mecca for all football enthusiasts, and my first port of call when I arrived in town, to park my bicycle and hear all the news. Eddie Webb, a wonderful Ballyhaunis supporter, paid frequent calls to Pat during the day, relating any titbit about the Mayo team, our next opponents or any other relevant information he might have gathered on his many travels. I can still see his green Hillman Minx car arriving in Maynooth as we were lined up to process to evening prayer on my first Sunday in the college. Only Eddie could have got as far as he did in those days of walled off seminary life. Unfortunately, a rather prissy Dean, later a bishop, sent him on his way and put me back in my place as I made a dash for Eddie's car. Fortunately, a more sensible member of the Maynooth staff, Tomas O'Fiach, later Cardinal O'Fiach, had already informed me of Mayo's victory, and how his own beloved Armagh had lost to Kerry in the senior final, having missed a penalty. Apparently, Eddie reported to Pat next day that 'it was bad enough for Sean to have to miss the final, but there he was on a fine Sunday evening wearing a surplice and 'hateen' like the Canon!' How times have changed!!

There must have been something special about shoe-repair shops and football in Ballyhaunis in those days! Earlier still Jimmy McGreal had a workshop on the Claremorris road near Robinson's. His nephews, Michael and Anthony Robinson were both outstanding athletes and footballers. In fact I am pretty sure that Michael was the goalkeeper in the 1950 county minor final, and made a few brilliant saves. Because they had relations in Huntsfield, I knew them quite well and Michael would often call for a kick about on his way to visit his cousins during the holidays. It was a joy to visit Jimmy's shop, the walls bedecked with cuttings and pictures of Mayo teams of the 1930s. He had time to tell one about the deeds of such giants as Moclair, Kenny, Flannelly, Kelly, Ormsby, Munnelly, O'Malley and Courell, et al. of the 1936 team, that won our first All Ireland. It must have been Jimmy's interest that prompted me to start developing scrapbooks of newspaper cuttings and photographs, something I continued for years afterwards. A few of these still survive and I often take them down and page through them, a little bemused my obviously insatiable appetite for gathering and preserving such material.

## Colossus

Proud as Jimmy was of these heroes, there was one Ballyhaunis man who stood out above them all, Martin



**Ballyhaunis Team 1953, on parade:**

*Above: Right to Left: Mick Deacy (Swinford), George Delaney (Abbey Street), Mick Murphy (Coolloughra), Joe O'Connell (Swinford), Paddy Moran (Levallyroe), Mick Freyne (Aghamore)*

*Below: Right to Left: Unidentified, Padraic Hannon (Abbey Street), Cyril Foudy (Clare Street), Mick Deacy (Swinford), and George Delaney (Abbey Street).*



Hannon, brother of Pete from Abbey Street. He had been ordained a priest for the Tuam diocese and had volunteered for missionary work in Africa, but died there of malaria as a young man. He was apparently a colossus on the football field, and would have been on the Mayo team of 1936, had he been available. He was immortalised for me by one M.A. Clune, who wrote a book entitled *Connacht Triumphs* that Jimmy had told me about. Apparently, Clune was the son of a post-master who had lived in Ballyhaunis, and he obviously knew and idolised Martin Hannon. Mrs. Waldron, Paddy's mother who ran a bookshop, got me a copy of the book, which I read and re-read many times. Indeed a weekly visit to that shop to pick up a copy of the *School Weekly* for my mother and *Gaelic Sport* for myself, is one of my strongest memories. Later on in life it would usually be accompanied with a visit to the Friary for confessions and a chat with Father Delaney.

Under the influence of Sean Flanagan, who on one occasion organised a cricket match in Tom Finnegan's field in Coolnaha, I became interested in all sports. Sean had no time for the 'ban' as you can imagine, and introduced me to *World Sport*, a magazine that covered athletics, rugby, soccer, cricket and every other 'foreign





game' you could think of. It appeared monthly and Mrs. Waldron obliged by keeping copies for me when I was in Jarlath's. Recently, my sister, Mary, came across a bag full of old copies of the journal going back to 1950. You can imagine my delight, and I have had many happy hours this summer paging through them. Sport is a universal language of the human spirit, and wherever I have been in the world I have become involved with the local game and its fans. The same rhythms of hope, despair, exhilaration and passion operate wherever and whatever sport is played. What a wonderful insight it was for Cusack and his friends to gather in Hayes' hotel in Thurles in 1884. They have left us a glorious legacy that we must never allow commercialism to erode or sully.

Clune's book made such a deep impression on me that I can still recite almost verbatim what he wrote about Martin Hannon. Recounting the half-time tension in a Mayo-Galway match, he writes: 'Our minds go back to previous Connacht finals and those who played in them. Six weeks hence, a well-travelled Western People or Connacht Telegraph will reach them, bringing news of this game, and a tear will be shed under the African sky when the memory of days like this is recalled.' He really could capture the pathos of sport and what it means to those who play and follow it with passion. I wish that some enterprising person would have the book reprinted. There must be copies of it about somewhere!

### Shoulders of Giants

This has been a ramble down memory lane and the Ballyhaunis people who crossed my path of life. There

were many others, I know, and like M.A. Clune, my thoughts go back to those far-off days and the people who so influenced my life. Many of them have passed on, some far too soon. Yet they are as real to me now as when I would set off on my bicycle and head for Ballyhaunis over 60 years ago, assured that I would meet football friends, or chat with some older people like Tom Finnegan along the way. These people were happy to help us young ones in coping with the passage from boyhood to manhood, and give all the support and encouragement possible in the lean days of the 1950s. The GAA was the one institution that made that possible then, and still has the same role to play today.

If the hereafter is like the here and now, there will be plenty to talk about, including, hopefully, a long-overdue return of Sam, to Mayo when we meet again. Today when I drive through the town I rarely stop, except to say a prayer at my Maynooth mentor, Canon McGarry's grave, or to drop into John Prenty to get the low down on Mayo football. Jimmy McGreal would undoubtedly approve of the plush office in Clare Street with Coisde Chonnachta proudly over the door. He would only want us to remember those who have gone before us, the giants on whose shoulders we stand. What strikes one especially is the number of names on the shops that have changed, though it is good to see a few familiar ones still there, such as Delaneys, Fordes, Dillons, Val's and Curleys. I hope that whatever future the new Ireland will bring to Ballyhaunis, some things will remain the same, especially the love and passion for our native games.



## 100km Charity Cycle

Well done to Sean Murphy (right) of Kildara, Tulrahan and Martin Vahey (left), Claremorris, who did a 100km Charity Cycle for "Mayo Pink Ribbon Day".

Sean raised €1,000 and would like to say a big Thank You to all who sponsored him. Also pictured is An Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny.



# Ballyhaunis Defibrillator Group

New guidelines with regard to CPR Training have been introduced at different stages worldwide during 2011 and it is envisaged that all counties will be up-to-date by the end of the year. As a result, it will be necessary for the Instructors in our group to be re-trained in the new guidelines and, as at the date of this publication, arrangements are being made in this regard.

Many revalidation sessions (reminder training) took place throughout the year although we would like to see more people attending – it is vital that people who have been fully trained keep their skills fresh in their minds and the revalidation sessions remind people of their CPR skills and how to use a defibrillator. There is little point in taking part in a full training session that lasts four to five hours and then never attend any of the revalidation sessions after that, as people will forget their newly learnt skills and need to be reminded regularly of their training. Revalidation sessions only last fifteen minutes and notice of when they take place is published in the main newspapers, the Parish Newsletter, MyLocalNews.ie and are usually held in the Friary House.

All of the defibrillators throughout the parish are checked regularly by committee members. Only one defibrillator presented with problems during 2011 and the company we purchased it through replaced the unit

for us. All of the pads in ten of the defibrillators have been replaced by October 2011 at a cost of €1,669.00. The life-span of the pads is two years and this will be a regular expense that our group will incur.

Full training sessions will recommence once our Instructors have been re-trained in the new guidelines and people will be contacted by committee members when new dates have been agreed. These sessions normally take place upstairs in the Credit Union building on Clare Street.

A special word of thanks to our group's Instructors, Olive Clarke, Maria Feerick, Susan Hoban and Marina Coyne who, voluntarily, trained many groups of people in our parish over the past two years and whose help to our group during this period has been fantastic. They also trained some groups for the parish of Began when they set up their own Defibrillator Group. Thanks also to the many committee members who generously give of their time throughout the year and who help regularly at the full training sessions and church gate collection. Finally, if you would like to take part in a full training session and have not already given your name, please phone (086) 2076581, leave a message and a committee member will get back to you.

## A Tear For Mayo

BY JUSTIN JOYCE. 12TH SEPT 2006

I cried when Mayo bate Dublin with the last point of the game.  
Even though I am a Kerryman in everything but name,  
I was born in County Mayo fifty years ago,  
And five more years before that we last had Sam on show.  
I cried for all the former teams that came away empty handed.  
Against Cork and Meath and Kerry twice, not one Sam was landed.

I cried for all the sacrifice our team had made all year.  
They stayed away from women, cigarettes and beer.  
They prayed in Lourdes, stopped in Knock, and even climbed the Reek,  
They trained so hard all winter and now had reached their peak.

O, I cried when we beat Dublin but the tears were bittersweet.  
I cried when then I realised, the team we'd yet to meet.  
The Kingdom in its glory, all players up to speed.  
'Twill be a case of "Mayo, God help us", indeed.



The 'inimitable' Joe Hosty from Lavallyroe, pictured at Rochford Motors where he served for the past twenty-seven years. Joe was a founding member of Annagh Magazine in 1978, and was a committee member until 2001.







Greenwood neighbours Michael Comer and Thomas Mulkeen having their daily chat in the 1970s.



Ned Kneafsey, Derrymore, 1985.



John 'Doc' Healy, Philip Morley, Niall McGillicuddy, Stephen Waldron and Pat Rattigan, pictured in Rattigan's Bar, Knox St., in the late 1980s.



Stephen Waldron and Michael Waldron.



Stephen Waldron and Jack Greene.



Tommy O'Malley, Pat Rattigan, Philip Morley, and Stephen Waldron.



# Benson Wins Sports Award

A Ballyhaunis-born Birmingham amateur boxing club coach was named BBC West Midlands Unsung Sporting Hero for 2010. Pat Benson has devoted thirty-five hours a week to running classes, organising events and working as secretary at the Small Heath Club, completely as a volunteer. The seventy-four year-old has trained thousands over a thirty-eight year career.

## Grassroots sport

Now in its eighth year, the BBC Sports Unsung Hero Award recognises the contribution of people who volunteer their time and get involved at the grassroots level of sport. Pat was presented with his award by Olympic gold medal swimmer and former Sports Personality of the Year, Anita Lonsbrough, at The Mailbox in Birmingham on Wednesday, 8th December 2010. "I was very surprised," he said. "When I boxed, I lost a lot of fights that I thought I should have won, tonight was a bit different," he added. Talking about his long career, he reflected: "I've had dads bring their sons back to me for years, lads that boxed for me. I always said I'd pack up when one of them would bring their grandson back. It's just happened, I've changed my mind. You get that involved with the kids you just keep going till you fall down."



## Dedication

Pat has trained more than forty-five future professionals including European Middleweight champion Matthew Macklin. He said the

coach had played a key part in his career: "He's a very good trainer, very experienced and knowledgeable, but he's more than just a boxing trainer, even the lads that keep fit, even the lads that aren't good enough to go on and do anything, he always has time for them also". Editor of BBC Midlands Today Mark Hayman said that the judging panel had selected Pat Benson because of his dedication to changing people's lives through sport. "He is a true inspiration to everyone within and outside of the sporting community," he added. Pat joined the other regional Unsung Hero Award winners at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2010 ceremony in the LG Arena on Sunday, 19th December 2010, where Lance Haggith of Bedfordshire, who provides children of differing abilities coaching in basketball, won the overall award.

# Homegrown Talent from Ballyhaunis

Ballyhaunis has a history of successful musicians that have gone on to do wonderful things in the Music industry over the years. Though the latest gang of Musicians to emerge from our little town, have something special going on.



Cold Room Records (CRR) was set up in 2010 by ten lads, from three bands, who all emerge from the Ballyhaunis area. Kyle Dee, Joe Padfield, Pat Nolan, Tommy Concannon, Gearoid Connaughton, Paul Higgins, Micheal Sheil, Dermot Kelly, Ronan Connaughton and

Enda Stritch all make up CRR three founding bands - Ka tet, Race the Flux and Town Criers.

The bands all began their musical careers as students in Ballyhaunis Community School. Since then, they have been through a few different band names and various members to arrive at the final arrangements that exist today. The bands have been working together and helping each other out for a number of years now, but only in the last year have they all merged to form an independent record company of their own. Earlier this year, shortly after forming, CRR toured Ireland bringing their special brand of energetic rock to crowds all over the country. Individually, the bands have supported some of the country's biggest acts including The Saw Doctors, The Coronas, Imelda May, Aslan and The Blizzards. At the moment they are half way through building a studio of their own that will allow them to continue to produce music that represents the excellent home-grown talent and sounds being produced in Ballyhaunis.

For more info on CRR go to

<http://www.facebook.com/ColdRoomRecords>





# Celebrating Our Cultures

BY ORLA MACKEN, CHAPLAIN, BALLYHAUNIS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Friday, May 20th, 2011 marked a wonderful day at Ballyhaunis Community School when staff and non-exam students took some time out to celebrate the diversity that is very much a part of this unique school.

No less than twenty-three cultures walk the corridors of this now well established multi-denominational school, from the following cultures: Afghanistan, Australia, Croatia, Congo, Czech Republic, Iraq, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, the Traveller Community, Syria, United Kingdom, United States, Zimbabwe.

The celebration was a huge success, with the colours, sounds and tastes of each of the cultures combining to create a great buzz and a super atmosphere in the school.

The celebrations included displays and presentations from each of the cultures as well as workshops in Zumba dancing, drums, sean nós dancing, and guest speakers from the Traveller, Lithuanian and Syrian communities. One of the most popular

displays on the day was from Traveller Tinsmith Ted Maughan. The students from Pakistan, the second largest culture at Ballyhaunis Community School, put on a wonderful display of traditional dress, food tasting and a display of the artistry of Henna – a skin decoration very popular with the Pakistan culture. The Irish Culture was also well represented with traditional Irish dancing and sean nós dancing.

The celebration was launched by the Cathaoirleach of Mayo County Council, Cllr. Michael Burke. Congratulations and well done to all involved. A special word of thanks to all the students who presented their cultures in a most colourful and interesting way. Truly it was a great education for all the school community – one that cannot be just learned from text books.



**Pictured attending Ballyhaunis Community School celebration of cultures day are (L-R): Canon Joseph Cooney P.P., Cllr. Richard Finn, Sr. Mary Glynn (Board of Management) Cllr. Michael Burke, Cathaoirleach of Mayo County Council, Cllr. Patsy O'Brien, Mr. Pat McHugh (Principal).**



**Pictured attending Ballyhaunis Community School celebration of cultures day are: members of the Ballyhaunis Petentcostal Gospel Choir, with Mrs. Eileen McDonagh, Cllr. Michael Burke and Mr. Pat McHugh – Principal.**





# Mary Dillon-Leetch, 100 Years of Growing

On the 10th October 1911 an event of immense importance for the Claffey Family of Patrick Street, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, and ultimately the Dillon-Leetch Family of Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, was taking place. The cable system didn't buzz with the event; the telephone network didn't ring with the news; there were very few phones to ring and the newspapers of the world were preoccupied with the abdication of the Emperor of China, a report of Scott's last expedition to the Arctic, the fact that Irish Unionists were opposing home rule, and that Californian women had succeeded in securing a right to vote for the first time.

The birth of Mary Claffey to her parents Patrick and Anna Claffey was, however, of more enduring significance, Mary was born a girl and has remained one since.

Mary was destined to live through two world wars, the birth of her Irish Nation, the transformation of the Continent of Europe from fledgling little nations to a united Europe. There have been financial meltdowns, currencies have merge and disappeared and, throughout this period, Mary Claffey enjoyed a life spanning 100 years of joviality and sociability, underscored with an unruffled faith and a love of fashion and proper attire.

She led a privileged life style at St. Patrick's Street, Castlerea, enjoying the pleasant walks of the demesne which were quickly to be substituted by the cedar walks of Mount Anville School in Goatstown in Dublin where her infancy was transformed to a youth of fun, laughter, gaiety and charitable works which carried her through the toughest and roughest year for her fellow country men in Ireland and her continental fellow citizens of Europe. The vicissitudes of hard living were never to trespass on Mary Claffey's determination to live life to the full.

Following her return to Castlerea, unaffected by the educational niceties promulgated so well by the Sacred Hearts Nuns of Mount Anville, she once again commenced to wander about the demesne playing tennis and golf. She had acquired a sparkle in her eye and an assuredness to her walk. These attributes brought her to the attention of a solicitor from the neighbouring town of Ballyhaunis, and John Dillon-Leetch courted her to cross the very distinctive border as between Roscommon and Mayo at the time, and on the 8th of September 1937 she was to become married to him at St. Patrick's Church in Castlerea, transforming from a giddy, single girl to a giddy married woman.



Fortunately for Mary her husband John had founded Ballyhaunis Golf Club in the year 1929 and she was able to enjoy her time conquering the course with her pars and birdies whilst her husband John spent his time picking the weeds off the nine greens to ensure they were fit for purpose.

## Active Life

Mary Dillon-Leetch was to become the devoted mother of six children: Anna, now living in Westport, Thomas Aloysius a solicitor and later a Barrister, Margaret who departed to Cork, Finola who moved to Dublin, Lisa who took up a nursing career and later joined Aer Lingus, and her afterthought John who is now Principal of the Firm of T. Dillon-Leetch & Sons in Ballyhaunis.

She became involved in the Golfing Union of Ireland and was hugely influential in developing Junior Golf, an interest she maintains to this day. Her devotion to the Virgin Mary was reflected in her being a daily Mass goer at St. Patrick's Church, and the millions of 'Hail Marys' which she was to recite wherever she taken. She became a Child of Mary, and took her duties with the Legion of Mary very seriously visiting the disadvantaged and, on Sundays during the Pilgrimage season, she was seen performing her duties as a Hand Maid in Knock.

She was involved in the formation of the Bridge Club in Ballyhaunis and she and her partner Mary Murphy were to play at least three times a week wherever they could organise a rubber of bridge, punctuated by tea, cakes and a chat, and followed by a post mortem from Mary Murphy as to how her partner Mary Dillon-Leetch might



Mary Dillon-Leetch with An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD.





improve her game for the next occasion which presented itself.

Her wonderful, fulfilled and busy lifestyle as a Mother and Home Maker was to be interrupted in the early 1960's when her husband John died on the 23rd February 1965 in the bed beside his devoted wife. But Mary was to bounce back, resuming her extrovert life, pursuing her spiritual and sporting interest as never before.

Never to be seen ruffled by any of the challenges which life presented to her and always accommodating to her children, her grandchildren and her great grandchildren, Mary immersed herself in all aspects of life that living in Ballyhaunis presented to her. She has a dignity, a charity and a bon viv which the people of Ballyhaunis were to receive with such generosity.

In these past few years Mary has taken up residence at the Brookvale Nursing Home in her cherished Ballyhaunis, and the dedication and care provided to her there by its staff have ensured that, to this day, Mary still enjoys good health and still engages in conversation and laughter, jokes and memories - still giving light to her world which was lit on the 10th October 1911.

Mary was honoured to receive a special visit on her birthday from An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny with whom



**Mary Dillon-Leetch and family at her Birthday party. Standing, L-R: Stephen O'Riordan holding Grace O'Riordan, John Dillon-Leetch, Geoffrey Dillon-Leetch, Jane Dillon-Leetch, Molly Dillon-Leetch, Timothy O'Riordan, Sarah Dillon-Leetch, Cliona Dillon-Leetch, Connor Dillon-Leetch, Ruth Dillon-Leetch, Natasha Dillon-Leetch, Richard Curry, Kito Curry, Melissa Curry, William Dillon-Leetch, Finola Curry. Seated: John Dillon-Leetch, Mary Dillon-Leetch, Anna Browne, Margaret O'Riordan, Rosemary Dillon-Leetch, Lisa Dillon-Leetch. Front: Katie O'Riordan, Ben O'Riordan, Timothy O'Riordan.**

she conversed, bantered and shared some refreshments. The Golf Club was host to a unique celebration for Mary's Birthday when fifty-five of her family, friends, grandchildren and great-grandchildren gathered from the four corners of the globe for a party. Mary made three speeches and sang her favourite songs and yes, Mary was born a girl and has remained one since.

## Hands

BY MARY HANLON

Eyes are drawn to them, truth their goal,  
shaping out language when words don't suffice.  
Hands reveal subtleties of the soul.

Some are square, others tapered oval  
Befitting the career they realize.  
Eyes are drawn to them, truth their goal.

Etching on palms depicts life as a whole.  
Nails with half moons manicured with pride.  
Hands reveal subtleties of the soul,

sometimes with palms wide open as a bowl  
hoping to receive, then steepling to rejoice.  
Eyes are drawn to them, truth their goal.

A clinched handshake suggests control,  
Makes me withdraw to regain my poise.  
Hands reveal subtleties of the soul.

They shield, create, and lend without a toll,  
Are flexible, ambidextrous, tactile.  
Eyes are drawn to them, truth their goal.

Two wrinkled hands, knuckles gnarled from toil  
rest on a lap, sculpted by a well-lived life.

Eyes are drawn to them, truth their goal.  
Hands reveal subtleties of the soul.

*Taken from the book of poetry entitled  
'Dear Beloved' by Mary Hanlon*







## Celebrating 50 Golden Years



### Paddy and Susan Laffey

*"There are many things in life that will catch your eye, but only a few will catch your heart." (Michael Nolan)*

**31st August 1961, Laffey-Fahey Marriage Announcement:** The marriage with Nuptial Mass and Papal Blessing took place at the Church of Christ the King, Salthill, Galway, of Mr. Patrick Laffey, son of Mr. & Mrs. John Laffey, Ballyglunin, Co. Galway and Miss Suzanne Fahey, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Fahey, Main Street, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo. The bride, who was given away by her father, wore a full length gown of Moussaline de Sole over Satin, dotted with Rhinestones and motifs of Guipure Lace. The gown's bodice was fashioned Guipure Lace. The bride's veil was held in place by a tiara of Pearls and Diamonds and she carried a bouquet of red roses. The bridesmaid, Miss Frances Moran, wore a lilac brocade with matching headdress and carried a bouquet of lemon roses. The best man was Mr. Aidan Kelly, Charlestown, Co. Mayo. Mary Flatley, the child attendant, was dressed in a white embroidered frock with headdress of white rose petals and she carried a basket of mixed flowers. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Des Fahey, St. Colman's College, Claremorris (cousin of the bride). A reception was given by the bride's parents in The Great Southern Hotel in Galway. (Courtesy of the Connaught Tribune: 9th Sept. 1961, pg 12).



**Paddy and Susan Laffey on their Wedding Day on the 31st of August 1961.**

focus. The excitement of sending their brood off to their first days at the local schools, First Holy Communion, Confirmations, Inter Cert and Leaving Cert exams and, suddenly, the five happy children had grown up into beautiful young adults and were ready to embark on new lives of their own. During all this busy family time, Paddy and Susan continued to be active members of the Ballyhaunis Golf Club and Bridge Club.

As parents to five children, Paddy and Susan demonstrated love, compassion, patience and humility as they guided their offspring in their development towards young adulthood by encouraging and supporting their individual journeys in life. Their unconditional love and devotion to each other as a loving couple are values and characteristics admired and treasured by their

offspring and passed down to their eight grandchildren. Nothing reflects the love and commitment of a happily married couple better than a Golden Wedding Anniversary Celebration. On the 4th September 2011 at Hotel Westport, family and friends joined Paddy and Susan as they renewed their marriage vows with a blessing by Fr. Brendan Fahey to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary. The occasion was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on what is truly of value in life, what gives meaning to our lives, and to set our priorities on that basis. A good marriage must be created and requires dedication, love, devotion and honour between two individuals. In the art of marriage, the little things are big things - it is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways with a capacity to forgive and always remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day. It is never being too old to hold hands and giving to each other an atmosphere in which each can grow. All those who are happy in the world, are so as a result of their desire for the happiness of others.

*"It is easy to fall in love, but staying in love is something very special" Anon*

In the late 1950's, a handsome gentleman named Paddy Laffey from Ballyglunin Co. Galway came to work in Ballyhaunis and took up lodgings in Abbey Street with Mrs. Brenda Moran. It wasn't long before he caught the heart of an attractive young lady called Susan Fahey, from Main Street. Over the coming years their friendship and love for each other blossomed into something very special. After a fun loving courtship over a few years, an engagement notice was announced in 1961. On the 31st August 1961 family, relatives and friends were invited to witness the marriage of two very special people. Paddy and Susan set up house for a short while in Hazelhill, Ballyhaunis before moving into their Abbey Street home in the early 1960's. Over the following sixteen years they were blessed with five healthy, happy children and life took on a whole new meaning and

**Lovingly submitted by Paddy and Susan's children, in appreciation and gratitude for being wonderful role models and loving parents.**

**Siobhan Laffey-Gibney, Ocean Shores, NSW Australia.**





## Celebrating 50 Golden Years

**Paddy and Susan Laffey and Family celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary in Hotel Westport on the 2nd of September 2011.**

Back, L-R: Siobhan Laffey-Gibney, Eleanor and Michael Laffey, son Kevin, David Laffey and Sr. Joan Fahy. Centre: Mark Gibney, Clodagh Laffey, Sean Laffey (son and daughter of Michael and Eleanor), Paula Laffey, Sandra Laffey-Gilmartin with baby Alicia Gilmartin, husband Derek and son Jack Gilmartin (on shoulders). Front: Paddy and Susan Laffey with grandson Luke Gilmartin.



### Bill and Kathleen O'Boyle

**Bill and Kathleen O'Boyle, Carrowkeel, with their family, on the occasion of their 50th Wedding Anniversary on 3rd April 2011.**



Back, L-R: Tommy McDermott, Brendan McHugh, Eamon Finnerty, Shirley O'Leary, James O'Boyle, Jimmy O'Boyle, Breege O'Boyle, Linda McDermott, William O'Boyle, Lorraine O'Boyle, Elaine Healy, Kathleen O'Boyle, Michelle McDermott, Daniel McDermott, Anne Schwer, Ciara McHugh, Noreen McHugh, Ethna Lewis, Anne Marie O'Boyle, Louis McHugh, Sandra McHugh. Front, L-R: Sean Healy, Liam O'Boyle, Eoin O'Boyle, Brendan O'Leary, Alex Healy, Shane McHugh, Conor O'Boyle.





## Celebrating 50 Golden Years



**Paddy and Bridie Ruane**

Patrick and Bridie Ruane, Knox Street and Cloonbook,  
married 18th Sept. 1961, St. Patrick's Church,  
Ballyhaunis.



**Joe and Marcella Keane**

Joe and Marcella Keane, Knox Street,  
married 12th Jan. 1961, St. Patrick's Church,  
Ballyhaunis.



**Seamus and  
Maureen Clarke**

Seamus and Maureen Clarke,  
Devlis, celebrated their  
Golden Wedding Anniversary  
on 10th July, 2011.

They were joined on this  
happy occasion by their  
children and their families.

They are pictured here  
with their son and  
daughters, Emily, James  
and Agatha.





# Pat and Ann Biesty Celebrate 50 Golden Years.

## BIESTY FAMILY'S GOLDEN MILESTONE

BY TOM KELLY

A warm smile exchanged at the Hurst Street Dancehall in Birmingham in 1960 was destined to play an integral role in shaping the history of a close-knit village on the outskirts of Ballyhaunis over the course of the ensuing decades. The meeting of Pat Biesty, Carrowkeel, and Ann McCabe, Daingean, Co. Offaly, at a venue synonymous with young Irish emigrants led to a long and fruitful relationship that was celebrated in a special way on January 28th, 2011, on the occasion of the couple's Golden (50th) Wedding Anniversary, an event attended by over 250 people at the Park Hotel in Kiltimagh.

Pat had emigrated from Mayo back in 1950 to work in the potato farms of Yorkshire. At nineteen years of age, it was a daunting step into the unknown but a necessary one during an era of high unemployment and recession in Ireland. It was a dark period in Irish history not only because of economic reasons but also a result of the fact the killer lung disease tuberculosis left its fatal mark on every community across the country.

Pat made the journey home for extended periods every summer to help his parents, Johnny and Annie (nee Duffy of Logboy, who lived to the age of 97), with the farm work. Pat had one brother, Jack, and five sisters, Rita, Nan, Vera, Virginia and Kitty. By the late 1950s, he had swapped the potato fields of Yorkshire for the building sites and factory floors of Birmingham, a city finding its feet again amid the fiscal and social pressures of the aftermath

of World War Two. His employers included Cadbury's Chocolate, a firm for which he still retains the highest regard.

Ann had emigrated to Birmingham with her family of sixteen in 1958 in search of a new life. The McCabes sold their large farm in Daingean, near Tullamore, to help give them a fresh start in England and set up home at Cavendish Lane, Birmingham. She completed her post-primary studies before commencing an apprenticeship as a seamstress.

After meeting for the first time their relationship flourished and they spoke about marriage and the likelihood of moving to America. The couple secured their emigration papers and were literally in the process of packing their bags for New York when Pat received the devastating news that his older

brother, Jack, was very ill. Jack's subsequent passing represented a major turning point in their lives as they abandoned plans for their trip to America. Their destination was changed to Carrowkeel, a community where they were to build a very rewarding and fulfilling life for themselves thanks to the support of loyal and supportive neighbours, not just in Carrowkeel but the surrounding villages.

Such encouragement and help had an input in shaping Pat and Ann's life together as they reared nine children, Patricia, Gina, John, Dolores, Patrick, Assumpta, Sinéad, Stephen and Paul. The rest is history.



**Pat and Ann Biesty, Carrowkeel, Ballyhaunis, on their Wedding Day.**



**Pat and Anne Biesty, Carrowkeel (seated), and family, Sinéad, Assumpta, Dolores, Patricia, Gina, John, Patrick, Stephen and Paul.**







## Celebrating 50 Golden Years



### Kevin and Maureen Durkan

Kevin & Maureen Durkan, Classaroe, celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary earlier this year. Joining them for the happy occasion were their sons Quentin and Hamilton, daughters-in-law Marie and Deborah, and grandchildren Liam, Ciara, Shane, Laura and Kevin.

*James Hunt Photography.*

## Another Face

BY MARY HANLON

I glance, then walk past the man  
who sits on the damp pavement,  
his back to the river Liffey,  
a satchel by his side.  
Another face of Christ.  
Strategists advise against donating,  
but giving is all I'm responsible for.  
I search for coins,  
retrace the few steps  
to his fine-crafted slender frame.  
Black stubble on his face, and pallor.  
His gaze is fixed low  
on an object unseen.  
Delicate hands,  
better suited to penmanship,  
cradle a polystyrene cup  
lined with small change.  
Mine clunks on top, gets  
the barest acknowledgement.  
Gone is the desire to splurge  
on a fantasy.

*Taken from the book of poetry entitled 'Dear Beloved' by Mary Hanlon. Mary was born in Co. Galway, trained and worked as a Primary Teacher. Her poems are widely published and she also writes short fiction. She moved to Knock in 2001 and joined the Western Bloc writers group.*

## Elwood Dancers at World Championships



**Photograph of the Ceili Team taken at the  
World Championships held at Easter 2011  
in CityWest, Dublin.**

*Back:* Caoimhe Henry, Grace Lyons, Maria Lyons,  
Louise McNamara, Mary Elwood.

*Front:* Ailish Phillips, Emily Worden,  
Lisa Hunt, Tracey Regan.







**Dancers who performed at the Square for the Ballyhaunis Summer Festival 2011.**

Chloe Kirrane, Roisin Fitzmaurice, Sinéad Delloul, Marina Carney, Amy Greally, Louise McNamara, Tracey Regan, Laura Culliney, Emily Worden, Mary Elwood (teacher), Ellen Phillips, Aoife Conway, Saskia Kirrane.  
**Front:** Megan Hanley, Erika Byrne, Mia Phillips, Lucy Phillips, Viktoria Burcovski, Roisin Conway, Clare Fleming.



Ballyhaunis Male Choir performed the music for the opening night of the National Novena at Knock on Sunday, 14th August. Pictured after the ceremony were conductress Moira Delaney and organist Paula Donnellan, with Director of Music at Knock Shrine, Una Flanagan (right) and Frankie Forde-Waldron, Knock Shrine (left).



*Above:* Joanne Morley, Ballyhaunis and The Neale, with husband Mike Walsh and twins Robert and Jack, with The Sam McGuire Cup at the All Ireland Semi-final in Croke Park.



*Left:* Joan Munnich (nee Keegan) pictured with her husband Michael celebrating her 50th Birthday on 12th May 2011. Joan celebrated with family friends from Ireland and Holland. Joan, formerly of Main Street moved to Holland over thirty years ago and now lives in Helmond with her husband and four sons Kieran, Ronan, Darren and Dylan.



# Ballyhaunis Rugby Club

2010 – 2011 was another exciting year for Ballyhaunis Rugby Club. Mixed results in the League didn't always go our way, the end of the season being our best period. Early meetings with Gort and Buccaneers were unsuccessful. A trip to Carrick-on-Shannon cheered us up when, after a fine display, we came away with a 22 – 6 victory. We had a thriller in Dunmore when we took on our great rivals. They were leading 21 – 3 with fifteen minutes to go when in an intense six minutes of play Ballyhaunis ran in three tries, two of which were converted, but Dunmore snatched another try in the last minute to finish 28 – 23.

Shortly after this, on the 30th Oct. 2010, we received the sad news of the death of one of our founders and dedicated member of the Club for thirty-three years Hugh Curley, R.I.P.

A 20 – 17 defeat by Portumna ended our League campaign. Revenge was sweet, however, when we met again two weeks later in the Junior Plate running out 42 – 5 winners, setting up quarter final meeting with O.L.B.C. in the Sports Ground in Galway. Unsuccessful on this occasion this was our last game in the Cup.

Training at all levels continues at the grounds in Doctor's Road.

- 6 - 12 year olds training on Saturday mornings at 10.30am.
- Under 15's training on Wednesday evenings at 6.30pm.
- Senior training is ongoing on Wednesday and Friday evenings at 8.00pm.

Anyone interested in Rugby is welcome.

The Under-10 team had a great evening at the Sports Ground in Galway when they got to display their skills at half time in the Connacht V. Samoa match in November 2010.

An end of season evening was held in the Clubhouse in May. Mass was celebrated by Canon Joseph Cooney in memory of all the deceased members of the Club. Later in the evening the presentation for Club Person of the Year went to senior player and dedicated clubman Seamus Horan.

Ballyhaunis R.F.C. would like to thank all the people of the community for their continued support. Lotto tickets are available throughout the area at €2 each with major prizes each week. Rugby Bingo continues in Julian's of Midfield on Thursday nights. Best Wishes to All.



**The Ballyhaunis Senior Rugby Team which played O.L.B.C. at the Sports Ground in Galway, March 2011.**

Back L-R: Fergal Kelly, Declan Murtagh, Kieran Costello, Jean Pierre Jeffreys, Ken Carrick, Aidan Healy, Shane Ganley, Michael Macken, Michael Jordan, Tony Gleeson, John Costello.

Front L-R: David Gallagher, Sean McKay, Colm O'Hara, Gareth Delaney, Martin Finnegan, Colm Gallagher, Patrick Gallagher, Gabriel Gallagher, Seamus Horan, Shane McDonagh.



**The Ballyhaunis Under-10 Rugby team who played at half time during the Connacht v. Samoa Game in the Sports Ground, Galway, November 2010.**





# Ballyhaunis and the Railway Station

## - The Early Years

BY JOE COSTELLO (BOHOGUE, BALLYHAUNIS)

The first railway in Ireland was opened in 1834 and by 1853 there were 840 miles of railway countrywide. However the expansion of the system into Mayo did not happen until 1861 when the Midland and Great Western railway opened the line from Castlerea to Ballyhaunis. Some 2,000 people were employed in bringing the line to Ballyhaunis. Many of those who came to work on the construction made their homes in the county when the work was finished and were commonly known as Railway 'Navvies'. In May 1862 the line reached Claremorris and in December 1862 it was extended to Castlebar. The line to Westport did not open till 1866 with an extension to Westport Quay in 1874.

The arrival of the railway into Ballyhaunis brought a new impetus for the town. The presence of railway labourers, (with money to spend), engineers and surveyors 'reflected' its changing character. The new station and equipment conveyed an air of progress long absent from the Mayo scene. The immediate effects of the railway were in employment and the trade and import of goods as the town of Ballyhaunis forged greater links with the surrounding countryside.

### Growth

Ballyhaunis was now a retail trade and service centre. Evidence of this growth is shown in a comparison of the years 1870 and 1881. In this eleven year period the number of grocers grew from eight to thirty-six. Ironmongers and hardware shops grew from one to ten, and publicans or 'spirit dealers' expanded from seven to twenty-nine in 1881. The shopkeeper in Ballyhaunis, as in the rest of rural Ireland, was an increasingly influential member of society. The town now boasted a main street full of shops, bakers, butchers and general dealers. It is interesting to note from the period that many of the traders in town operated two or three businesses. In 1870 Michael Cassidy was a grocer, dealer in sundries and a spirit dealer while Patrick Delaney was an ironmonger, grocer and spirit dealer. A writer in the Mayo Examiner on August 3rd 1868 observed that "Ballyhaunis is a thriving town". Similarly, a landlord in 1871 stated that the goods shown in this small town included "articles of comfort and luxury that would have been silly to ask for twenty years ago". The change did not just reflect goods, diet also began to vary. The increasing substitution of Indian meal and bread for potatoes, of black tea for milk and water, the changeover from homespun to imported

manufactured clothes was greatly facilitated by the arrival of the railway to Ballyhaunis.

The railway also increased interaction between rural and urban areas. Dublin was now hours away as opposed to days, and brought about significant changes in communication. The railway company built telegraph poles along the lines and afforded a means of communication not only to businesses but politicians and newspapers alike. Increasingly newspapers rose in circulation and in 1880 the numbers of weekly newspapers in the county was eighteen. It reflected the increasing Anglicization of the town and county in general. Local knowledge of the outside world was increasing. The town also benefitted from the parcel service at the railway station. Parcels were conveyed between all stations irrespective of distance and were charged according to weight. Typical rates for a 2lb parcel was four pence, up to 7lbs sixpence and a 21lb parcel cost one shilling. All these changes distinguished a new quality of living in Ballyhaunis in the aftermath of the railway's arrival.

### Migrants and Emigrants

Sadly the spectre of emigration loomed over the country and the railway played its part in transporting, en masse, migrants and emigrants from the town and surrounding areas. Special fourth class fares were available to take harvest labourers to Dublin on their way to England for seasonal migration. Third class tickets were favoured by the majority of travellers on the Ballyhaunis line indicating their economic state. Many newspapers at the time cover mournful accounts of grieving families saying goodbye to their loved ones on the railway platform. On the other hand, seasonal migration offered an opportunity for smaller farmers and their families to find work abroad and return home. Local farmers also availed of the opportunity to export produce and in the Ballyhaunis area the sale of eggs in particular for the English markets via the railway companies undoubtedly kept more families from emigrating during harsher economic times.

### The Races

The railway station helped put the town on the sporting map in the form of the annual Ballyhaunis Races at the racecourse in Tooraree. The 10.10 train from Westport and the 9.40 from Athlone both brought punters, riders





## Ballyhaunis Railway Station in the 1960's



and horses alike to what was termed the “Finest Race Meeting in the West”. The first race meeting was held in July 1866 and the town’s location on the railway became the focal point for the largest race meeting in the west of Ireland. Think of the races annually in Galway today and one gets some idea of the masses thronging Ballyhaunis on race day. Attendances were in excess of 20,000 people. Many favourable comments were made about the excursion train for the meeting. People were able to reach it “expeditiously, cheaply and comfortably”. The presence of ‘strangers’ in the town was very large and the Castlebar Amateur band played lively airs to accompany the day’s pleasure. Ballyhaunis was highly praised by the Mayo Examiner in 1866: “We do not exaggerate when we say that very few districts in Mayo could make as favourable a show of health, intelligence and rural beauty as the race course contained today”. Many people sampled local hospitality and others stayed overnight at the Railway Hotel, one of two hotels in the town, and undeniably gave locals and shopkeepers welcome trade.

In essence Ballyhaunis 150 years ago was a very different place. What is undeniable is its relationship with the railway station and their bond with each other. Whether

it was sending a telegraph, receiving a parcel, emigrating or selling eggs it was the focal point of the town, bringing and taking people and produce in varying amounts. Shops developed and grew and it opened up our town to the outside world in the form of newspapers and the tourist attraction that was our races. Few could have imagined this enduring legacy on its opening in the Autumn of 1861.



**Steam Engine in the Station, one of those occasions organised by the Irish Steam Preservation Society.**

*Photo: Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlerea .*





# Ballyhaunis Railway Station 1967 – 1977

BY MICHAEL GAVAGAN

My father, Denis Gavagan took up the position of Station Master of Ballyhaunis Railway Station in April 1967, replacing Mr. Paddy Ryan who had been transferred to Castlebar. Our family, consisting of parents Denis, Mona and five children moved from Fermoy, Co. Cork, where the railway station had closed on March 27th, 1967 due to the closure of the Mallow to Waterford branch line. He had worked as Chief Clerk and later Station Master at Fermoy. We did not know it at the time, but he was also to be the last Station Master appointed to Ballyhaunis.



**Denis Gavagan,  
Ballyhaunis' last  
Station Master**

## Station House

At that time it was the norm for the Station Master to live in the "Station House". In Ballyhaunis the house was located adjacent to the eastbound platform, along with the main waiting rooms, the Station Master's office and the parcels office. At the start of our occupancy, the living accommodation consisted of a large kitchen / living room, three bedrooms and a small sitting room. There was an outside toilet and no bathroom. However, these shortcomings were rectified in 1968 when an extension was added. At the time, all buildings, including the house, had their interiors painted in the CIE colours of dark green and light grey, with a white ceiling. There was also a vegetable garden close by, and as a young teenager, I became interested in tilling it. In this task, I received good advice and help from staff member Johnny Murren, a most helpful and pleasant man. Johnny was originally from Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo and must have come from a farming background. Frank Connolly, a Signaller, was also a great role model in this pursuit, as he kept a specimen garden himself.

Other buildings in existence at the time were the goods store and goods office, the lamp shed, the signal cabin and a small waiting room on the westbound platform. At the end of this platform stood the water tank which was fed from the pump house, using water pumped from the stream flowing under the railway. This old tank, a relic from the days of the steam locomotive, was still used to supply domestic water to the station.

There were three rail sidings in use at the time. One was adjacent to the goods store and ended in a ramp by which vehicles could be unloaded from a railway wagon. This siding also served for the loading of goods and cattle. To assist, a manually operated crane was provided. The other sidings were used mainly for the manual unloading of the goods wagons, usually onto a lorry. To facilitate this, these sidings had a split level bank

or platform between them. Thus, one could walk into the wagon from the high level, or walk into it on the lower level from the lorry

Besides the Station Master, the other staff members were two Porters (Johnny Murren and Christy Glynn), two Signallers (Frank Connolly and Dick Knight), one Lorry Driver and Helper (Tom Conboy and Peter Finn), a Goods Checker (Con Fahey), Goods Clerk (Una Ryan, later Serena Connolly), and usually a Boy Porter.

There were also a number of "Milesmen", Platelayers and their Ganger (Willie Armstrong) whose duties included the inspection and repair of the permanent way (tracks, gate crossings and signals). The station was also the depot for several school buses and a 44 seater CIE bus which ran a daily road service to Athlone. This bus was driven by Brod (Michael) Moran, who worked a particularly long shift, six days a week.

Among the duties of the Station Master at the time were rostering of the staff, compiling the timesheets, preparing the wage packets in cash, selling train tickets, keeping accurate accounts, making daily lodgements and withdrawals at the bank, and visiting the manned gate crossings. It was a tradition that the Station Master on duty always stood on the platform and signalled permission for the passenger train to depart the station.

## Goods

In the 1960's the station also served as a depot for Irish Ale Breweries, from where their supplies were distributed around Mayo by road, having been transported by rail. The Smithwicks and MacArdles Ales came from Kilkenny and the Harp lager from Dundalk. The CIE lorry was the final step in delivering most of the goods to their final destinations in Ballyhaunis and surrounding towns and villages. Some of these included Ballinlough, Granlahan, Loughlynn, Tooreen, Kilkelly and Glenamaddy. The customers were mainly shops and publicans, and the goods carried were a mixture of Guinness kegs, cigarettes, sides of bacon, shoes and wellington boots, hand tools such as shovels and spades, also the odd case of spirits. The lorry also delivered cement and granular fertilisers to builders merchants and farm co-ops around East Mayo and West Roscommon. All loading and unloading in those days was done by hand. There were no forklifts anywhere. Cement was particularly unpleasant to handle, as each wagon held twelve tons of hot dusty cement in one hundredweight bags. The granular fertiliser was none too easy either, as it was usually shipped in open wagons, and the wet





plastic bags were difficult to manage when it rained. The old Bedford flat-bodied lorry was also severely tested when carrying such heavy loads. The local farm machinery supplier, Johnston's of Knox Street, received most of their supplies by rail. There was a steady stream of shiny red McCormick International tractors and finger-bar mowing machines arriving in open wagons from the importers, J.H. Saville of Dublin. Also arriving at the goods siding were tractor mounted mowing machines and haycock carriers from Pierce of Wexford. There was also the occasional item of used construction or agricultural machinery shipped from the U.K.

Ballyhaunis station also handled some outward goods traffic. This mainly consisted of furniture produced in Ballyhaunis by two local manufacturers, Connell's and Keane's, who sent their products by rail to their various customers. During the autumn and after the fair days in town, cattle were loaded into cattle wagons and transported to the North Wall in Dublin, to be shipped onward to Holyhead "on the hoof".



**The Crane.** Courtesy of Ciaran Cooney [www.eiretrains.com](http://www.eiretrains.com)

### Emigrants

On the passenger trains, there was a similar, but much more poignant situation being played out. Throughout the year, but especially from September on, there was a steady stream of emigrants taking the train to Britain. Many of these men and youths were going permanently while others were taking seasonal work, such as potato picking in the English Midlands. Such was the demand for tickets that one could purchase a passage direct to places such as Scunthorpe in the British East Midlands at the Ballyhaunis ticket office. The partings on the platform followed a familiar pattern. The traveller was usually accompanied to the station by a large contingent of family and friends. As the train came to a stop, they each made their tearful farewells. After boarding the train, the passengers would wave goodbye with their handkerchiefs from the open windows as the train



**Signal Cabin at Ballyhaunis Station.**  
Courtesy of Ciaran Cooney [www.eiretrains.com](http://www.eiretrains.com)

moved off and away towards Castlerea and Dublin. Those left behind on the platform would continue to wave goodbye to the rapidly disappearing train until it was well out of sight. They usually stayed for a little while, quietly gazing up the track, before slowly departing the station. Of course, the scene was very different in the days before Christmas each year when the emigrants made the return journey home. Even though it was usually dark and wet, the joy and excitement was palpable. There was laughter and loud conversation with adults and children milling excitedly around the multitude of suitcases and boxes lying on the platform. Such were the mixed blessings of emigration from the west of Ireland in the sixties.

### Signal Cabin

The signal cabin was, in many ways, the nerve centre of the station. It was here that the shunting of the goods wagons was planned and the order of the rolling stock behind the locomotive was decided between the Signaller, Porter and Train Guard. These individuals were responsible for the safe coupling and decoupling of



**Goods Store and Siding.**  
Courtesy of Ciaran Cooney [www.eiretrains.com](http://www.eiretrains.com)





the wagons and parking them on the appropriate siding for loading or unloading. The Signaller also ensured the smooth and safe passage of all trains through the station and onward to its next stop. He routinely managed situations where two or more trains might be in the station simultaneously. He also monitored and relayed details of the movements of all trains in the "section" to passengers and other staff. He was also responsible for the management of the use of the Electric Token Staff, the failsafe system to ensure that it would be impossible for two trains to be in the same section of track at the same time. The signal cabin also served as an unofficial canteen for staff and train crew, and an information point for all visitors. Because of its high and prominent location, people were attracted to it, so there was always someone dropping by.

The Ballyhaunis railway station was a wonderful place to spend one's formative years. There was so much to learn, such as the workings of the signal cabin or getting a bus driving lesson from Jimmy Kearns, one of nature's gentlemen. Another skill to learn was how to manually move a fully loaded railway wagon using a "sprag", which was a long handled lever used between the track

and the wagon wheel. One of my most pleasant memories is of walking out the track, past the "home signal", on towards the "distant signal" on a summer's day. The *distant signals* were located about a mile on either end of the station. Their purpose was to warn the train driver in good time to begin applying the brakes on the approach to the station. I can still recall the smell of the paraffin fumes of the lamp as I climbed the vertical steel ladder to the lamp box behind the big amber magnifying glass high up on the pole. From this vantage point the view of the surrounding landscape, and of the straight railway line stretching into the distance, was spectacular.

My father continued to work in Ballyhaunis until 1977, at which time the station lost most of its staff and services due to rationalisation. The ticket sales were reassigned and the introduction of the container truck, the pallet and the forklift ensured the demise of the old ways of transporting and handling goods. It was time to move on once again. The family transferred to Athlone, and my father was assigned to the schools transport office of CIE, where he worked until his retirement in 1980.



Above: A Steam Engine pulling more modern carriages. Photographed at Ballinphuill, near Ballyhaunis, 2005.



A modern train pulls into Ballyhaunis Railway Station





# My Memories of the Railway

BY AISLING (WEBB) CAULFIELD

My children often ask me what we did when we were young without Playstations, Xbox, playgrounds or other leisure centres and activity parks you see dotted around the country today. My reply is always the same, "Disneyland couldn't hold a candle to our own private little theme park" - Ballyhaunis Railway Station.

Growing up in Devlis in the 1970's and 80's the Railway Station and 'The Line' was a focal point for the Webb, Winston, Moran, Marrinan, Burke and Clarke children who were living there at that time.

The area I would consider 'The Railway' ran from 'The Ballast Pit', out the Ballinlough line behind Brod Boyle's forge, down to 'Pissmire Hill' out the Claremorris line behind the Convent.

The hill at the Ballast Pit was our own rollercoaster ride where we came down on bags filled with straw, on cardboard, on our hunkers or simply on our backside. When you reached the bottom your adventure was not over as you would have to manoeuvre your way around the many boulders scattered around the bottom of the hill.

Bonfire time was a very exciting time of year for all the children, and our tyres were often stored in the sheds at the railway station. Many happy hours were spent raiding tyres and guarding our stock for the best bonfire in town!

## Leisure Centre

We had a good 'working relationship' with the many Stationmasters and railway men who worked there during the 70's and 80's, and they knew that we had respect for the property and that we would not damage or vandalise our own 'leisure centre'. Most of the fun we had in the station was harmless and innocent. We would often leave half pennies, caps and bangers on the line, and sit back and wait for the train. Someone would tap the line with a stone and then put their ear to the line and would let the rest of us know how long it would be before the train's arrival.

One of my earliest memories from my childhood was climbing up the signals which, at that time, were illuminated by paraffin candles which we used to heat the apples we had raided from the convent, Dillon's or Hannon's orchard.

Another trick of ours at the time was to watch the signal man going out the line lighting the signal boxes and, by the time he would get back to the station we would have competitions and dares amongst ourselves to see who could blow out the most lights without getting caught.

The water tower was also another important aspect of

the railway station for which we had alternative uses. Initially, I presume that the water tower was used to refuel the locomotive engines of the time. But we had far more interesting and fun uses for it. In the summer time the water tower was our swimming pool where many a child from Devlis learned to swim, while during the winter, when the water used to freeze over, the water tower was Devlis's very own ice rink.

In the late seventies the railway station and line was a hive of activity during the week with CIE workers. However, at the weekend we made full use of their facilities, cooking utensils and stove which were located in the 'workers carriage'. All the children would bring whatever they could sneak from their own houses and we would muster up a midnight feast fit for a king. I wouldn't be so sure that modern day hygiene standards were adhered to but, thank God, we all survived.

During the summer months we would all meet in the evening for the famous game of 'Tag'. Children would come from Main Street, Knox Street and Clare Road. There could be up to thirty or more children gathered at the station. The station was 'Den' and our boundaries ran from the GAA pitch down to the pipe that crossed the river at Halal, and down as far as Morley's Corner. The game usually finished at nightfall or when hunger got the better of you.

## Leisure Centre

During our teenage years when the Scouts Den Discos were in full swing the railway station had far more varied and interesting uses, but that's another story for another day.

I have so many fond memories of the station and growing up in Devlis that I could fill the Annagh Magazine. We had far more freedom and adventures than today's youth and our fun was innocent and harmless. Rather than risk leaving anybody out I have purposely not mentioned any of the many characters and families who worked and lived in the station during my youth, but they have all added to the many happy memories of my early years in Devlis.

I hope my article has brought back some happy memories to the many Ballyhaunis children of the 70's and 80's who frequented the station. I could not finish this article without mentioning three 'railway children' who are no longer with us: my cousin Damian Webb and our friends and neighbours Brian Marrinan and Patricia Sheridan. I hope that we will all meet up again some day further down the line.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n'anamnacha dilse.





# Ballyhaunis Railway Station

BY SERENE MORONEY (NEE CONNOLLY)

Ballyhaunis Railway Station opened on Monday, 9th September 1861. The first train arrived from Dublin six hours later. A single fare was 11/4p. Sixteen hundred men were employed on the construction of the railway.

There were four passenger trains to Dublin - 8.30am, 11.30am, 2.30pm and 7.30pm. There were also four trains back from Dublin to Ballyhaunis and on to Westport and Ballina. There were also three goods trains to North Wall and back.

The staff employed at the station were as follows - the Stationmaster, Goods Clerk, Foreman, Goods Checker, two Porters, two Platform Porters, two Signal Men, one Lorry Driver and his Helper and three Permanent Way men looking after the railway tracks. There were a total of fifteen members of staff employed in the Railway Station until 1980 when the station was downgraded. The goods store closed and all the staff were paid off. One signal man was employed to work at the signals and to issue tickets. There were now only three trains to Dublin -

8.15am, 2.25pm and 7.30pm. Trains arrived back from Dublin at 11.20am, 3.45pm and 8.45pm. The running time for trains from Ballyhaunis to Dublin was two hours forty-five minutes.



**Former Railway families and staff members:**  
**L-R: Noel Armstrong, Serene Moroney, Una Shields, Molly Connolly, Patrick 'Junior' Connolly.**



**Connolly's House, at the Railway Station.**





# Jimmy and Kay Molloy

BY SINÉAD FREYNE

This photo was taken in the late 1960s at Hazelhill in Ballyhaunis. Pictured in it are the late Jimmy Molloy and his wife Kay. The young boy is my brother John Freyne holding Tibbs the cat!

Jimmy was a former Station Master who lived in the Station House at Ballyhaunis in the 1960s. Before coming to Ballyhaunis, he was stationed at Balla and before that at Rathoath in Co. Meath. Kay and Jimmy were both natives of Munster – Jimmy was from Crusheen and Kay a native of Corofin, Co. Clare. Jimmy was a second generation railway man, as his father had also worked for CIE and they had lived for a time in the station house at Crusheen.

On retiring from CIE either in 1962 or 1963, Kay and Jimmy moved house to Hazelhill, living in one of the semi-detached two storey buildings owned by the late John Dyer. They were situated opposite what used to be the old GAA pitch.

My parents Sean and Ina Freyne and their infant son John moved in beside the Molloy's during December 1963 and so began a lifelong friendship between the two families. John remembers when the photograph was taken and that he hadn't started school yet, which would have made him under four, and being born in 1963, this photo must have been taken sometime in 1967.

My mother Ina remembers Jimmy and Kay being great neighbours. They had no children of their own and were very fond of the expanding Freyne brood. Jarlath came along in 1966, Ann Mariea in 1969 and Eamonn in 1972. Mam remembers every time that Jimmy went into Bernie Byrne's Shop in Clare Street for the milk and his un-tipped Players cigarettes, he would also bring home a Curly Wurly chocolate bar to John. With every new child, another Curly Wurly bar was brought home, with the end result being Jimmy buying three Curly Wurly bars on every visit to Bernie Byrne's. My brother John remembers them being such a treat. It must have been an expensive trip to town every time!

I don't remember Jimmy myself, but I'm told he was a heavy smoker and died during a stormy and windy month of January in 1973 – the year I was born. All my family remembers Jimmy with great fondness, saying he was a true gentleman. I remember Kay well. We called



**Kay and Jimmy Molly, with John Freyne, holding Tibbs the cat.**

her "Cáca" as in "Cáca Milis" (Irish for cake). She was a great baker and always had something lovely in the oven. Her speciality was butterfly buns with strawberry jam followed by a glass of red lemonade.

Jimmy and especially Kay were avid gardeners when they lived in Hazelhill and had the most beautiful flowers, vegetables and fruit, as well as an immaculately manicured lawn. They also had a fabulous tree beside their house. We called it the "banana tree" because the yellow blooms on the branches looked like little bananas. I remember one summer afternoon when Kay was in town doing her shopping, all five of us getting on a

rather big branch of the banana tree. We began swinging, when CRACK, the branch broke clean off and the tree was almost destroyed! We knew there would be trouble, so in our wisdom we decided to hide the severed branch in Kay's own shed! Between the five of us children, I don't know why we didn't figure on her finding the piece of the tree in her own shed! Anyway, she didn't stay mad at us for long and, even though there was a great big chunk gone off her beautiful tree, it did survive the trauma. What fond memories. The houses are long since demolished and the tree and gardens gone. The land is now part of the Gallagher & Sons Ltd Hardware store and yard site.

In 1979, our family moved into our new house on Clare Road beside John and Mary Frances Cleary. Kay moved to the newly built cottages at the aptly named Station Rise, sometime in the 1980s. She made friends with many neighbours there including Mrs. Stacey and Des Folan. She also had good friends in the late Mrs. Flanagan of Spaddagh and John Kilduff of Upper Main Street. She had such high regard for her fellow Munster native, the late Paddy Ryan and his family. She wouldn't shop in any other grocery or drapery shop other than the stores owned by the Ryan family!

She was a great conversationalist and was a very dignified lady. She was a daily Mass-goer and lived happily in Station Rise until her death in the Spring of 1990. She is laid to rest beside her husband Jimmy in the graveyard in Crusheen, Co. Clare.





# The Railway Station - Memories

BY EAMON MURREN

"Hazelhill, Holywell, Garryredmond... he just left Castlereagh". This would be the information given from the signal box in Ballyhaunis Station. Men whom I remember working in the signal box would include my late father John Murren, also Con Fahey, Frank Connolly, Dick Knight, Willie Sheridan, Aeneas Kelly and Willie Armstrong.

The station in my youth was a very busy place and, apart from passengers, a lot of goods came to Ballyhaunis. The truck drivers I remember at the station were Brod Moran, Tom Conboy and Mick Kerrigan. I also remember Jimmy Geraghty and Pete Finn working as helpers on the lorries.

The first Station Master I remember was a Mr. O'Brien. He would have left Ballyhaunis in the early 1960's. I remember he had a daughter called Carmel in our class. Next was Paddy Ryan. Paddy left Ballyhaunis and went to Castlebar around 1971. The Ryan family still have a great affinity with Ballyhaunis - Una, Tom, Jim, Breda and the late Pearse. Paddy Ryan was replaced by Denis Gavigan who was the last Station Master. Denis had family including Michael, Kevin and Francis.

They were hard-working times back then in the railway. A lot of lifting was manual; no forklifts or hoists. A lot of the cement and fertilizer came in two hundredweight bags. No Health and Safety in those days! The pay was poor and any overtime was very welcome. Most of the people I have mentioned have gone to their eternal reward and a better station. May they rest in peace.



Con Fahey pictured outside the Signal Box at Ballyhaunis Railway Station in the 1970s.



Signal Box and Footbridge in 2011.



The Station house photographed in 2011.





# A Gatekeeper Remembers

BY MAURA O'DOWD

My first memory of Ballyhaunis Railway Station is of having an interview there for the position of Gatekeeper with the then C.I.E. It was the spring of 1978, a friend of mine was doing relief work at Holywell level crossing, and he told me to apply as a vacancy had arisen for a live-in operator for the gates.

I met with the then Stationmaster, Mr. Jim Brett of Claremorris Station, and also there was Willie Sheridan, one of the signalmen. He explained about the job to me and, after a few questions, said he thought I would be suitable. He said he would arrange a medical for me in Castlebar and if all was well with that he would let me know when I could start work. Mr Brett was a real gentleman on that day and remained like that for all the years he was my boss. He passed away this past year.

I passed the medical and started work on April 24th, 1978 and completed thirty years in 2008 when the gates were automated. I collected my wages weekly from the station for years until they changed the system and then it was paid into the bank. I also had to collect the paraffin oil from the station that was used to fill the signal lamps at the crossing, my least favourite part of the job.

I have very fond memories of the signalmen who worked there over the years, as I mentioned, Willie Sheridan, also Con Fahey, Eaney Kelly and John Walsh - all gone to their eternal reward. They would ring out the trains to us and let us know when the train was leaving Castlereagh. They



**Seen at the east end of Ballyhaunis Station is 071 Class loco No.074, heading an Irish Railway Record Society special from Westport to Athlone.**

Photo courtesy of Ciaran Cooney [www.eiretrains.com](http://www.eiretrains.com).

had to twist the handles on the old block phones and call out 'Hazelhill, Holywell, Garryedmund and Cloonconnor...', and hope we would all answer. They were great times really. Some of us would have a little chat and then go out and close the gates.

It's very different now with the automatic barriers: the personal touch is gone; some might say for the better.

The only time I go to the station now is if I am travelling by train but I will always have great memories of Ballyhaunis Railway Station.

## A Short Railway Tale

When a new railway was constructed and crossed a road, a bridge, level crossing or underpass was constructed to keep the road operating, depending on the relative heights of the permanent way and surrounding land.

Occasionally, the lie of the land was such that a choice of options was available.

This is what happened in the townland of Ballinphuill, just a mile outside Ballyhaunis on the Ballinlough road, according to local folklore. Six farming families used the roadway into Ballinphuill - Three Lyons families, two Boyle families and a Cunnane family. When it came to decide on the level-crossing or underpass, five of them

went for the 'underpass', while one opted for the level-crossing option. As the choice wasn't unanimous further discussions were held as to the advantages of either option. Eventually the level crossing was decided on and put in place - and remains so to this day. Just as well too - given the lie of the land an underpass might have been prone to flooding.

Furthermore, it's unlikely that anything bigger than a horse and cart would ever be able to get through it, which would have caused great inconvenience with the onset of motorisation and mechanised farming.





# The Big Clearance

BY GABRIEL MORLEY

On Saturday 18th December at ten o'clock a call to arms was heard (well, really it was men with shovels and strong arms to clear snow). Assembly point was 'Sruthán', the site of the annual Burning Sticks. Memories of a warm June evening came to mind, of the bonfire burning bright and laughter in the air (it was only -10° around here today).

It was decided that Martin Cunnane would clear the snow with his tractor and yard scraper, Jimmy O'Boyle was sent to Ballyhaunis to get grit. News soon reached us that there was very little grit in town (there was as much grit there as there was flies around here!). After a little begging, a lot of pleading and a few promises he managed to get a trailer of grit. On arrival back, the trailer was surrounded by men with shovels (it was like vultures around a carcass). There were shovels of grit being thrown in all directions.

When the trailer was empty we heard that there was grit in Began. Jimmy was sent to Began and Vinny Biesty on his tractor and loader in hot pursuit. More grit arrived back and was duly spread. By four o'clock all roads in Carowkeel, Pattenspark and Woodpark were cleared and covered in grit.

A big thanks to all who arrived with tractors, trailers and shovels. All who made cups of warm tea (and hot toddies). It shows a lot can be done in a short time when people work together. Good neighbours are a gift.



Lisa, Simon and Megan Morley, Woodpark, with "Frostie", Winter 2010



Above: Doing their bit for the Community, Winter 2010. Locals clearing the roads in Woodpark: L-R: Vinnie Biesty, George O'Neill, Paul Cunnane, Austin Biesty, Brian O'Neill, Martin Cunnane and Gabriel Morley



Left: Clean Sweep. Clearing snow off the roads in Carrowkeel, Winter 2010.

L-R: Brian O'Neill, Simon Morley, Gordon Biesty, Paul Cunnane, Gabriel Morley and Jimmy O'Boyle.





The Annagh Magazine website was launched in December 2010. Since our launch we have been averaging over 300 unique visitors to our site every month.

The key feature on the website is our 'Back Issues' page. Every annual publication of Annagh Magazine from 1978 to 2009 has been digitised and hosted online for everyone to download. All of these back issues have been scanned using OCR (Optical Character Recognition). This means that it is possible to search for articles by using words or phrases. You will also need to have Adobe Reader on your computer to view these digital editions as they are in PDF format.

Our website also features:

- An '**About Us**' page giving a brief summary of the history of the magazine, the people involved and some key milestones.
- An '**Order**' page which outlines the price of the magazine and gives a guide to worldwide postage and packaging costs. Also featured on this page is an electronic order form where you can submit an order request for a copy of the magazine.
- A '**Contact Us**' page which gives the contact details for the magazine (postal address, email addresses). In addition this page also includes an interactive Google Map where the markers on the map show the

townlands in the current (post-1893) parish of Annagh, along with the official Irish form of their names, and a translation of the Irish.

At the bottom of each of the main pages on our website is a link to Facebook. Our Facebook page is something we recently launched in order to allow friends and fans of Annagh Magazine to follow and comment on our posts.

We endeavour to keep our site as up to date as possible and we feature a '**Latest News**' section on our home page to keep visitors advised of recent news or events. This year we will also be adding a '**Links**' page to our website. When launched our links page will predominantly feature links to the websites of our patrons. However, over time we hope to feature links to as many local businesses or organisations as possible. So if you are a local business, organisation or person and you have a website that you would like featured on our website, please contact us at [info@annaghmag.ie](mailto:info@annaghmag.ie).

As always we genuinely appreciate all the support we receive every year from volunteers, contributors, readers and patrons. We would love if you could continue your support of our magazine by visiting our website ([www.annaghmag.ie](http://www.annaghmag.ie)) or by following us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/annaghmag](http://www.facebook.com/annaghmag)).

## Active Retirement Gala Dinner



Members of Ballyhaunis Active Retirement Association who attended the Western Region ARA Gala Dinner in Galway in October, 2010.

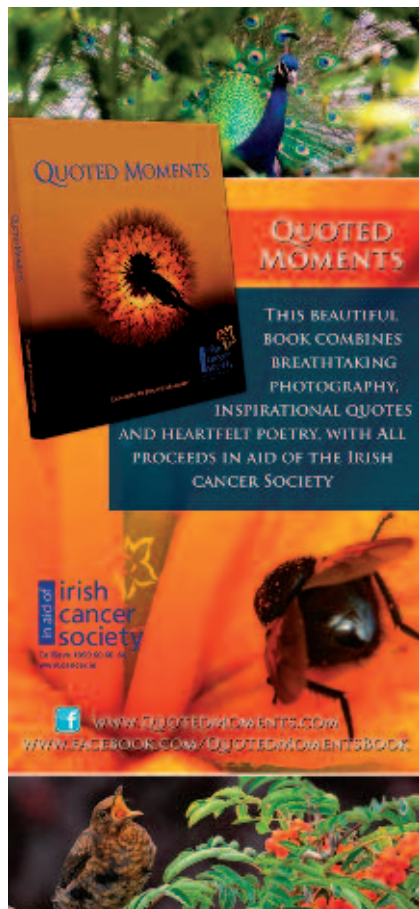
L-R: Máisín Meath, Pauline Curley, Bridget Hanley, Maura Fitzmaurice, Bridie Webb, Ann McCormack.





# Quoted Moments

QUOTATIONS FROM "QUOTED MOMENTS" – COMPILED BY JOANNE MALONEY  
IN AID OF THE IRISH CANCER SOCIETY – PRICE €15 – [WWW.QUOTEDMOMENTS.COM](http://WWW.QUOTEDMOMENTS.COM)



"Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go" – **T.S. Eliot**

"Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow" – **Helen Keller**

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall" – **Nelson Mandela**

"Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go, it is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow" – **Alice MacKenzie Swain**

"Three great essentials to happiness in this life are, something to do, something to love and something to hope for" – **Joseph Addison**

"A warm smile is the universal language of happiness" – **William Arthur Ward**

"Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer" – **Dalai Lama**

"Everything has its beauty but not everyone sees it" – **Confucius**

"The way I see it, if you want the rainbow you gotta put up with the rain" – **Dolly Parton**

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase" – **Martin Luther King Jr**

"Life is the flower for which love is the honey" – **Victor Hugo**

## Ballyhaunis GAA Club Trip to All-Ireland Semi-final



Members of Ballyhaunis GAA Club at the All-Ireland Semi-final on the 21st August, Mayo v Kerry.





# Sean Culliney Receives National Award

Sean Culliney is the son of Gerry Culliney of Ballyhaunis, now living in Tucson, Arizona, and the nephew of Noreen Culliney of Upper Main Street. He recently received the Excellence in Fire Service-Based EMS Award on behalf of the Northwest Fire/Rescue District in Tucson, Arizona. This award recognises Best Practices and Innovation in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and is given by the Congressional Fire Service Institute at its annual gala dinner in Washington, D.C. All professional fire departments in the United States were invited to participate in this award program.

Sean's role within Northwest is to educate/retrain the department paramedics and emergency medical technicians on best practices as first responders to non-hospital emergency medical situations. In partnership with the University of Arizona School of Medicine, Northwest developed a major medical trauma scenario played out on December 16, 2010. It was designed to stretch the capabilities of the responders. The scene involved a head-on collision of two vehicles with the injured including children, a pregnant woman and a senior citizen. High-end electronic mannequins that could actually simulate injury conditions (including giving birth) were used. In addition, there was a real live feed to the University physicians and students who observed first responders' practices in a non-hospital situation.

The objectives of this exercise were (a) observe and refine the skills and practices of first responders on-site, and (b) become the first step in developing a program for remote fire departments to have both video and audio contact with a hospital in emergency catastrophic situations. Further development of this programme is pending the award of a grant from the National Institute of Health.

On January 8, 2011, the U.S. and the world watched as a

lone gunman turned a Tucson shopping centre into a scene of chaos and terror where over twenty people, including our Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, were killed and/or injured. The battalion chief in charge of the Medical Emergency teams on that day was the same person in charge of the "drill" on December 16. The quick coordinated effort and performance by all responders was exceptional.

According to Sean, 85% of calls to fire departments in the U.S. today are medical-related. The skill and practices of these first responders are critical in non-hospital situations.

Sean's current focus, in cooperation with the University Hospital, is developing techniques and practices to improve the survivability of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patients. Sean has a B.A. and Master's degree in Public Health Policy and Management. He lives in Tucson with his wife, Kristen, son Reece, and daughter Harper. Needless to say, his family is extremely proud of his accomplishments and dedication to helping save lives and improving our medical capabilities.



**Sean Culliney (right) receiving the Excellence in Fire Service-Based EMS Award on behalf of the Northwest Fire/Rescue District in Tucson, Arizona. His father Gerry, originally from Upper Main St., Ballyhaunis, is in the centre.**





# The Tale of the Nanny Goat

BY TONY CARNEY

The leaves of the Sycamore are losing their grip and beginning to fall, some making a soft landing outside the back door. The swallows have all gone, leaving behind their battered nests clinging to the rafters. That wiley old crow with just one leg heads off to the nearby spruce tree to rest up for the night. She has lived on our premises for the last four years. If I rattle a plate with a knife or fork she comes immediately: meal time for her. Porridge left-overs are her favourite food. She has no fear of me getting close to her. Great trust both ways. Duskus comes that little bit earlier each evening and, slowly but surely, winter is around the corner. Not much to look forward to until springtime and the long day comes again - last year being the exception.

## Political Banter

Talks of an election everywhere you go. 'Endamania' and 'Kennymania' sweeping the country like a forest fire. An ocean of money on the way from 'European Bailout', they called it; 'Sell out' some more called it; but whether or which it will not be enough to save Fianna Fáil. One by one they abandon the sinking ship and head for shore, and off into the sunset with massive bulging wallets, while tens of thousands of our youth have no jobs, no prospects of any kind of future other than the few scraps that is thrown from the political table: a damning indictment of a failed government. I have always admired and complimented the late Donagh O'Malley for his input into post-primary education but the whole idea fell far short of much more research and pre-planning before being launched. A small agricultural country like Ireland could never guarantee a white collar job for every student.

## The Emigrant Ship Again

Thousands of those fine young boys and girls are fleeing to foreign countries in search of a decent life. Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland are the main attractions. They did not leave but were driven out by a government who failed to provide for them, and the few who are left are expected to be the Ireland of tomorrow. My advice to

all of those fine young boys and girls: keep your chin up, and together we'll survive with them or without them.

## A New Beginning

Now a brand new administration is appearing on the political horizon. The king of Irish politics and policies is already being crowned long before a polling station is opened. In all my life (over eight and a half decades) I never witnessed anything like the pre-election hype.

Even a suggestion that we will be back to a one party government again. Mr. Kenny is catapulted into power with almost double quota. The whole country is pinning their faith on the sandy-haired young man from outside Castlebar. We in County Mayo feel proud, and we are well aware of the task he faces heading up to the new government. The manifesto for the lead party did not seem to be the correct one for me anyway. Promising any kind of upgrade in the economy in one hundred days, or improvement in the unemployment sector was always a non-runner. After almost six months of

government cracks are beginning to emerge. The hundred days are round the block twice and headway of any kind is minimal if at all. The economy is in tatters and the hundred days could well be one hundred years.

There is, however, one certainty and the very people who call the shots knows it too well. The gap between the rich and the poor will widen still further, in which case we the underprivileged can expect more of the same with just a bit more of the same. As one with little or no education, having had to leave school at thirteen, I refuse to admit I'm stupid. Let somebody please let me know if we live in a democracy and if so please let me know what the word means? I've been told it's the freedom to vote for a person or persons of your choice. Is that all?

Was that the democracy that Connolly, Pearse and so many more paid for with their flesh and blood? We hear so much about equal rights and equal opportunities. Do they or do they not come under the democratic rights of the underprivileged and, if not, is there a second definition for the word democracy? We the underprivileged of this country are a very tolerant and law abiding



Mary, Tony, Michael and Hugh Carney with their mother Ellen, 1936.





people. They did their damndest to take away our medical cards. They failed. We won them back without any violent demonstrations when the embarrassment overwhelmed them.

The current crop in authority need to watch out. Landslide victory at the polling station counts for little as the late Jack Lynch found years ago. Telling the social welfare recipient that his or her weekly pittance is under threat six months before the budget is cold comfort. Telling the householder that his income will be reduced by €100 is hardly the way to ensuring his longevity. Household tax that can be reviewed every year; and isn't there talks of a site tax, flu jab contribution? So as you can see there are several ways of widening the gap between rich and poor, and, far worse, many of the people we vote for in the back benches have no choice except to vote in favour of the people dishing out the medicine. Let me be hereby recorded to say I would not have a T.D. or Senator job fired after me. I could not vote against my conscience. Dishonesty cannot be vindicated.

### **Annagh Magazine**

Now that the long winter nights are approaching, thank God for Annagh Magazine. Hope you will enjoy my contribution for 2011.

### **Tony's Believe It or Not**

So there you have it at last. I'm through with hiding in the past. After twenty-nine years and four months of bottling it up I'm handing myself in or giving myself up, whichever you like. That tragic April day thirty years ago is as fresh in my memory as if it were yesterday, so I have decided to use your magazine to reveal the dreadful tragedy to its many readers. I am well aware my crime will not go unpunished, but I'm ready to face the consequences and if the law says I must spend the remainder of my days in the slammer then so be it, and when I finish my time I can hold my head up. I will conduct my own defence. It will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. No need for counsel but I reckon the judge won't take to kindly to that. What do you think?

Before passing judgement you, the reader, should first consider all the facts, bearing in mind that I never spend two seconds in a courthouse in my life. Most all of you who know me are well aware that for eight decades of my lifetime all of my waking hours was spent working. That is something I will cherish forever. Regardless of how hard the job, I never refused, I never backed down: I always gave it every ounce in my body. People who were aware of my work potential cashed in by making me work far beyond the call of duty, but not one single one of them ever found the end of my endurance. What they did know was I was great value for little or no money.



**Tony and Christina Carney, 1953.**

Before I go on to give you the facts of that tragic April day, imagine if you can the eighteen years before 1982, each week consisted of ninety hours. Yes, that's correct, ninety hours a week working every day of every week, of every month, of every year, for eighteen years - Christmas Day, New Year's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter Sunday. No let up, and all that in the public sector if you don't mind. Save yourself the job of finding out if this is true, there is a record of every day's work of that eighteen years. If you are in any doubt, please feel free to call me and you can have all the confirmation you require.

### **That Fatal Day**

It's the second Sunday in April 1982. The whole family will be going to Galway University Hospital after lunch. We have just bought our first motor car, a silver Simca, second hand and looking very clean and smart. I'd be







**Tony Carney left of picture, his brother Michael on right, sister Mary and daughter Eileen (centre), 1974.**

less than honest if I said I looked forward to the journey. We are going to see the two youngest of the family in hospital. The youngest boy is just turned two years and tests are being carried out to try and track down the allergy causing chronic asthma. His elder brother has a far more serious complaint. The story is not about him but perhaps for another issue of Annagh, God willing.

I went for medical advice to Dr. Eamon Waldron, R.I.P. He was a wonderful man, a great doctor, very caring and greatly respected by all who knew him. We had a long chat about the young boy. He feels sure the allergy is coming from cow's milk. He advises me to get a milking goat and suspend all cow's milk. I told him I'd make the change over and report back. Getting a goat was no problem, getting a milking goat was a living nightmare. I wore the tyres of the car in search of a nanny goat and was about to throw in the towel when I got tidings of milking goats and I'm all set to try my luck. My intention is having the goat home with me before we go to Galway. I know the house and owner of the goat.

*"Come in", says he, "and have a dosh of tay."*

*"No thanks but it's a goat I am after", as I tell him the story.*

*"I have two goats but one reared the kids and has no milk. The other one has two young kids much too early to wean." "But I tell you", says he, "if you bring me a bag of calf milk replacer for the kids I'll give you the nanny." I'm on cloud nine.*

*"I'll buy her off you", I tell him.*

*"You won't because she is not for sale. We will hobble her now and put her in the boot of the car."*

I shake hands and thank him for his kindness and promise to have the milk replacer delivered tomorrow. Time is not on my side, less than one hour to settle the goat in her new digs, have my dinner and hit the road

for Galway. Afraid that she will do a runner when we are gone I stake her in the garden close to the back door, with a nice circumference of grass, a few dairy nuts and a basin of water to wash it down, she will be fine until we get back around six or seven. A beautiful sunny day as we leave home and all the conversation is about the nanny goat. Somewhere between Milltown and Tuam, as changeable as an April day comes into play, rain, sleet, wind and a biting cold, with the windscreens wipers unable to cope. Much more like January than April but after ten miles April is here again.

I had to throw off my jacket in the hospital with the dent of the heat and the sun through the windows would roast you. I get to talk to the Matron in charge and she says she can see an improvement in the child, but so far they cannot pinpoint the cause of the allergy and they will keep him for another week for further investigation.

### **All Aboard!**

As we prepare for home my thoughts are all about the additional animal on the farm. Getting out of our car I head straight for the nanny and my God, nothing could have prepared me for what I'm about to witness. Poor thing shaking from head to foot, trembling noise from her throat like the spluttering of a broken down motorbike. It's hard to know which of us, me or the goat, is the worst off, but I must control myself and come to her assistance. She is in a terrible state, but she isn't half as bad as I am. I carry her to the kitchen and plant her down beside the Stanley fire. The gas heater creates an unbearable heat in the kitchen but not enough to stop the trembling. I'm at a terrible loss to know what happened her. In hindsight I should have called the vet but instead I gave her a penicillin injection. I'm quite used to doing this with young stock who develop colds and the likes. The next hour or more I spend rubbing her and massaging her, and begging her not to kick the bucket, because if she does I'm as well to go with her, having to face the owner and explain the terrible truth. If the worst goes to the worst I'll tell him she must have had a heart attack, or else I killed her with kindness, grass, nuts, water, maybe I should have brought her to Galway with me. Either way I'm going to finish up a loser.

The heat coming from the Stanley and the gas heater coupled with the smell of the goat creates an unbearable smell. The whole family gives me an ultimatum. It's either them or the goat - one or the other has to go. Down in the out-house I prepare an igloo type cubicle of baled straw. I rig up an infrared lamp to insure maximum heat overnight. After two hours she does not seem to respond and before I introduce her to her sleeping quarters I have one final oral administration. In case a friend calls I always keep a little 'Mumsie's Dynamite'. Brandy, Hennessy and perhaps three inches of the real thing in





the five naggin bottle; off-hand I would say about five or six half ones. Down the hatch every last drop. There is only one certainty now: if she survives the night she'll have one hell of a hangover in the morning. At this point I'm exhausted so I head for the local and a couple of pints of stout. I'm about to offload my story to my mates when I overhear everybody talking about the freak downpour during the day. Only then it occurs to me what happened to my nanny. Unable to get to shelter she took the full blast of the storm. I should not have staked her. Immediate panic finishing my pint I head for the nanny goat. If she is no better I'll call for the vet. Why didn't I do that hours ago? Opening the door of the outhouse the draught of heat from the infrared offers some hope and switching on the flash lamp. Well, well, come on guess you're right. I know what the reader is thinking. The poor nanny goat is dead. And so she is, head thrown backwards. Dead as a door nail. As I look down at the wretched corpse, it's only then it strikes me. I killed her. Just one small mistake in the course of the day has resulted in murder. Why did I stake the poor nanny? What am I to do now? I could sure do with a brandy but the last drop in the house is in the dead goat's stomach. With the sweat pouring from my forehead, having to accept being a murderer is hitting me real hard. Will I be charged with first degree murder? No I don't think so. It was not premeditated. Well then second degree murder reduced to manslaughter. But how can you be charged with manslaughter for killing a goat? The next is third degree murder for killing an animal. In my case 'goatslaughter'. There is one for you, and for Scotland Yard as well. The penalty for 'goatslaughter' is anything up to three years and could also carry the solitary confinement thing as well. Of course with good behaviour and other perks that sentence could well be reduced to perhaps one year. Just about enough time to write my memoirs.

That night in bed I look at the wider picture. I finally convince myself that murder is not in my vocabulary. The killing gene is not present in me or any of my family. Still there is the one other factor I may have to deal with in the event of cross examination and it all comes down to one question. Do I possess the killer instinct? And if I don't can I explain my contribution to John B. Keane's blockbuster 'The Field'? For thirty years under four different producers I was called on to play the 'Bull'. I won many, many awards for my version of the 'Bull'. One adjudicator said it was the best portrayal of the 'Bull' he had ever seen and that included Ray McNally. Others would say Harris came nowhere near, and easily bettered the recent 'Field' in Castlebar. I don't look for any bouquets for that, but just in the case of the goat it is a concern. To play the 'Bull' you must be ruthless. You must have seen them all: films and plays. No producer ever told me how to play the part but there is such a

thing as ruthlessness with subtlety. I'm full certain that is where Harris and McNally failed. I would never change my way of playing this part, because I couldn't.

### Many Memorable Nights

I had many memorable nights on the boards with top class actors and actresses. People such as Jack Green (R.I.P.), a legend with a golden voice and acting ability second to none. Frankie Ralph O'Malley, so professional in every word and movement, and always prepared to bring her stage ability to amateur level if required. Margaret Niland, and what can I say about Margaret? Whether playing an old woman or a teenager, she had the ability to slice you in two and you got her every line right in between the two eyes. Margaret was wasted at amateur level. Finola Mellette Morley, a godsend for any producer, and, like Margaret, she possessed 'old woman' to burn. And Anna Henry, a quality actress and my one regret is having only one play with her. The one thing about Anna was her ability to relax you when playing with her. Anna could raise the production to new heights and take all the cast with her. People like these are in short demand. And it's people like them that can vindicate me from being John B. Keane 'Bull'. All of these actors know me inside out in the field of amateur drama and would die for each other. Perhaps I digress by bringing these people into the goat tragedy but any one or all of these people know the real me. As well they know I'm incapable of killing a fly much less an innocent goat. I have no intention of calling on these people as witnesses in my defence, but if I'm convicted and doomed to Mountjoy or Castlereagh, there will be countless people out there who believe in me for what I am.

One final job to be done before the boys in blue call with the handcuffs. Face up the man who gave me the goat.

*"You're a man to your word" says he, "here in good time with the milk replacer for the kids".* When we come face to face he detects something is wrong. There is a long pause.

*"Come into the house and sit down and tell me what is wrong."* There is even a longer pause, I can't believe what I'm saying.

*"The goat is dead!"*

When I told him the whole story, he looked at me and then I knew there was one man who would not convict me.

*"You killed that goat!" says he, "but only 'cause you loved her, and I can tell you where you will get another nanny."*

As it turned out the young lad came home from the hospital, and that was the last we ever heard or seen of the asthma. This is a true story and if you meet me in the street, be sure to let me know your own verdict!





# Dr. Alan Delaney Retires

BY MIKE BYRNE

Friday, 29th July 2011 was a day filled with emotion for Dr. Alan Delaney and his many loyal patients, when he bade farewell to the practice he has served with great dedication for over forty-three years.

Throughout the day there was a steady stream of well-wishers calling into the Annagh Medical Centre to wish Dr. Delaney well on his last day of duty in Ballyhaunis. It was an emotional day for Alan and his staff, with whom he worked very closely over the years. Speaking on the Tommy Marren Show on Midwest Radio, Dr. Delaney thanked his patients for their support over many years and for the many messages of goodwill he had received in recent days. Reflecting on his arrival in Ballyhaunis back in 1967, he recalled how he came as locum for the late Dr. Eamonn Waldron. "I came for two weeks, and stayed for over forty years", he said. After some time working for Dr. Waldron, he established his own practice at his home on Doctor's Road in 1969. In the last decade, he teamed up with Dr. Michael Brogan when the two GPs opened the Annagh Medical Centre, also on Doctor's Road.

Alan was the second generation of doctors in the family. His father had a family practice in Castlerea, and his daughter, Ursula, a Nurse, works in the Ballyhaunis practice. Recently Alan's son Donal qualified as a doctor making it the third generation in the family. Alan is wished a long and happy retirement.



**Dr. Alan Delaney (right), pictured on his last day at work, on Friday, July 29th, welcomes Dr. Glen Lecky, who takes over the practice at Annagh Medical Centre.**

## Successor

Meanwhile, Alan's position at the Annagh Medical Centre has been filled by Dr. Glen Lecky. A native of Co. Donegal, Dr. Lecky is married to the former Áine Murphy, daughter of John and Frances Murphy of Coolnaha.

We join with the Ballyhaunis community in wishing Dr. Lecky the very best of luck in his new practice.

## Summer Reading Programme



**Maeve and Gillian Donnellan, Alice and Molly Curran with their Summer Reading Certificates received at Ballyhaunis Library.**

*Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlerea.*





# Summer Reading Programme

Presentation of certificates to children from Ballyhaunis for the Summer Reading Programme at Ballyhaunis Library by Cllr. John Cribbin. Also pictured are Eleanor Freyne (Ballyhaunis Library), Mary Gannon (ex. Librarian) and Noreen Hoban (Clerical Officer). *Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlerea*





## Recent Photographs



Children from Began N.S. listening to the stories of Maureen Higgins from Clarecourt, Ballyhaunis, who entertained them at Ballyhaunis Library over the Halloween Break.

*Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlerea*



Jack Buckley (Annagh) aged one with Uncle Paul McNamara and Ruby the dog.



**MAYO HANDS ON SAM!**

Cillian Keane, Cian Walsh, John Keane, Luke Walsh, Martin Walsh, Joshua Webb at Mayo v Kerry.



Darragh and Diarmaid Eagney (sons of Dermot and Anne Marie Eagney), formerly of Doctor's Road, Ballyhaunis. Photographed at the GAA Grounds, London in May 2011.





**Muirgheal Ottewell from Agloragh, Ballyhaunis represented Gaelscoil Uileog de Búrca, Claremorris in the Labhart na Gaeilge (Irish conversation) category at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann which took place in Cavan last August. She was one of twenty finalists - five from each province. Muirgheal had previously won the Connacht Final in the 9-11 category. This is the first time that any pupil from this Gaelscoil had reached the national finals and we think the first person from Ballyhaunis to get that far in the competition. Although she didn't win a medal in Cavan, Muirgheal is pictured here with her Connacht medal.**



**The Big Snow, Christmas 2010. Nathan, Alannagh and Jason Hession, Cloonbulban, Began, with their snowman.**



**Fiona Morley Clarke (Lissaniska, Began) and Caroline Mannion Hession (Cloonbulban, Began), at their Twentieth School Reunion – Ballyhaunis Community School Class of 1990.**



**Holy Communion Party. P. J. Hession, Nathan Hession, Denis Mannion, Luke Mannion, Caroline Hession (Mannion), Padraig Mannion, Bernie Hoban (Mannion). All members of the Mannion family, Derryhog, Tulrahan.**



**Kathleen Mannion (Niland), Derryhog, playing the button accordion for her grandchildren in Began.**





# St. Joseph's Secondary School Class Reunion 1962-'67



St. Joseph's Secondary School, 1962-1967. Back, L-R: Ann Rushe, Mary Murphy, Mary Glynn, Gertrude McGuire, Cynthia Hannan, Lillian Geraghty, Ursula Lawless, Rita Barry. Centre, Anne Cummins, Peggy Leonard, Phyllis Regan, Anna Grogan, Eva Concannon, Mary Cunnane, Marian Carney, Kathleen McLoughlin. Front, Dolores Melly, Mary Ganley, Mary Conway, Teresa Henry, Rita Lyons, Mary Herr, Mary Hannah Regan, Mary Devaney.



St. Joseph's Secondary School, 1962-1967. Back, L-R: Noreca McNeive, Elizabeth Moran, Denise Earley, Mary Byrne, Maeve Lyons, Mary Plunkett, Mary Freyne, Marie Mulrennan, Mary Conboy, Mary Regan, Joan Coyne. Centre: Margaret McGuire, Una Cribbin, Noreen Murphy, Mary Caulfield, Evelyn Caulfield, Helen Cruise, Maureen Keane, Eileen Morris, Jenny Burke, Eileen Freeley. Front: Mary Hopkins, Helen Meehan, Mary Jane Mulrennan, Bridie Kneafsey.



## St. Joseph's Secondary School Class Reunion 1962-'67



St. Joseph's Secondary School Class of 1962-1967, at their reunion held earlier this year, 2011.

Back, L-R: Una Cribbin, Mary Moran, Maeve Lyons, Joan Coyne, Maureen Keane, Mary Jane Mulrennan, Margaret McGuire, Margaret Conboy, Mary Regan, Denise Earley, Kathleen McLoughlin, Mary Byrne, Mary Cunnane, Marian Carney, Gertrude McGuire, Lily Geraghty. Centre: Mary Regan, Marie Mulrennan, Rita Forde, Rita Lyons, Helen Cruise, Ann Rushe, Elizabeth Moran, Teresa Henry, Mary Ganley.  
Front: Mary Herr, Noreca McNieve, Evelyn Caulfield, Mary Plunkett.

## Convent of Mercy N.S. Reunion from the 1940s



This group of ladies started school together in the Convent of Mercy National School in the late 1940's.

They met up during the summer for a class reunion and get-together.

Back, L-R: Mary Teresa McHale (nee Rattigan), Mary Farquharson (nee Nally), Ann Watchorn (nee Byrne), Noreen Miller (nee Culliney), Mary McNaught (nee Kearns), Alacoque Grey (nee Lyons).  
Front: Mary Forde, Teresa Mueller (nee Green), Corrine Flatley (nee Lyons), Bernadette Moran (nee Concannon).





# Canon Cooney Honoured

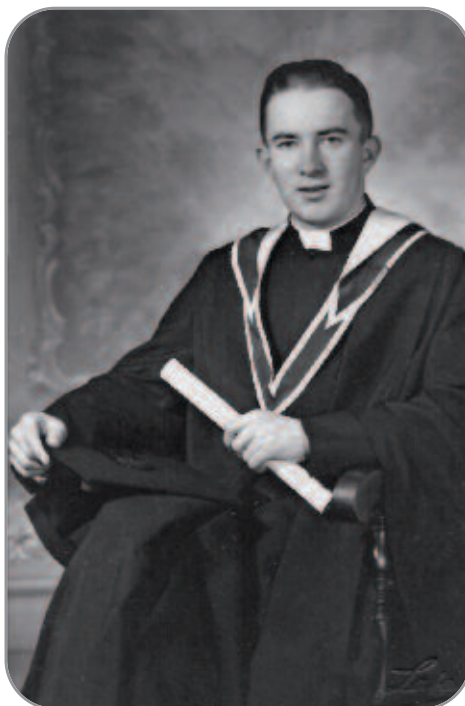
## On his Golden Jubilee and Retirement

Fifty years of memories and service to the Sacred Ministry of the Priesthood were celebrated in Ballyhaunis on Sunday, 26th June last, when parishioners, family and colleagues turned out to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Parish Priest, Canon Joseph Cooney.

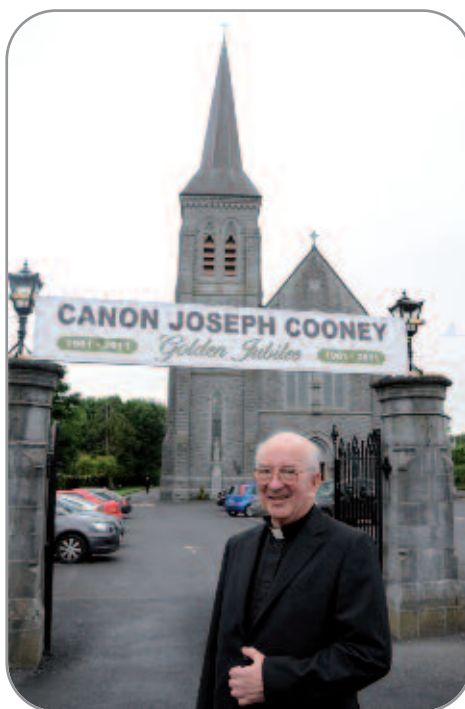
St. Patrick's Church was packed to capacity on a day when people turned out in force to pay tribute to a man who dedicated his whole life in the service of God and in the service of others.

Canon Cooney, a native of Coolroe, Crossboyne, was ordained on 18th June 1961, and started out as a priest in St. Jarlath's College, Tuam where he was Prefect of Studies from 1961-62. He ministered in the parishes of Cill Ronáin (Aran Islands), Carraroe, Tully (in the Gaeltacht parish of Knockspiddal) and representatives of these parishes made the journey to East Mayo to pay tribute to their friend and former colleague on his special day. He returned to Tuam in 1974 and was Administrator of there from 1989 to 1993, when he moved to Ballyhaunis as P.P. in succession to Canon Patrick Costelloe. He was appointed Canon of the Cathedral Chapter in 1998 and the Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. Michael Neary, was among those who paid tribute to him before a packed attendance at the Mass in Ballyhaunis Church on Sunday evening.

Dr. Neary, reflecting on the fifty years of service given by Canon Cooney, paid tribute to his colleague, whom he said he first encountered when the young Fr. Cooney was appointed Prefect of Studies at St. Jarlath's College, in 1961. The Archbishop spoke of Canon Cooney's great organisational skills, which came very much to the fore when he was appointed to the Cathedral parish of Tuam in 1974, and fifteen years later, taking up the position of Administrator.



**Graduation Day for a young Fr. Joe Cooney.**



**Canon Cooney, with St. Patrick's Church and its Millennium Spire.**  
*Glynn's Photography.*

Dr. Neary said, "When appointed to your parish here in Ballyhaunis in 1993, he summoned up his organisational skills and ensured that the parish was in a position to meet the challenges of the changing culture. He became involved in the renovation of the sanctuary area and the refurbishment of the church in so many ways, culminating in the Spire."

### Millennium Project

The spire plan, which became the Millennium Project, was one of the great achievements accomplished under the stewardship of Canon Cooney. In its original design way back in 1903, the designers of the new Ballyhaunis church proposed that the building would be complete with a spire to adorn the new edifice for the parish and its community. The prevailing economic conditions of one hundred years ago, however, did not permit the original design to reach its final objective. An inspired and determined Canon Cooney invited a band of volunteers to come forward to form the Millennium Spire Committee, with the objective of completing the church building.

Through local fundraising initiatives and a significant contribution from the National Millennium Committee, under the chairmanship of the late Seamus Brennan, T.D., this ambitious aspiration was to become a reality. There is little doubt that, without the drive, ambition, enthusiasm and enterprising organisational skill of the Ballyhaunis Parish Priest, the Millennium Spire would and could not have become a reality.

"The presence of Canon Joe Cooney as Parish Priest of Ballyhaunis was very appropriate in view of the broadcast Masses on Midwest Radio," the Archbishop reflected. "Using his organising ability, he scheduled the Masses which are carried by the radio





**Canon Cooney celebrating Mass commemorating his Golden Jubilee with fellow priests and Archbishop Michael Neary.**

*Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlerea.*



**Canon Cooney with some of the committee who organised his Golden Jubilee celebrations.**

**Back, L-R: Helen Hoban, Mary Donnelly, Michael Goulding, Jarlath Fahey, Matt O'Dwyer, Jim Donnelly, Tom Finn, John Mooney, Marie Brennan, Christina Concannon.**

**Front: Fr. Benny McHale, Anne Carney, Canon Joe Cooney, Gabrielle Lyons and Patricia Plunkett.**

*Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlerea*

every Sunday, ensuring that the sick and the housebound would have the opportunity of tuning into the broadcast Mass. "It is obvious to everyone that Canon Joe puts so much work into preparing his homilies. There is always food for thought; they are well crafted, challenging, incisive and encouraging. In addition to his parish responsibilities, Canon Joe also has a diocesan portfolio as a member of the finance committee. At national level, he was a member of the Bishop's Commission for

Immigrants, to which he contributed very significantly with his wide ranging experience."

### **Celebration**

The jubilee celebration could be described as a great community occasion. Young and old turned out in force to salute the contribution their Parish Priest has made to their community for almost two decades. The contribution of the choir, which comprised of the four choirs from the parish, contributed to making this celebration an occasion to treasure and one the Ballyhaunis community will not forget for a very long time to come.

Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Fr. Benny McHale, C.C., whose own communication skills and ever-dependable wit, added in no small way to the enjoyment and flavour of the day's event. The success of the jubilee celebration is due in great part to the organisation committee and the Pastoral Council, who spent many long nights preparing the pictorial booklet depicting Canon Cooney's years as a priest, preparing the liturgy and the organisation of the function in the Parochial Hall after the ceremony.

After the Mass it was standing room only as the Parochial Hall was bursting at the seams with the hundreds of well-wishers who crowded into the building to shake his hand and say farewell to a man who has obviously been a very popular priest in the Mayo parish since moving there over eighteen years ago.





## Canon Cooney Says Thanks

*From, The Connaught Telegraph, Tues, 12th July 2011:*

In his final address to parishioners, Canon Cooney thanked the people of Ballyhaunis for their support since his arrival in the parish. He said, "I have had eighteen wonderful years in Ballyhaunis and those years have brought home to me how precious the gift of Priesthood is. It is a great life, a calling which has given me unparalleled access to people and families. It is a vocation that is very fulfilling because there is nothing more satisfying then being with people on special and traumatic moments in their lives."

"Ballyhaunis has been a wonderful home to me for the past eighteen years, and the friendship, goodwill, co-operation and everyday assistance I received from the people of Ballyhaunis is something I will treasure for the rest of my life", he added. Canon Cooney paid tribute to Fr. Benny McHale for the work he has done in Ballyhaunis since coming here three years ago. "Much of that work may not have been obvious to parishioners, but there is hardly a week that goes by that he is not giving a school retreat, a parish retreat or a priests' retreat," the Canon said. "I have often marvelled at his dedication and energy; a very kind and considerate person and he has been exceptionally kind and caring to me over the past few years. He is now

going to a very busy parish, a parish of 3,000 families, and I wish him every blessing, every happiness in his new ministry."

Canon Cooney took the opportunity to thank the people of Ballyhaunis for their kindness and generosity shown him on the occasion of his golden jubilee. He said: "I was simply overwhelmed by the thoughtfulness of so many and I appreciate it very much."

He also thanked the Pastoral Council and the representatives of other organisations who made the occasion such a special one for him and his family. "Visitors who came on the day are still talking about it and the memory of that day is something I will always treasure," he concluded.



**Michael Goulding, on behalf of Ballyhaunis Pastoral Council, making a presentation to Canon Cooney.**



**Canon Cooney cutting his Golden Jubilee cake surrounded by parishioners in the Parochial Hall, Ballyhaunis.**

*Glynn's Photography, Ballyhaunis/Castlerea.*



# Canon Joseph Cooney Golden Jubilee (1961 - 2011)

In a year of depressing headlines, a celebration of fifty years of dedication and service to the Ministry of the Priesthood and our Diocese of Tuam is a wonderful achievement and cause for celebration.

Canon Cooney, or Father Joe (as he likes to be called), was born on 20th September 1936 in Coolroe, in the parish of Crossboyne. He started his education in Ballindine N.S., moving on to St. Jarlath's College, Tuam and finally, Maynooth College. He was ordained on 18th June 1961 and his first priestly duty was to be Prefect of Studies at St. Jarlath's. Later he ministered as curate in Inis Mór, Carraroe and Baile na hAbhann, before being appointed Administrator of Tuam Cathedral. He was appointed Parish Priest of Annagh (Ballyhaunis) in 1993 in succession to Canon Patrick Costelloe.

Over the past seventeen years Fr. Joe has administered in the parish of Annagh looking after his parishioners with kindness and compassion. The dedication he showed to the parish and to his parishioners was exemplary.

The parish benefitted enormously from his organisational ability: the refurbishing of St. Patrick's Church, including the complete restoration of the stained glass windows – a massive undertaking. His enthusiasm led

to the formation of many societies including the very successful Ballyhaunis Cemetery Committee, Community Council, Tidy Towns, Pastoral Council. Undoubtedly, the highlight of his term in Ballyhaunis was the Millennium project he initiated and saw through to fruition – the erection of the Spire in 2000 to complete St. Patrick's Church which started almost one-hundred earlier.

His jubilee was celebrated on 26th June 2011 in St. Patrick's Church and attended by his family, classmates, His Grace the Archbishop Dr. Neary, and a church filled to overflowing with parishioners. It was a fitting way to celebrate a lifetime of achievement. The liturgy on the day was co-ordinated by Fr. Benny McHale, and the theme of the celebration evident in the decoration and bunting in the church grounds was maintained throughout the liturgy, by the participation of the choirs and many parishioners. A DVD of the Mass and reception afterwards was presented to Fr. Joe.

The genuine depth of affection shown by the parishioners for Fr. Joe at the reception afterwards was palpable. It is the wish of all that Fr. Joe has an enjoyable jubilee year and the health to enjoy his well earned rest.

*Ballyhaunis Pastoral Council*



**Friends and Neighbours from Knox Street**

*Left to right: Catherine Morley, Vera Forde, Gabriel Forkin, Carmel Johnston, Bridie Barrett (RIP), Eugene Barrett (RIP), Noreen Morley, Tommy Jordan, Mary Jordan and Teresa Nicoll. Photograph taken in 1993.*



**Kitty Corless, Abbey St. Ballyhaunis, celebrated her 95th Birthday with a big party with family and friends at the Ave Maria Nursing Home, Tooreen, Ballyhaunis, earlier this year.**





# "Hail and Farewell"

BY JIMMY CRIBBIN

The novelty of this annual pencil pushing exercise has worn off. Now it's my legs that require exercise not my fingers. The doctor advised me to walk three miles every day. In those circumstances it is natural that adventures in literature are forgotten. I had completely forgotten about 'the magazine' until Seamus Mulrennan crossed the street to tell me that at a recent meeting of the editorial committee it was mentioned that no 'manuscript' had been received from me this year. I was somewhat flattered to hear that my name was mentioned at so eminent a meeting. After all, as the song about a lonely immigrant in a big city says, 'What's the world to any man where no one breathes his name?'

"I am wondering what sort of bull might fill a page this year". Once he started he went on to write two pages under the title "Dissertation on the Demise of 1990". It was a veritable who's who of the players on the world stage at that time, or those who had exited stage right or left. In order of appearance Mr. Fahy's "dramatis personae" were: Shay Healy, Ghandi, Dan Quayle, Chausescu, Sean Doherty, David Norris, Dev, Charlie, Lenin, Stalin, 'me auld pal' Saddam, Jack Charlton, The Pope, JFK, Eamonn 'Dummy', John 'Gowls', Mary Robinson, Austin Curry, Alan Dukes, Maggie, Brian, Dessie Ellis and Shergar. That was back in the twentieth century! I wonder how many of the class of 2011 know

anything about many of the above, even the ones that are still alive and able to write their autobiography. Those who passed on, now make interesting subjects for would-be biographers.

Leaving the twentieth century behind, I wonder what opinion polls have to say today about who will be next in the Vice Regal Lodge, sorry, I mean the Áras, I have a habit of calling things by their original name. With so much pleading by so many people that they become President it would make a refreshing change if I penned a few lines under the title 'Why I should be President'. But then if I change my mind and decide in the future to make a dash for the 'Park'

the whole exercise might become counterproductive.

We are masters of our own words until we speak or write them, then we become their slave. Still with the Presidency, I have a question to ask: who was Ireland's first President? You will probably say Douglas Hyde; I beg to disagree! The inscription on John Moore's tombstone where he's buried beside the '98 Memorial in Castlebar, describes him as Ireland's first President. Note that question was not, who was the first 'President of Ireland'? Following the invasion of 1798 the French declared a Republic of Connaught and installed John Moore as President. He was buried in the South East of Ireland where his body lay for 150 years until it was exhumed, brought back to Mayo and re-interred beside the '98 Memorial in Castlebar. It was a state occasion with Eamon De Valera, Sean Lemass and other government ministers present. A guard of honour drawn from the FCA lined the route as the cortege passed with the coffin on a gun carriage and draped with the national flag. It was probable that there were more than two FCA men



**"Listening to an address in the McWilliam Park Hotel on why I (Jimmy Cribbin, extreme right) should not be President, were three wise men from Johnstown"  
L-R: John Cleary, Seamus Walsh and John Joe Lilly.**

It is mid October and deadline time is days away. I am in a bit of a rush to get to Eddie Murphy's to get toggled out for a trip up the aisle as the organ is about to play 'Here comes the Bride'. Now, do not get me wrong, I have no intention of jettisoning the living alone allowance. I am merely saying 'yes' to a request by my niece, Maria Condon, to escort her on her last trip up the aisle as a single girl. I also say 'yes' to Mr. Mulrennan's request that I make my annual non-monetary contribution. Without those who year-in, year-out make a monetary contribution the magazine could not continue being published even if the literary contributions were up to Shakespearean standards.

I now find myself in the same dilemma to Glór Achadh Mór found himself as he started to write for that magazine in 1990. Vincent Fahy wrote on that occasion,





from Ballyhaunis in the guard of honour on that occasion but just now I remembered only two: Michael Lyons from Bridge Street and myself. So we can say that we represented Ballyhaunis in an official capacity at the funeral of Mayo's (and Ireland's) first President, who has been dead for over 150 years and had one term in office and two funerals. The first one was probably secretive and had a small turnout. The second one was well publicised with much pomp and ceremony.

The Moore family continued to live in Mayo as landed gentry during the nineteenth and first two decades of the twentieth century until the family mansion 'Moore Hall' was burned down in the 1920's. George Moore was one of the last to live in Moore Hall. He was a writer and a novelist. I read one of his books once (not an easy read) but the title comes in handy now to bring this piece to an end.... "Hail and Farewell".

## Ben There, Done That!

### BALLYHAUNIS DOG AND HANDLER ON WORLD WINNING TRIALS TEAM

Peter Concannon of Lecarrow, Ballyhaunis and his dog Ben were members of the Irish Team that won the World Sheep Dog Trials this September.

This event, which is held every three years, took place on the Lowther Estate, Cumbria, in the North of England from 15th to 18th September. Twenty-

three countries, with 240 handlers and their dogs competed at the four-day event. Brazil and Japan were represented for the first time, along with England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Faroes, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and USA.

Peter operates a sheep farm as well as breeding and training Border Collie sheepdogs, in Lecarrow, about two miles outside Ballyhaunis, on what is amongst the highest land in the parish of Annagh. An experienced trialer, he has been on the Irish team for the International Trials seven times already, while this was his second time on the Irish team in the World Trials, having done so previously, with 'Kerry', in 2005 when it was held in Tullamore.

He won his place on this year's Irish Team for the World Trials as one of the highest placed in the Irish National Trials in 2010. The dog he ran on that occasion was Rob. Unfortunately, eight year old Rob got seriously ill and had to be put to sleep, and so his place (under International Sheep Dog Society Rules) went to his alternate dog, the much younger Ben. Peter purchased Ben in 2009 as an eight month old pup from Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon breeder Pat Byrne.

Qualifying rounds at the World Trials took place on three

courses over the first two days of the trials, with the top seven from each field (forty-two in all) going forward to the semi-final on the Saturday. Three year old Ben, though inexperienced, was equal to his formidable task and had an excellent run in the qualifiers, attaining second place out of forty on day one.

With 191 points out of a possible 220, he scored just six points less than the highest qualifier on the day. As well as qualifying for the semi-finals, he was awarded the 'Team Gold Medal' which goes to the five highest pointed dogs on the winning team.

Unfortunately, Peter and Ben didn't qualify for the final, but four of the Irish team did - making up a quarter of the sixteen runners in the finals which were dominated by the Irish team. The overall winner was James McGee of Ballybofey, Co. Donegal with Becca, while fellow team member Michael Gallagher of Armoy, Co. Antrim with Cap came third. Second place went to Serge Van der Zween of the Netherlands with Eve, an Irish bred bitch.



**Peter Concannon with Ben (foreground) and Rob (left).**

This remarkable achievement shows that the Irish are gaining prominence in the breeding, training and handling of sheepdogs. Until recent years the sheepdog world was dominated by England, Scotland and Wales, but this year's World Trial results has put Ireland firmly to the fore.

Peter looks forward to trialing into the future, and hopefully he and Ben will have more success ahead of them. Who knows, Ben might even match the achievement of his full brother 'Chief' who (with his owner Bobby Reid of Castlederg, Co. Tyrone) won this year's Irish National Trials in Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow.





# Ballyhaunis Foróige Club

BY ELAINE DONNELLY, LISA CARNEY & TINA MCGOLDRICK

Ballyhaunis Foróige Club has gone from strength to strength in the last couple of years, with sixty-three members last year alone. It provides a safe and enjoyable environment for the young people of Ballyhaunis and its surrounds. The club has hosted and attended many inter-club events over the last twelve months as well as fundraising for several charities and enhancing the local community.

Last November we held a charity Wake-a-thon in the Rugby Clubhouse. This involved staying awake from 8pm to 8am to raise funds for Crumlin Children's Hospital and the club itself. During the night several parents helped out with supervision until the early hours of the morning. There were plenty of activities during the night to keep everyone entertained even though the all-nighter was too much for certain leaders! The club raised €1,500 in total with half donated to our chosen charity and half for the upkeep of the club.

Over the course of the year the club attended several discos around Mayo hosted by other clubs. We travelled to Kiltimagh, Bonniclon, Westport and Ballinrobe among others. It was great to get to meet and socialise with other clubs in this way in a safe and non-alcoholic environment. Some of the leaders even gave the kids a run for their money with their dance moves!

In March of this year there was a national Foróige competition – Foróige's Got Talent. We entered two acts into the Mayo heats, 'M & M', comprising of Mickey O'Rourke and Morgan Lyons. Niamh Murray and Ailish Phillips also represented Ballyhaunis who sang with local group 'Forever Young' made up of girls from Tooreen and Knock clubs also. Both acts did us proud in the heat held in Breafoy House and went on to represent Mayo in the Helix in Dublin with 'Forever Young' coming second in Ireland. A huge achievement for our club, they did Ballyhaunis proud!

One of the most entertaining nights of the year was our inaugural Alternative Annagh Rose Competition. We paired up the girls and boys and it was up to the girls to dress up their models. It was decided on the night that it would become an annual event!

During the Easter Bank Holiday weekend we held a huge fundraising drive for our end of year trip to Killary Adventure Centre.

We did a car wash and bag-pack in Ryan's Super Valu. It was a great success although some of us had more suds on us than the cars did! We raised €1,200 and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported.

By far the biggest event our club has held to date is the big end of year event that takes place for every club in Mayo. We chose to host it this year and in May we held a disco in Monsoon Night Club. The I-Radio team travelled from Galway and kept the place rocking until late. Almost all the clubs in Mayo joined us for this event, consisting of 600 children. There were plenty of leaders and parents on hand to supervise and help out. The night was a great success with everyone thoroughly enjoying themselves and the year going out with a bang.

The annual 'Band on the Strand' was held on Lackan strand, Co. Mayo at the end of May. There were 1,756 children in attendance from Foróige clubs all over the country. There were three live bands providing entertainment for everyone and the show closed with a spectacular fireworks display over the beach. Unfortunately the weather didn't hold out for it this year but none-the-less it was a great night.

That late night was followed by an early morning as we all set off on the bus ready and rearing for Killary Adventure Centre for an action packed weekend. There were plenty of activities on offer with our group undertaking canoeing, gorge walking as well as taking part in the Killary challenge. Everyone's highlight of the trip being when one member fell head first into a bog-hole followed by two leaders who shall remain nameless!

On behalf of Ballyhaunis Foróige Club we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Pat and Willie Ryan for their continued support and sponsorship throughout the year. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Maggie Finnegan for her dedication to the club since its inception. We waved goodbye to one of our favourite leaders but the door will always remain open for her return. ☺





# Saint Vincent de Paul

MATT O'DWYER, SECRETARY

The Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) Society was set up to relieve poverty in an age when Social Welfare was non-existent. In our present society people, whether in receipt of Social Welfare or not, can find themselves in financial difficulties. This results in hardship for themselves and their families through no fault of their own. SVP is adapting to these changing needs.

Unemployment, illness, management problems and unforeseen circumstances can lead to problems such as these:

1. Arrears with mortgages, electricity, rent and other bills.
2. Cost of school uniforms, books, third level education fees.

3. Transport costs for hospital visits.
4. Shortages of fuel and food due to mounting bills.

SVP Ballyhaunis may be able to assist. Concern for others is at the heart of a Christian community. You may contact us in confidence at (086) 2640969 or you can meet with two of us by appointment. You can also call into the Friary House during working hours and fill out an application form.

If on the other hand you are financially secure you might like to send a donation to the Saint Vincent De Paul Society, the Friary House, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo.

We trust that you will find this information helpful.



A day out in the desert, enjoying the sunshine. Deirdre O'Shaughnessy (Ballinlough), Mary Henry (Gurteen), Bridie Ruane (Johnstown) and Pauline Henry (Gurteen) on holidays in Dubai, 2008.



Above: Fr. Stephen Farragher, P.P., pictured with Tommy, Eavan, Patrick and Seán Caulfield, following Mass at the Friary on Abbey Pattern Day 2011. Tommy and Eavan were married by Fr. Stephen at the Friary in October, 1999.



Left: Jim Connell with his brother Bill Connell – both of Devlis - taken in the Ave Maria Nursing Home, Tooreen, at one of their dog training sessions.





# The Sixties in Ballyhaunis

BY HEATHER CONWAY

Do you remember The Sixties in Ballyhaunis? For me it was an exciting time. We didn't have the BBC so missed a lot of the footage of The Beatles, except clips from RTE, for example the famous Frank Hall interview, which was electrifying.

John Conway and Pat Halpin created a version of "Beatlemania" around our shop, in Bridge Street, in the Sixties. They started a group with John Higgins and Ned Curley, and practised in our kitchen on a regular basis, heading for the big time.

Mary, my sister, and myself became quite popular, and suddenly found ourselves with friends from every corner of the town. Unfortunately it wasn't our charm that caused us to be in demand, but the chance for these pals to bump into the band lads in our house made us hot property. We basked in the glory of it all.

The Niagara became a sensation in their blue van, and of course The Riviera Showband, with the late Shea Cribbin (R.I.P.), all drove the teenage girls wild.

I think it was 1968 that John came up with the idea of bringing the "All Stars" to Ballyhaunis for a football game, with the older generation of former GAA players from the area. It was played on the football pitch on the

Clare Road and was in aid of charity.

This generated huge excitement in the town. The "All Stars" team was made up of all the big names from the showband world, who would be pitted against the over sixties here. I particularly remember the late Tom Forde (R.I.P.) kitted out, and taking on the celebrities with aplomb.

Afterwards, they came back to our house, among them Mike Murphy of RTE, for a little party. I was beside myself with excitement, mixing with such stardom, and I only in my mid teens. I had so much to boast about to all and sundry afterwards.

Yes, Ballyhaunis was quite an exciting place for me in the sixties. Our shop was the centre of the teenage world, because we had a jukebox, which was a magnet for young people, to play their favourite records. It, and the band sensation, which John was so much a part of, would make it a Mecca for trendiness, or so we thought at the time.

I look back fondly on those times, and wonder what magic the teenagers of today can look forward to, in my home town of Ballyhaunis. It would be hard to beat what we had in the sixties.

## 1958 in the Galtymore, Cricklewood



A group of Ballyhaunis people at the Galtymore Ballroom, Cricklewood, London on 25th October 1958.  
L-R: Paddy Molloy (Tipperary), Ann Hunter/Floyd (Lecarrow), Imelda Biesty/O'Hanlon (Pattenspark), Michael Biesty (Pattenspark), Anne Strutt/Biesty, Monica Byrne (Bridge St.), Kieran Freyne (Clare St).



# U.S. Soldier Honoured

On Saturday, 24th Sept. 2011 a special ceremony took place at the grave of U.S. soldier, Private Thomas Carey (Kirrane) in the Old Cemetery, Began. This ceremony was organised by members of the Mayo Peace Park War Graves Committee, in association with the American Veterans Legion in Ireland. Thomas Kirrane was born in Lissaniska, Began, and when he emigrated to the U.S., used 'Carey' as the anglicised form of his surname. He enlisted in the American army in Pittsburgh, PA, and fought in World War One. He died in France on 18th Sept. 1918, aged twenty-seven years. His body was returned to Ireland on 27th May 1922, and was interred in Began Old Cemetery.

'Freeman's Journal' of 8th May 1922 reported on the sad

homecoming of sixty-four Irish American soldiers – including Pvt. Carey – who had been killed in France during the First World War: "The bodies of sixty-four American soldiers, men of Irish birth, arrived in Dublin at noon yesterday on board the SS Millwater, having been exhumed from graves on French battlefields for re-interment in Irish soil. Claimed by relatives for burial in Ireland, the United States Government arranged for the removal of the bodies from France." Pvt. Carey's remains were claimed by his mother Margaret Kirrane, Lissaniska.

There was a large attendance of American Veterans Legion and visitors at the ceremony in Began Cemetery this September, during which a special U.S. Military

Plaque was unveiled on the grave by Mr. Marty McCormack from Chicago, whose parents originally came from the Claremorris area. The Legion made a special flag presentation to Patrick Culliney, grand-nephew of the late Private Carey. Also in attendance was his grandniece, Ms. Bridie Hession, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin and grand-nephew Seamus Culliney.

Pvt. Carey was brother of the late Bill Kirrane and Mrs. Mary Mulrennan, Lissaniska, and uncle of the late Kathleen Culliney, Lissaniska, formerly of Carrowbaun, Aghamore.



Pat Culliney, Bridie Hession and Seamus Culliney, grandnephews and grandniece of Pvt. Thomas Carey.



Pat Culliney receiving the American Flag from Ron Howko, Commander of the American Legion Post in County Mayo.



Jim Culliney, Tavnaghmore and Kathleen Sloyan, Carrowbaun, Aghamore, who married on 1st July 1948. Kathleen was a niece of Pvt. Thomas Carey.





# Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce

BY MARTIN FITZMAURICE, PRESIDENT

This is my second year as elected President of Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce. By the time you read this, our AGM will be over and a new President will be in place. It is a voluntary position but a very privileged one. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to contribute to the welfare of the town. My ambition since being elected was to make "Our town - A better place to live, work and do business". In very difficult times it is very hard to stimulate business people to drive ahead with initiatives which will attract people to the town. I believe the only way a small rural town like Ballyhaunis will survive is if all traders work together for a common good. The town has a lot to offer and we should keep telling people what we have and concentrate all our efforts on developing what we need. People often ask what does the Chamber of Commerce



**Martin Fitzmaurice, President, Ballyhaunis Chamber.**

do? My personal experience of this over the last sixteen years is that we create events that will attract people to town and work with the traders to maximise the benefit to and from those people.

## New Website

We are presently developing a community website [www.ballyhaunislife.com](http://www.ballyhaunislife.com) which 'does what it says on the tin'. It will show everything the community has to offer, covering sports facilities, organisations, business, heritage and any information relative to the town. I believe this will be a massive asset to the town, but its success will depend on the ability of the community to use it. Please have a look and let us know what you think.

We are just after celebrating the 150th Anniversary of our railway station on Saturday 1st October. This was a massive day for the town and people travelled from all over the West of Ireland to share the day with us. We erected a commemorative plaque at the station to mark the day, which was part sponsored by Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union and Major Equipment Intl. Ltd. This will remain there for all time in memory of a special day. On the day Fr. Kieran Waldron blessed the station with a specially prepared blessing. This was followed by



**Ballyhaunis Chamber members take a step back in time at the Railway Station 150th Anniversary Celebrations.**

**Back, L-R: Katriona Legg, Conor Freeman, Evan Fitzmaurice, Jimmy Hopkins.**

**Front: Lydia Biesty, Aine Cribben, Kiah Legg, Maura O'Dowd, Noelle Keegan, Theresa Grogan, Martin Fitzmaurice.**







**Tuam All-Stars performing at the Ballyhaunis Summer Festival, 2011.** *Photo by Jimmy Leonard*

a life experience of Ballyhaunis railway station by Oliver Hannon, Patsy O'Brien and Noel Armstrong. They shared their knowledge and experience of life on the railway with the hundreds of people who were present. This was complimented by some light refreshments and musical accompaniment by Paddy Joe Tighe and Johnny McGarry. To give the day some authenticity a number of Chamber members and friends dressed up in period clothing and arrived on the 3.10 train to be greeted on arrival in a re-enactment of traditional times. You can see footage of this day on Youtube: go to Youtube and type in 'Ballyhaunis Railways Station 150th anniversary'. Just a week earlier we were involved in assisting Mayo A/C with their annual Ballyhaunis 8k Road Race. This year we got excellent help from our two friends who have left Ballyhaunis but never forgot their roots: Frank Greally, Editor of The Irish Runner, and Joe Webb of The Irish Independent. Both were very instrumental in promoting the race and attracting runners from nearly every county in Ireland. We had the privilege of hosting no less than three previous Olympians who represented Ireland; Jerry Kiernan, David Matthews and Noel Berkley who was the overall winner. The occasion brought great life to the town for the day and all participants gave great praise on how the event was organised and stewarded. The Rugby Club once again provided the facilities for all participants to warm up, shower, tog out and enjoy refreshments and presentations afterwards. All contestants received a T-shirt and a goodie bag on completion of race. Spot prizes were provided by Frank Greally, Elvery's Sports and many local traders. There were special prizes for the first Ballyhaunis man and the

first Ballyhaunis woman, which remembered the late Pat Cribbin. There was a new award this year in memory of the late Michael "The Minister" Waldron. You can check out all the details at [www.ballyhaunis8k.com](http://www.ballyhaunis8k.com)



**L-R: Frank Greally, Tom Waldron, Bernard Waldron, Sean Webb, Rita Morris, with the Michael Waldron Memorial Trophy, presented by Frank Greally to Sean Webb, following the 8k Annual Road Race.**

### Summer Festival

This year's Summer Festival was our tenth consecutive success and probably our most successful of recent history under the new stewardship of Alison McDermott. It took place over the June Bank Holiday week-end. At a time when business is on its knees and funds were extremely limited, Alison managed to organise a full week-end of events. There were a few new





ones, including our 'Party in the Park' on Friday evening. Rock bands performed free in the Friary Field while people just sat in the grass in this natural amphitheatre and enjoyed the fare till late. We are now firmly established in June Bank Holiday week-end as the place to be.

This year we held two Business After Hours (BAH). This year's two events were held in Val's Bistro in Main Street and Sentinel Fuel Products in Kilmannin. This is an opportunity for someone who is moving into a new business to promote themselves to the community and meet other business people and residents.

We have produced and distributed two newsletters this year. The purpose of the newsletter is to promote what is happening in the community at that time. It carries a special feature on a business who sponsor the cost of the issue. This year our two sponsors were Michael and Ann Dee, who sponsored the August issue. They have taken over the running of Newsround and opened their own fruit and veg shop on Lower Main Street. We wish them both well. Our other sponsors this year were Curley's Pharmacy and Jewellers shop. Curley's have two family run businesses operating in the town in their second generation now, and long may it continue.

Our Annual Dinner dance takes place in January in Knock House Hotel. This is one of the few opportunities for our business people to meet and mix in a social environment. Its always a great night out with excellent food and live music till late. This year's dance will take place on Saturday 28th January 2012. You can order your tickets during office hours at Chamber office (094) 9630311.

As I write this, we have just commenced preparations for this year's Christmas Shopping Festival. We are taking a different approach this year. Along with putting up

many offers and deals in our shops, we plan to have a weekly lucky dip for many vouchers and an overall €500 prize on the final week. We also plan to run a festival around the shopping campaign including a visit from Santa, blessing of the Crib, Carol singing exhibition, street stalls, a Tea dance, disco for kids and many more activities to attract people to town and entertain them. Events will be family orientated and free.

### Thanks

We are constantly lobbying for improvements to the town, upgrade of N83, bye-pass and grants/subsidies for events. We would love to see people decide to set up business in the town and will do anything in our power to assist people who have an interest. We would also like to see more people becoming actively involved in the destiny of the town. We would welcome suggestions from anyone who has ideas on what would make "Our Town - A better place to live, work and do business". I would like to pay special tribute to our CEO, Anne Cunnane, who works so hard to make everything a success, and her staff at the Enterprise Centre. I would like to thank the businesses who sponsored many of our events throughout the year. Thanks to all my associates in Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce for all their help and support over the last two years. I would also like to give a special 'Thank You' to all our volunteers for all their help with the various events that we run throughout the year. It is one thing for people to give money, but to give so selflessly of your time speaks volumes. And last but by no means least, Thank You to Mayo North East Leader Partnership Company who help fund various activities run by the Ballyhaunis Chamber. To you, the reader, and all - a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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## The Sound of Music is alive and well at St. Patrick's Church

BY MIKE BYRNE

Looking back recently on the 1991 edition of Annagh, the late Mick O'Connell penned a nice tribute to the late Dill Hughes, RIP. A half a century ago, Mrs. Hughes, formerly Dill Eaton, kept the music very much alive in Ballyhaunis for many years, both as Director of Music for the Parish Choir and also as a tutor for young singers and musicians of the area. Happily, some forty years on, the tradition of music is alive and well in the parish where no fewer than four different choirs perform regularly at St. Patrick's Church. The Parish Choir perform twice a month (first and third Sunday), while the Abbey Male Choir provide music on one Sunday of each month. Both choirs are currently under the direction of Moira

Delaney. The children of Scoil Íosa Primary School, under the direction of Ita Fahey, delight the congregation with their angelic voices on the other Sunday of the month. In addition to this, every Monday morning there is a choir for the weekly Novena in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Succor. It must be said, the dedication and commitment of organist, Ludmila Berkowski, also plays a significant part in the successful continuity of providing musical support for the liturgical ceremonies in the east Mayo parish.

New members are always welcome to come along and get involved with any of the choirs at any time.





# Ballyhaunis Community School Class of 1986-'91

## 20 Year Reunion

BY SINÉAD MALLEE

The Ballyhaunis Community School Class of 1991 Reunion took place in The Hazel Bar, Ballyhaunis, on Saturday, 6th of August, 2011. It's hard to believe that 20 years has passed since we left secondary school – of course it's such a cliché, but it really does seem like yesterday!

For the most part, groups of friends have remained in contact, and with the help of 'Facebook', we were able to find and re-connect with at least forty per-cent of the classmates on-line. The rest were by word of mouth, invitations, text messages, emails and family connections. Around three-quarters of our year turned-up on the night. A few of the groups had met up in pubs beforehand to break the ice. As the night went on we re-connected with our youth, our music, our memories and our school-friends. D.J. Brian Finn played an eclectic mix of familiar music from the '80s and '90's. The Hazel

provided a fine selection of finger-foods and sandwiches. Thanks to the management and staff – Margaret, Sebastian, Lorraine, Kevin and Mary – for their help in making our reunion such a success.

A 'Reeling in the Years' photo board was displayed with class photos from the 1986/87 to 1991 school yearbooks. Sadly we have lost two of our classmates, Anne Marie O'Loughlin (1974 - 2000) and Vincent Coll (1974 - 1993). R.I.P. *Suaimhneas síoraí ar a n-anamacha dílis.*

Thanks to Carol O'Dowd (who got the ball rolling), Marcella Lyons, Lorcan Higgins, Linda Morris and Brian Freyne, and to everyone else who helped with the round-up! We had a surplus of €180 left after expenses, which was donated to Mayo-Roscommon Hospice Foundation. It was widely agreed that we should have another Reunion in 10 years time, so keep August 2021 free in your diary!



Some of the Classmates who attended pictured above: Eugene Coggins, Sylvia Keane, Carol O'Dowd, Thomas McNulty, Fergal Delaney, Olive Waldron, Michelle Lyons, Lorcan Higgins, P.J. Moran, Michael Sloyan, Marie Hession, Deborah Lane, Madeline Dolan, Regina Glennon, Marion Fitzpatrick, Rosaleen Fahey, Cathy Comer, Sheila Hyland, Marcella Lyons, Sharon Walsh, Darragh Shields, Evan O'Dwyer, David O'Connor, Brian Freyne, Walter Cleary, Michael Walsh, Padraig Ruane, Mark Gormley, Desmond Groatke, Sheila Hunt, Linda Morris, Caroline Owens, Linda Biesty, Lorraine Gaffney, Sheena Forde, Siobhán Finnegan, Linda Morris, Sinéad Mallee, Ray Kirrane, Fiona McNamara, Regina Dyer, Noel Gallagher.





## A Rural Transport Scheme

BY SEAMUS HORA

I recall a time not long ago  
When Ireland had few cars –  
But every single one of them  
Could park outside our bars.  
The local Gardaí knew the score  
On who was safe and sound,  
When they passed our public houses  
On their nightly rounds  
A little word in the ear  
To those who broke the rules,  
Let everyone concerned know  
The Gardaí were no fools.

O, I blame the legislators –  
The people with the powers,  
Who destroyed an Irish culture  
By extending drinking hours.  
The Ireland that we knew of old  
The Ireland that was then;  
Was just a little safer  
When the bell, it rang at ten.

I know we were a bit naïve  
To think that it would last,  
But very few could visualise  
That it would change so fast.  
Our cars they got more powerful,  
The drugs they got too strong.  
A mix of both and alcohol  
And our freedom it was gone.  
Moderation, it is something  
That we don't understand.  
Along came the Celtic Tiger  
To lend his evil hand

Drink driving, it is something  
That we will not condone,  
But two pints at the local  
Beats drinking home alone.  
Our problems could be overcome,  
If we worked as a team  
Got off our ass  
And put in place –  
A Rural Transport Scheme

## Farewell Fr. Benny McHale

BY MIKE BYRNE



After three very fruitful years in Ballyhaunis parish, Fr. Benny McHale departed to the 'Fields of Athenry' in Galway in July, having been asked to take a position as Curate there by Archbishop Michael Neary.

The Castlebar native was certainly a big hit in Ballyhaunis during his time here, with both young and old. The students of Scoil Íosa Primary School and Ballyhaunis Community School always loved to see him arrive in the

classroom. You were sure of a laugh, or

two; for Fr. Benny brought his sense of laughter and sense of humour wherever he went.

For the older folk in the parish, he was a tonic for the First Friday visits when he always managed to bring cheer to the housebound and the sick. He also contributed much to the local branch of the Legion of Mary, and was a great source of encouragement for the few remaining members of the group.

His homilies at the weekend Masses were always uplifting, positive and always carried a message which made his listeners ponder on and reflect on during the week ahead.

His busy schedule continues to bring him all over the country where he gives retreats and talks to both young students and to his colleagues in the priesthood.

Best of luck, Fr. Benny, and thanks for the memories...oh, and of course the fun and laughter as well.

## Graduation



**Congratulations to Maria Connolly who received her Masters of Pharmacy (Honours) from the University of Brighton, UK.**

Maria also received the Ali Dato award titled 'Most promising area for Pharmacy Practice Research' for her thesis. Maria will be completing her pharmacy pre-registration year at the University College London Hospital. Maria is daughter of Kieran and Mary (RIP) Connolly, Lecarrow, Ballyhaunis.





# A Memento of St. Patrick's 4th Mayo Troop, Ballyhaunis, 1931 - 1981. Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland

BY ANTHONY JORDAN

*In February 1985 the 4th Mayo Troop had completed fifty three years of continuous existence. A brochure was produced to mark the occasion from which the following information is taken.*

The Golden Jubilee was marked in June 1981 by a series of events, culminating in a weekend camp at Devlis, at which the four provinces were represented. The Scout Den was been extended from its original 320 Sq. feet to a magnificent Community Centre of 6,640 Sq. feet with a three story front. The valuation was £125,000. Government grants of £35,000 were received and the debt stood at £7,500.

The Den was then used for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Senior Scouts, Girl Guides, Brownies, Irish Dancing Classes, Card Drives, Badminton, Karate, Uni-Slim, Feiseanna, Plays, Concerts, Socials etc. The survival of the 4th Mayo was credited "almost entirely to the work and vision of one man, Seamus Durkan".

The brochure included a list of names of boys who had been members of the 4th Mayo, compiled from "several memories and other sources". The brochure was signed by: 1931 - Joseph W. Mulligan; 1941 - Thomas Hopkins; 1951 - Bertie Curley; 1961 - Jim Higgins; 1971 - Michael Grogan; 1981 - Brian Loughran.

## Scouts

Don, Liam & Vincent Baker, Main St. Pat Brennan, Barrack St. John Biesty, Knox St. Michael Biesty, Pattenspark. Tommy, Brendan, Val, Michael & William Byrne, Main St. Derek & Val Byrne, Main St. Tim & Joe Byrne Johnstown. John & Tom Buckley, Maygrove. Sean Barrett, Tooraree. Paddy & Kieran Benson, Upper Main St. Dominic Byrne, Clare St. Paddy Byrne, Barrack St. Arthur & Alex Campbell, Clare St. Hugh, Eddie & Liam Campbell, Knox St. Tommy & Michael Caulfield, Upper Main St. John, Michael & Gerard Cleary, Clare St. Michael, Hugh, Patrick & Eamon Curley, Upper Main St. Seamus & Liam Connell, Devlis. Sean & Patrick (Jun.) Connolly, Devlis. John Conway, Bridge St. Sean Conway, Garda Barracks. Joe & Oliver Cooney, Foxhill. J.J., Willie & Tommy Cribbin, Main St. Joe Conboy, Devlis. Austin Connerton, National Bank. Noel Culliney, Upper Main St. Vincent Caulfield, Carrowkeel. Vincent & Seamus Caulfield, Upper Main St. Oliver Concannon, Main St. Pado Cunningham, Abbey St. Oliver Cunningham, Abbey St. Patsy Cunningham, Upper Main St. Padraic Cunnane, Began. Seamus & Padraic Cassidy, Upper

Main St. Bertie Curley, Clare St. Tom Curran, Garda Barracks. Marcus Caulfield, Carrowkeel. Willie Coyne, Devlis. Cyril Coyne, Bridge St. Fergus & David Coyne, Bridge St. James, Niall & Ultan Cruise, Knockbrack. Ignatius & John Davitt, Bridge St. James & Gerard Devine, Upper Main St. John, Bertie, Paddy & Frankie Dillon, The Square. Tom Dillon, Ballindrehid. Tom, Vincent & Michael Donnellan, Clare St. Colm Durcan, Foxhill. Paddy & George Delaney, Abbey St. Georgie Delaney Jun. Abbey St. David Dwane, Clare St. James & Willie Duffy, Annagh. Seamus & Sean Durkan, Abbey St. Gerry Doyle, Devlis. Alex Eaton, Main St. Andrew Egan, Upper Main St. Michael Finn, Gurteen. Edward & Danny Fitzgerald, Bridge St. Ted & Tom Fitzgerald, Clare St. John Fitzgerald, Bridge St. Sean & Bernie Flanagan, Ballindrehid. Billy & Seamus Flatley, Main St. John Flatley, Lakehill. Kieran Folliard, Upper Main St. Bernard, Henry & John Forde, The Square. John, Michael & Arthur Foudy, Clare St. Oliver & Denis Foudy, Clare St. Jarlath Freyne, Clare St. George Fitzmaurice, Devlis. Paddy & Gusty Forrie, Knox St. Pat Feeney, Erriff. Pat & Ivan Freely, Main St. Luke Freeley, Gurteen. Joseph Freeley, Main St. Joe Freeman, Island. Joe & Christy Freeman, Tooraree. Robert & Ray Flynn, Main St. Conor Flynn, Main St. John & David Fitzgerald, Upper Main St. Mickey & Tom Gavin, Tooraree. Austin Gibbons, Main St. Sean & Franco Glynn, Clare St. Kevin & Joe Green, Main St. Christopher Greene, Abbey St. Gerry Glynn, Hazelhill. Eamon & Jarlath Green. Gerard & Michael Griffin, Bridge St. Mickey, Sean & Joe Griffin, Clare St. Michael & John Griffin, Clare St. Martin, Joe & Clarence Grogan, Clare St. Paul Gallagher, Main St. Jack Ganley, Abbey St. Michael, Tommy & Seamus Grogan, Doctor's Road. Joe & Seamus Geraghty, Coolnafarna. Austin Greally, Drimbane. Jack Halpin, Abbey St. Patrick & John Halpin, Main St. Petie, Tommy, Seamus & Patsy Hannon, Abbey St. Peter, Martin & Oliver Hannon, Abbey St. Michael & Billy Hayden, Devlis. Desmond & Robert Healy, National Bank. Paddy Heffernan, Devlis. Anthony & Michael Hegarty, Bridge St. Michael & Conor Holmes, Abbey St. Tom & Donald Hopkins, Upper Main St. Tommy & John Hopkins, Larganboy. Louis & Gerard Hyland, Abbey St. Milo Henry, Gurteen. Noel, Frankie & Kevin Henry, Upper Main St. Denis, Georgie & Raymond Hannon, Bridge St. Murt Hunt, Lecarrow. Sean & Patrick Hamilton, Devlis. John & Paddy Henry, Devlis. Michael, Freddie & Robert Herr, Knox St. Gerald Hunt, Lecarrow. Jim, Pat & John Higgins, Devlis. Gerald, Liam & Donal Hynes, Ulster Bank. Andrew & Ambrose Johnston, Foxhill. Anthony & Jimmy Jordan, Knox St. Patsy,





Emmett & Bernie Keane, Annagh. Willie & Michael Kelly, Devlis. Ado & Joe Kenny, Knox St. John Kilduff, Barrack St. Robert, John & Aidan Kelly, Upper Main St. Sean Lambert, Devlis. Noel Lawlor, Greenwood. Seamus, Bernard & Michael Lyons, Bridge St. P.J., Michael, David, Declan, John & William Lyons, Devlis. Michael Laffey, Abbey St. Brian Loughran, Abbey St. John Dillon Leetch, Main St. Albert & Noel Lyons, Knox St. John Joe Lyons, Knocknafolia. Michael Lyons, Erriff. Willie Lynskey, Gurteen. Gerard Lyons, Abbey St. Bertie, Joe & Fintan Lynch, Main St. Tommy Moran, Main St. Sean Moogan, Fairgreen. Frank Meehan, Devlis. John P. Melly, Upper Main St. Pat & Edward Moran, Abbey St. Eugene, Howard & Noel Morley, Woodpark. Jimmy & Christopher Morrison, Clare St. Tony & Seamus Morley, Knox St. Jimmy, Pat & Frank Mulligan, Devlis. Paddy & David Mulligan, Barrack St. Sean Mulhern, Upper Main St. Sean Moran, Devlis. W.J. Mulligan, Coolnafarna. George Murray, Devlis. Paul & Eamon Meath, Clare St. Edward Murphy, Main St. Pat Moran, Brackloughboy. Billy Murphy Knox St. John & Michael Morley, Knox St. Declan, Dermot & Brian Murray, Ulster Bank. John Morley, Kilmannin. Sean Morley, Kilmannin. Joe McDonnell, Abbey St. Tommy Moran, Upper Main St. John, Paddy, Tom, Bernard, Brendan, Kevin & Joe McGuire, Ballindrehid. Sean McGuire, Ballindrehid. Kieran, Fintan & Declan McGrath, Upper Main St. Paul McCloskey, Main St. Brian Marrinan, Devlis. Niall McGillicuddy, Knox St. Sean, Tom & Paddy McGuire, Cherryfield. Bosco Morris, Main St. Kevin & Teddy McMorro, Devlis. Michael McQueeney, Main St. Aidan & Malachy Nally, Garda Barracks. Joe Nolan, Upper Main St. Tommy & Marty O'Boyle, Main St. Liam O'Boyle, Carrowkeel. Patrick & John O'Brien, Knox St. Kevin, Seamus & Michael O'Connell, Bridge St. Joe & Eugene O'Donnell, Devlis. Seamus O'Boyle, Carrowrea. John O'Brien, Main St. Tim & Michael O'Malley, Knox St. P.J., Eamon & Martin O'Connell, Devlis. Rory & John O'Connor, Upper Main St. Eddie & Donie Philips, Barrack St. Richard Prendergast, Knock Road. Declan

Phillips, Main St. Willie & Frankie Purcell, Station House. John Pigott, Fairgreen. Dermot & Donal Rafferty, Station House. Pat Rattigan, Pollnacruagha. P.V. O'Brien, Upper Main St. (Cork). Sean, Tim, Paddy & Michael Regan, Clare St. Seamus Ruane, Johnstown. Tom & Jim Ryan, Station House. Kieran Ruane, Curries. Eamon Reilly, Woodpark. Damien & Alan Rattigan, Pollnacruagha. Tommy, Brendan & Val Rattigan, Knox St. Michael Regan, The Square. Pat Smyth, Main St. Tom & Michael Sullivan, Ballindrehid. John Swift, Ballindrehid. Joe & Liam Smyth, Knox St. J.T., Eamon & Liam Smyth, Knox St. Sean Smyth, Abbey St. Tommy Smyth, Abbey St. Micheál Smyth, Clare St. William, James & John Toolan, Devlis. Joe Tarpey, Knox St. Paul, Kieran & Martin Timoney, Abbey St. Aidan Waldron, Upper Main St. Austin Waldron, Drimbane. Dermott Waldron, Bridge St. Paddy & John Waldron, Abbey St. Padraic Waldron, Abbey St. Sean & Michael Waldron, Cave. Walter Waldron, Holywell. Jarlath, Noel & Kieran Waldron, Main St. Mickey Walsh, Main St. Sean Walsh, Johnstown. Ian Wilson, Abbey St. Paddy Waldron, Cherryfield. Eddie, Seamus, Joe & Frank Webb, Main St. Michael & Ted Webb, Main St. Micheál & Paul Webb, Main St. Edward, Sean & Joseph Webb, Devlis. John & Damien Webb, Devlis

#### Chaplains

Fr. Moane C.C.;	Fr. Prendergast P.P.;
Fr. Ruane C.C.;	Fr. Jennings C.C.;
Fr. Rushe C.C.;	Fr. Costello P.P.;
Fr. Williams C.C.	

#### Chaplains abroad

Fr. Rushe, Rome – Kandersteg 1950  
Fr. Walsh, Lourdes – San Sebastian 1973  
Fr. Cribbin, Rome – Kandersteg 1975

**Anthony J. Jordan's latest book is "Eamon de Valera: Irish Catholic Visionary". His autobiography containing details about life in Ballyhaunis is called, "The Good Samaritans – Memoir of a Biographer". Both books are published by [westportbooks@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:westportbooks@yahoo.co.uk)**



## 80th Birthday - Mary Cunnane

Mary Cunnane, formerly of Bridge St., celebrated her eightieth birthday earlier this year with her children, grandsons and great-grandson, sister Bridie Cameron, cousins and friends in Pearl River, New York.

**Pictured are the Carney sisters, Mary (Carney) Cunnane (80) and Bridie (Carney) Cameron (75), formerly of Cloontumper and past-pupils of Began NS.**

Both sisters emigrated to New York in their teens. They are both great-grandmothers to Patrick and Christopher. They are both reaping the rewards of retirement and the joys of four generations and the fruitful years of senior citizenship.

They still enjoy many visits back to their homeland where many lovely cousins and neighbours and school friends welcome them. Their latest joy is welcoming Helen Dolan to New York to marry their nephew Gerard McDermott. This union is bringing Cloontumper very close to them.







**L-R: Bernie Jordan, Noreen Morley,  
Joe Waldron, Jimmy Jordan (front) and  
Anthony Jordan (front).**



**Noreen Morley.**



**Above: L-R: Corrine Lyons, Catherine Morley, Dor Morley,  
Noreen Morley and Norrie Dillon.**

**Left: Noreen Morley, with Terence McHugh  
in the background.**



**Photograph taken in 1956  
outside B. T. Lynch's shop  
on Main Street.**

**L-R: Tom McCormack,  
Tony Greene, Frank Webb.**

**Sent in by  
Tony and Pauline Greene,  
Shohola, Pennsylvania, USA.**





## "I Await Your Lordship's Assent"

From 1844 until 1884, Charles E. Strickland (1818-1892) was land agent for Lord Dillon's vast estate extending to over 83,000 acres in Mayo, Roscommon and Westmeath. He lived in Loughglynn, Co. Roscommon, while the absentee Dillon lived at Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire, England.

In the letter below, written in 1855, just a few years after the Great Famine, he informs Dillon on the state of his property, and urges him to invest in the latest company set up to bring the railway to the West of Ireland. The scheme in question, put forward by the North Western Railway of Ireland, proposed a line from Strokestown to Castlebar through Elphin, Frenchpark, Ballaghaderreen and Swinford, with a branch to Roscommon. This scheme was put forward in 1855, but never came to pass. It was superseded by the formation of the Great Northern and Western (of Ireland) Railway Company in 1857, which eventually brought the railway through the southern end of the Dillon estate, through Castlerea, Ballyhaunis and further west. The following letter, nevertheless, gives an interesting insight into landlordism in nineteenth century West of Ireland.

Loughlinn,  
18th Dec 1855

*My Dear Lord Dillon,*

I received your Lordship's kind letter from Florence a few days ago. Mrs. Strickland and I hope you have by now reached the end of your journey safe and well and that neither Lady Dillon nor your Lordship's daughters have suffered great.

My remittances for the half year have been £7,150 and I hope to send about £2,000 more at least by the close of the half year.

The leases all reached safe. The advances from the Board of Works for Land Improvements Act is £7,500. The sums granted were for more but no instalments have been received for some time and none will be. I paid Wilsons' bill in Dublin immediately after I received it. Goggins' bill has been sent for and I shall, of course, pay it. The price of W. Collins's mare was £25 and for mine £20 - for the two year old and £30 for the three year old, but if your Lordship thinks these the least too high, may I request your Lordship to pay whatever you think fit.

This country has improved very much and this year is particularly good for the small tenants. The prices they have been and are getting for all their produce are very high and their crops were generally very good. They are decidedly more and more sufficient for table each successive year, but more especially this year than any since the Famine. The poorhouses have not one-fifth and some one-eighth of the number of inmates they were built to contain. In Swinford, instead of having as we had at one time some 3 to 4,000 in the workhouse, we now have less than 200 and others bear the same proportions.

The potato crop has been very good - far better than last year and the Famine is now past for them. The people look cheerful, well fed and well clothed. I think I have answered all your Lordships's questions.

I am glad to have to say that a railway movement is again afoot for this country, but on a better footing than ever and with every prospect of success. I enclose a small map which will show its general direction. As far as this locality is concerned and the County of Mayo is concerned it is the same as that proposed two years ago, but the present line will go through Strokestown to Longford (to which place the railway now extends) from Mullingar and instead of, as before proposed, running from near Strokestown through Roscommon town to Athlone. The Midland Company are going to extend their line from Longford to Strokestown entirely at their own expense and the newly formed North Western Railway Company propose at present to carry it on from Strokestown to Castlebar and as soon as possible afterwards to carry branches to Sligo, Ballina and Westport. The line now sought





from Strokestown to Castlebar will run close to Ballaghaderreen and right across your Lordship's estate for very nearly thirteen miles uninterrupted and will occupy about 135 acres statute and mostly of bad land. No line could be laid out which would improve this estate more and I am therefore doing all in my power to promote it in every way. I saw a prospectus of the new company in which are the names of many leading gentry in both counties (amongst others) and to which are now added many others including some lay capitalists in Dublin.

This new Company has been formed with the greatest care for the protection of all those lending their names to it both as provisional committee and as shareholders. No shareholder can be held responsible for more than the amount of his shares. Not more than £1 per share of £10 can be asked until the Act of Parliament is got, and if the Act is not got, no shareholder can be held responsible for more than £1 deposit and the remaining £9 per share cannot be called in even if all was required sooner than two years after the passing of the Act. As your Lordship's Estate must benefit so largely from this line and your Lordship's interests be so much enhanced, I think it right to request your Lordship's leave to add your name to the provisional committee which would naturally add great weight to it, and to know if your Lordship will take any shares for this would much more show your Lordship's interest in it and stop the mouths of many of the enemies to the project. This is, fortunately, the only line towards Mayo now before Parliament of the many that have been and are proposed, and unless the most strenuous exertions are made to carry it through and every support given to it, there may be every chance of its falling to the ground. This is the only line of the many projects that would pass through this estate and come near the locality and, if it now fails from any want of exertion or support, it could only be brought forward again in equal competition to several other projected lines each of which will be so strongly supported that there would be every chance of this boon being taken from us, and if the country was ever occupied by any of the other projected lines there would be no chance whatever of this line perhaps ever being carried, and this your Lordship's Property would be altogether [.....] from all advantages of a railway.

As to the pecuniary point of assent in taking shares, I think I may safely say that my remittances would not be decreased by your investing in any number, for I am even now in course of re-letting land fallen out of lease and from which a good increase of rent will be got and each year the same proceeds must go on, for a vast number of farms now require to be re-valued from which continued increases of rent will be got from the quantity of land reclaimed. I enclose a form for your Lordship's assent to be filled and returned signed as soon as convenient. Lord Lucan has taken 100 shares and many others have taken largely. I shall anxiously await your Lordship's answer for there will be many meetings at which I shall be asked your Lordship's views and, though I am exerting myself to the utmost in a matter, I feel of such great importance to your Lordship's interests, still I am anxious to have your Lordship's sanction for all and that your approval of what I am doing.

Mrs. Strickland encloses a few lines to her Ladyship.

Believe me my Dear Lord Dillon,

Yours very faithfully,

*Charles Strickland*





## Autumn Stations in the Parish of Annagh



**Station Mass in the home of Austin and Joan Biesty, Pattenspark.**

Front (L-R): Kay Curley, Catriona Biesty, Lana Biesty, Clodagh Byrne, Emma Biesty, Ashling Biesty, Fr. Stephen Farragher, Helena Byrne. Middle row: Jean Alvey, Kathleen Madden, Mary Cleary, Joan Biesty, Austin Biesty, Mary O'Dwyer. Fourth row: Chloe Bowman, Louise Bowman, Lucy Mathews, Ann Madden, Ann Lynch, Marian Biesty, Alan Biesty. Back row: Brian Alvey, Anthony Bowman, Diarmuid Byrne, Austin Biesty, Dorothy Biesty, Louise Biesty, Vinnie Biesty.



**Station Mass in the home of Dom and Lorraine Mulligan, Scrigg.**

L-R (seated): Sandra Murphy, Ann Plunkett, Sinead Donohue; (standing): Michael Plunkett, Martin Donohue Jr., Michael Donohue, Martin Donohue Sr. Centre (seated: Lauren Gallagher, Mrs. Mulligan, Jenny Culliney, Margaret Lyons, Peggy Flaherty, Dominick Mulligan, Dom Mulligan, Lorraine Mulligan, Nellie Mulkeen, Vera Waldron. L-R (doorway, standing): Caroline Fleming, Noreen Gallagher, Deirdre Donnellan, Eddie Mooney, Mary Ryan, Liam Waldron, John Mulligan, Karen Flaherty, Orla Ryan. Centre L-R (seated): Anne Marie Flaherty, Fiona Murphy, Helena Gill, Rita Mooney, Rosaleen Kelly. Front: Sarah Gill, Edel Fleming, Aoife Gill, Lorna Donnellan, Niamh Donnellan, Conor Donnellan, Claire Fleming, Jack Mulligan, Rebecca Mulligan, Holly Gallagher, Anne Murphy.





**Station Mass in the home of Tom and Regina Carney, Classaghroe.**

L-R: Neil Carney, Bernie Quinn, Eileen Lyons, Elizabeth Carney, Bridie Hunt, Padraic Hunt (back), Regina Carney, Aoife Carney, Anne Carney (back), Laura Carney, Marina Carney, Sinead Lyons, Patsy Flanagan, Bridie Lyons, Brenda Lyons.  
Back: Pat Lyons, Tom Carney, Denis Burley.



**Station Mass in the home of Oliver and Marie Cribbin, Togher.**

Kneeling: Brendan Morrissey, Cian Flanagan, Stephen Nolan, Shane Cribbin. Front (seated): Denise Nolan, Eric Mueller, Theresa Mueller, Bridget McLoughlin, Deirdre Byrne, Eileen Waldron.

Front (standing): Margaret Cribbin, Tara Coyne, Mary Morrissey (seated), Oliver Cribbin, Marina Carney, Aoife Nolan.

Back, L-R: Mike Nolan, Breda Waldron, Jimmy Cribbin, Mary Gillespie, Leah Flanagan, Josie Flanagan, Patricia Waldron, Nuala Nolan, Marie Cribbin, Isobel Morrissey, Luke Cribbin, Laura Gillespie, Emma Gillespie, Maria Morley, James Cribbin, Karen Coyne, Jill Potter Cogan, Anne Tully, Anne Cribbin, Sheila Waldron, Tom Cribbin. Doorway: Tony Waldron, Stephen Nolan, Thomas Cribbin, Paul Waldron, Sean Waldron, Bernard Waldron, Tim Flanagan, John Gillespie.







**Some of the people who attended the Station Mass in the home of John Joe and Maureen Lilly, Johnstown. History was made at this Station Mass when, through the aid of Modern Technology, Louise Lilly living in Sydney, Australia, was able to join in the celebration. With the aid of Skype Louise was able to read a passage from the Mass Leaflet and see all the proceedings taking place.**

Front, from left to right: Caoimhe Connaughton, Karen Lilly, Robert Lilly, Gemma Lilly and Shauna Morley. Sinead Donegan, John Donegan, Bernie Lilly, Rebecca Reynolds, Lorna Higgins, Ian Connaughton, Adrian Lilly and Enda Morley. Teresa Waldron, Angela Kelly, Bridie Ruane, Jimmy Leonard, Annmarie Reynolds, Maureen Lilly, Saoirse, Darragh, Miriam and Oisín Connaughton, John Morley Ann Morley and Kathleen Morley. Helen Waldron, Carmel Higgins, Mary Cleary, John Joe Lilly, Nancy Jordan, Kathleen Morley, Ann Cribbin, Joe Byrne, Mary Morley and Eileen Jordan. Teresa Healy, John Morley, Connie Gildea, Patricia Lilly, Helen Byrne, Mary Devane, John Jordan, Margaret Byrne and Ursula Morley.



**Station Mass in the home of Kieran and Rosemary Connolly, Lecarrow**

Back, L-R: Joe O'Gara, Bill Lohan, Michael Joe Lyons, Mick Regan, John Joe Lilly, Peter Concannon, Kevin Tighe, Martin Sheehan, Kevin Lyons. Middle, L-R: Martin McCarthy, Teresa Keegan, Del Murphy, Nuala Higgins, Mary Lyons, Anthony Burke, Aibheann Gallagher, Martha Gallagher, Helen Meehan, Maureen Coyne, Rita Burke, Patricia Heaney, Maureen Lilly, Eileen Rattigan, Rosie Gallagher, Ann Cribben, Peter Gallagher, Patrick Gallagher, John Fahey, Marie Jordan, Walter Burke, Tom Burke. Front, L-R: Breege Cribbin, Teresa Tighe, Anna-Marie Tighe, Kevin Austin Tighe, David Connolly, Erin Higgins, Claire Higgins, Alma Gallagher, Maria Connolly, Kieran Connolly, Louise Coyne.





### The Ballyhaunis-Castlebar Connection

Here we have 'Bride' Dearbhla Keane, aged 11, Sarnaght, Castlebar, daughter of Fintan and Alison Keane, and granddaughter of Emmett and Teresa Keane, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis, and 'Groom' Oisín Coen, aged 11, Newport Road, Castlebar, son of Tom and Shelia Coen and grandson of Delia and the late Gerry Coen, Clagnagh, Ballyhaunis. Dearbhla and Oisín are both Scouts in the Snugboro 20th Troupe, Mayo. In the photo they are taking part in a mock wedding held in the old National School, Snugboro.



### Graduation

Dr. Simon Coleman was recently conferred with his PhD from Dublin City University.

Simon is son of Brian and Bernie Coleman (nee Keegan, formerly of Main St.).



### Travelling in Australia on a fine Winter's day!

L-R: Francis Harrington (Kilkelly), Conor Mulrennan (Gurteen) and Kevin Higgins (Curries) at Glenelg Beach, Adelaide, South Australia, November 2011.



### Proud Grandmother

Bridie Webb, Main St., with her grandsons Lieut. Phelim Carroll, Irish Army (left) and Airman Danny Carroll (right) at Danny's Graduation at Casement Aerodrome, Dec. 2010.





# Growing up in Abbey Street

BY GEORGE DELANEY

**George Delaney is one of the longest established businessmen in Ballyhaunis, and one of the best known people in the town and district. This year he celebrated his eightieth birthday, and the Annagh Magazine committee decided to ask if he'd share some memories with our readers. Here he recalls growing up in Abbey St., Ballyhaunis in the 1930s and 40s.**

I started school in the Convent around 1936, and was taught by Sr. Borgia and Sr. Acquin. Sr. Borgia was a nice old lady; Sr. Acquin was very quiet and timid. Then I went up to the Boys' school. Mrs. Cooney used to teach me and then I went into Mr. McNicholas. I didn't see eye-to-eye with him, so, one Monday morning I said, "No, I'm not going there", and went out to Jimmy O'Dwyer in Coolnafarna instead. He was a gentleman; he was very, very good. We used cycle out there. Paddy, my brother, happened to come with me, and then a lot more: Paddy Waldron, Joe Webb, young Prendergast there above at the top of the town, and the Jordans in Upper Main Street.

Sometimes we'd have to serve eight o'clock daily Mass in the Friary of a winter's morning. You had to be there at five to eight more-or-less, and had to pass up by the graveyard in the pitch dark, in the rain and wind, and no-one in sight. The thing was to get up past that graveyard as fast as you could. We were afraid of our lives of it. Now, Jesse Owens (the famous runner) broke the world record at the Olympics in 1936 but I don't think he was going as fast as I was going up that hill some mornings!

The third Sunday of the month was our Sodality in the Parish Church. Now, you had to be at that Mass, but it could happen that you might be serving Mass in the Friary the same Sunday. They used only have half eight Mass and half eleven Mass in the Friary on Sunday, but then they started a half nine Mass as well, which was ideal for people to go to. However, that took them away from the Parish church, and that wasn't liked at all. If we were serving that half nine Mass, we'd miss our Sodality. When you went into school then the next morning, you were asked, "Where were you yesterday for your Sodality?" "I was serving Mass in the Friary, father". You'd be told, "Put out your hand", and you got a few slaps.

I remember them doing up the Friary in the late 1930s. Johnny Leahy was the contractor: he was a Monaghan man, from Ballybay, and he stayed in Mrs. Campbell's in Abbey Street. They were working there and came across an opening, there as you go into the sacristy from the

front, you take the turn right at the bell, and about five yards in there to the left (off the concrete). They found steps, and when they went down, there was a big opening all underneath the church. I was told afterwards that they were opening it to look for the body of MacJordan Duff, the founder of the Friary.

Before they closed it up they said that people could go down to have a look. I remember it was Thursday (the half day for the staff in town) and there was a big crowd there. I was there, and Joe Regan (who later had the pub at the Square) and Tom Hunt and a crowd of them were going down, and Joe Regan put me up on his shoulders and brought me down. It was pitch black, but everyone had candles. It might only have been the size of a room, but to me now it seemed vast.

## The Railway Station

Working in the Railway Station when I was young were Tom Martin, Dominick Barrett, Bill Hayden, Jim Maleady, Mr. Lambert - and Mr. Raftery was the Station Master. Bill Hayden, Tom Martin, Mr. Lambert and Jim Maleady were in the goods store. Dominick Barrett was in the goods store too but he used to operate the signals in the evenings. Dominick Barrett lived in Tooraree; Lamberts and Martins lived there in the station houses on the Devlis side - Lamberts in the inside one and Martins in the first one. Then the Station Master lived in the station house, of course.

We knew all the train drivers. We'd hop in a wagon and the driver would be shunting wagons into the different sidings. Shunting was how they moved individual wagons from the train into sidings so they could be unloaded at the goods store. The full train pulled into the station and then the wagons would be unhooked and left there on one line. The driver would pull the rest of the train out as far as Brod Boyle's. Then they'd change the points and the driver would bring the engine back down to the station and shunt the wagons into the goods store, or into Hannon's, Abbey Street, who had a siding of their own. The engine would just touch the wagon and it would go off itself into the siding, and one of the workers would stop it in time: There was a brake on each one of them.

If anybody stayed in our house there were three nights of the week they couldn't sleep, because at two o'clock in the morning, and again at four o'clock, trains came in and the shunting and whistle-blowing would start. The workers used whistles to communicate and let each other know when to change the points and signals, to tell them they were ready. It was all whistles that did the job,





otherwise the fellow in the cabin couldn't know what to do.

### The Goods Store

We had a great time in the goods store; that's where we often played. It was always full of stuff – bags and barrels – everything that was sold in town came by rail and through the goods store. Delivery men with carts or lorries brought the stuff from there to the businesses in town. Some places like ourselves and James Waldron's, we used to go up with our pony and cart and collect our own. On a wet Saturday, when you couldn't do anything at home, the goods store was a great place to play. Me and my friends used to go up and help empty the wagons for them. There were three places there for wagons to come in. You started a wagon and you had hand-trucks to bring the goods in-and-out, in-and-out, until there was a row and they'd run us. There were hundred-weight and two hundredweight bags – fertilizer came in two-hundredweight bags. Whiskey came in kegs; beer came in timber barrels and firkins (small barrels). Another thing I remember, as well as could be, was the great trade in rabbits during the War. A few people in the area dealt in rabbits. I don't know how many hundred would be in it, all tied together, and the blue bottles eating them above in the station there, in the heat. Then they were sent up to Dublin and sold off. How they ate them, I do not know, but there was awful big money in them that time.

At that time there was a passenger train for Dublin about half ten, eleven o'clock in the morning. There was one that came down about one, and then another one went up about five, and another one came down about eight o'clock in the evening. And all the hackney cars and all would be above waiting for passengers. All the trains ran on turf or coal. It was all turf during the war. It was all brought in there on lorries and had to be filled by hand onto the wagons. Pete Finn of Hazelhill used to drive one of those lorries for Martin Fahey. It was all got locally, down in Carrowbehy and other places. And then of course they had to get the water. They got the water from that big tank at the end of the platform. The water was pumped up out of the river behind Murray's (Winston's) house. There's a little pump-house there. They used to have a pipe out of the tank about a foot wide and it turned on a swivel. The man would pull the pipe out until he got it over the boiler and filled it up with water. When he finished he'd leave it back against the tank.

I vividly remember a train that came through the station in September 1937. Ten young men from Achill, who had been potato-picking in Kirkintilloch, Scotland, were



**Standing:** Patsy Cunningham, Mick O'Connell, Pat Keane, Joe Greene, John 'Doc' Healy, Tommy Smyth, Michael Cameron.  
**Kneeling:** George Delaney, Paddy Healy.

killed in a dreadful fire. The corpses were brought home by train. I was among the big crowd at the station the day that train passed through. It had been prophesied that the first and last trains to Achill would be full of corpses, and that was the last train that ever went into Achill. I was only a little nipper, but I remember it well. It was on a Sunday and all the coffins were laid out across the seats. You could see them in through the windows.

### A Sunday Spin

There were two Raftery lads in it – the Station Master's sons. The younger one used to be with us all the time. There was a bogey left at the back of Coen's house in Devlis. It was just like a four-wheeled cart with railway wheels. Anyway, on a Sunday (Sunday was nice and quiet) the whole gang of us would get it onto the tracks. Mr. and Mrs. Raftery used to go to last Mass and we'd be all geared for that. We'd move it then onto the line, and make sure it wasn't on the first line which only led into a siding. So, we had to make sure the wheels were on the right tracks, then all push and hop on. We went through the station there very slowly, but then as we went down towards Hannon's, we picked up speed – there was a fall going that way towards Holywell. So we kept pushing to get it going fast, and by the time it came to Hannon's, she was going a bit faster. Another ten or twenty yards and she was going faster still. But when we came beyond the back of the convent she was going a bit too fast – we couldn't even get off it. We started to get scared, and she went up way above Finn's (Hazelhill). There was an incline there again, and she was going slower – going uphill. Our trouble now was (it was gone so far) to get her back to the station before the Station Master and his wife came home from Mass. By golly we sweated!





Luckily, we knew there were no trains going at that time - only during the Knock season were there trains on a Sunday.

### More Devilment

We had a great childhood, but the things that we did... I think we'd be locked up now if we did them! Our gang in Abbey Street included Tommy Smith (R.I.P.), Paddy Waldron (R.I.P.), Tommy Joe Boyle, Archie Lambert, Eamon O'Connell. Every one of us had a catapult or a sling or something - they were all home-made. I remember a Sunday we hit off along the railway line and we had pocketfuls of stones. We were abroad at the ballast pit - that was a great place - and we started firing at the cups, the insulators on the telegraph poles, and sure we broke left, right and centre. We did awful destruction, there's no getting away from it. There was awful trouble anyway and we knew the guards were out looking. One of them was Martin O'Connell - Eamon, his son used be with us - he lived out in Devlis there. One day one of the lads was down at the railway line and, of course, Boyle's Forge was going well at the time. We used always go in there on wet days, blowing the bellows for Brod and trying to help out. Our friend (Joe, we'll call him) was down at the railway line, about thirty yards to the back of the forge. Martin O'Connell was cycling past and didn't he spot Joe. He left the bicycle there went down to Joe. "How you doing?" - he started putting chat on Joe - and he used pick up an odd stone and fire at the 'cups', you know. "I've an awful bad shot", says the guard, "Could you hit that?" "Ara, stand back", says Joe, getting ready to take a shot himself, "You should have been with us a few days ago..." The game was up! We got an awful doing over that.

Sometimes we used get a spool of thread and tie one end to Mrs. Waldron's door-knocker, then tie the other end to Dillon's knocker across the road. Knock at one of the doors, then run. She came out and opened the door. When she closed it again, it knocked at the door across the street. Of course there was nobody there either. That could go on for a long time.

### Straight shooting

I remember this day, a Saturday morning, I'd my jobs done (my early ones - you had to do several different types of jobs during the day, weighing out tea and everything like that), and I was down in Smyth's. Didn't the postman come in and leave a parcel to Tommy. Ah, sure we opened it up, and there it was - a beautiful Daisy Gun - all chrome, and it had this lever action, you know, that the cowboy guns had. And, what I never saw before was, it wasn't pellets that it shot, but little ball-bearings. You poured the 'bullets' in the top; it took around three hundred of them. Sure we were delighted. It was a wonderful thing to have. We hit out the back door, and

before we could even get up the steps out to the garden we had fired two or three shots. We said we'd go up the railway line, and as we went on, we gathered bottles and jam-jars and everything like that. At the very end, before we crossed the railway line, we put them all up and started firing at them. We didn't know how far we had to be away from the target or anything, but anyway, the gun wasn't hitting straight. So we went up, crossed the railway line, up to the wall above at the back of the Boys School. We wanted to see how far the gun would fire. We fired this way, that way, the other way. Tommy Smyth had a few goes, I'd a few, Paddy Waldron had a few - no good. Then we started firing at a lob. We wanted to see how far it'd go - still nothing. So anyway I went across the yard, climbed up on one of the windows, and I was mesmerized when I got there, because the windows were all bored. The gun was so powerful and we didn't know it. The bullets were going through the windows - back and front, and not even leaving a crack - and we were horrified. We had them destroyed. Anyway, Monday morning in the school, I was absolutely petrified. There were two detectives, there was a Superintendent, and two guards were up there. Everyone was rolling around the school, because of the ball-bearings on the floor. Anyway, I never saw that gun after that. I never heard anyone say anything about it.

### A Day out on a Dray

Seamie Hannon, Patsy Hannon, Pat Lyons ('Skeagh'), Johnny Cruise, Seamus Durkin - the Lord have mercy on them all - they made a big, low cart, like a dray, with boards and held together by six-inch and four-inch nails. It had solid iron wheels: two hay-rake wheels at the back, and two smaller mowing machine wheels at the front. There was a seat above for the driver. Sometimes, if you did work for them during the week you were brought along for a spin on a Sunday. That work could be blackening the hooves of the lovely, big, black horses Hannon's had for drawing their hearse, or getting the harness ready and going out with Seamie Hannon delivering stuff with the ass and cart.

They made the dray anyway for Devilment. And the noise of it - you'd hear it coming for miles! On a Sunday, you had your breakfast, went to Mass, then you hit off. You didn't know where they were bringing you, so you'd bring something to eat. They might bring ten or twelve or fifteen of us in it, and two asses pulling it - Brod Boyle's big ass and Seamie Hannon's ass. I remember it was Corpus Christi and we hit off up the Dunmore road and went up so far, then we came back and went up through Bargarrieff, and on up through Granlahan. We went further than that, then we came back again and, at Grange Crossroads we turned right. We kept going and got out on the main Ballyhaunis Ballinlough road. The discussion was going on with the big lads - where would





we go? It was decided we'd go into Ballinlough. So they decided they'd rev up the asses and have them going a good speed going through Ballinlough. So anyways we did - revved up the asses, had them flying at great speed - and we took the turn in the middle of the village. And the noise... you could hear it coming in Castlereagh, I suppose. And what was there crossing at the bottom, but the Corpus Christi Procession! We couldn't stop and the procession had to part to let us through!

### Horse hair

All along Abbey Street at that time everyone had a yard: Hannon's, Cunningham's, Durkan's, ourselves, Dillon's and Caulfield's (where Midwest Radio was). Your customers went in, whenever they came to town, and they put their horse in your yard. This was during the War and everything was scarce. Two things that were very scarce were horse-hair and jam jars. You'd get a great price for horse-hair. On Fridays now, when school would be over, we might go out to our own place, and any horses there, you got up on the horses back and you cut some hair from the inside of its mane - you never cut the outside. And you'd do the same in Hannon's, Giblin's, Caulfield's - all the horses. You'd collect it all up, then, when someone came around to buy the horse hair, you'd get a few bob for it.

### Roscommon Match

It was during the War, it must be forty or forty-one. It was a very, very wet summer and every place was drowned. Mayo were in the final and it was in Roscommon, and there was a doubt there was going to be any match at all (it used always flood over there, the old pitch). Anyways, everyone was getting ready to go cycling (there were no cars) to the match. I wanted to go, but was very young, and Joe Eagney (the Lord have mercy on him) and somebody else came in and got my father and mother to let me go. They said they'd look after me. Now if it was 1940 I was just eight or nine. So we hit off to Roscommon. This side of Ballymoe, where the river Suck comes out there, there was a big flood and we couldn't go across. There was an awful crowd there. There were two ladeens with an ass and cart, and if you gave them five pence they'd ferry you across the flood and then bring your bicycles. So anyway, some of them got wet and we'd to go into a pub in Ballymoe to dry their clothes. Off again to Roscommon then, into the pitch, and it was all flooded all around. We lost the match by a point.

We were cycling home again and we turned off this side of Roscommon, above on top of the hill. Some of the lads had friends in Ballintubber, so they decided to go there. There was a dance on that night in an old hall and they wanted to go... but I was the stumbling block. What were they going to do with me? I remember they got

some house for me - a two-storey house - and the woman said she'd mind me until they'd finished, but her only trouble was she had no tea and she had no butter. She gave me a cup of cocoa and a bit of brown bread and a bit of jam. Anyway the lads came back for me, and it was pitch dark. When we arrived under the railway bridge, around two o'clock in the morning, we were stopped by two guards - the gang of us. Weren't they out all night looking for me!

### Aghamore Sports

There used to be a great sports in that field opposite Niland's in Mountain, Aghamore, and they had a big donkey derby as one of the highlights. I don't know what the prize was, but it was a good one. The only problem was, we had no ass. Anyway, we had a brainwave. Jim Freeley in Clagnagh had a big Spanish ass and we decided to ask him for it. Mrs. Freeley was very nice to us. We went down to her and told her we wanted to go to Aghamore, that there was a donkey derby, and would they ever give us the lend of the ass? Well, when Jim heard about it he flew off the handle, but she told him to be quiet and said, "leave the ladeens alone". Anyway, she got him to give us the ass, and told us to come down on Sunday morning for it. "Now", he said, "ye're not getting the ass without the cart. Ye'll be able to drive the ass and cart". He had the big, high crates on the cart so we wouldn't fall out of it, and we all got in: Tommy Joe Boyle, Tommy Smyth, Paddy Waldron, Archie Lambert, Myself, Martin O'Connell. We hit off through the town anyways, as proud as punch. When we got to the Bank of Ireland there was a big crowd there. There was a bicycle race from there to Aghamore and Ned Eagney was in the bicycle race. Ned was a great cyclist that time. The guards wouldn't let us go through on account of the race, but I remember Ned stepping in. "Look it, let the ladeens go and they'll be careful", he said, "and when they see us coming they'll get off the road". And we made a promise that we would, so they let us off. I remember we were just down at the Cave Bridge, that's where they came, and we'd plenty of room to get in off the road there.

We got to Aghamore anyway and unhooked the ass. We ran a few races, did a few jumps and I think we got a few prizes. Then the donkey derby was coming up, but the thing was who would be the jockey? Anyway, Tony Moran was there. He had a great pony at the time and used do a lot of racing. He'd a saddle and everything like that, so we hired him. I remember them all below at the start, every shape and size - our big Spanish ass and these small little asheens; asses with crooked hooves and everything like that, and young ladeens up on top of them. The race started and, sure before our ass was even half way, this little asheen was gone flying across the finishing line. Sure we got nothing, not a thing out of it!





After all our trouble. Coming home again in the evening, I remember passing through Coolnaha. Now, Coolnaha didn't mean much to me then, but we were starved with the hunger. There was some field there (and I do not know to this day where exactly it was) with turnips in it. We got the few of the turnips anyway and ate them all the way from there home.

## Athletics

Tommy Grogan of Holywell and myself used to go to sports an awful lot. He was a four-forty man - four hundred yards, quarter of a miler - a nice runner, and I used to do the jumps. I remember cycling down to a sports in Loughglynn. It was teeming rain when we left and we'd to shelter a few times. We were down at the end of the long straight below Carrowbehy, sheltering from a shower up a bye-road. We heard an announcement coming over from Loughglynn to say that they were cancelling the sports due to the weather. So we'd to cycle all the way back to town again. We went again the following week, and the same thing happened once again - it was cancelled.

When I finished in Coolnafarna national school, I went to Garbally College in Ballinasloe. Why I was ever sent there, I do not know. I remember the first time I went up, hitting off on the train to Athlone, change there and take another train to Ballinasloe. I didn't know anyone there. Into a big old rookery of a place, and I didn't see any of my family again until Christmas. Others there from town were Gerry Hyland, Joe Greene, Kevin Greene and Bill Mulligan's son in Coolnafarna.

I never saw a hurley or a hurling ball till I went there, but I ended up Junior and Senior Goalie on the Ballinasloe team. I played football in it as well; I played rugby in it; I played handball in it; I did Pole-Vaulting; and I did the Hop, Step and Jump. I was Connacht champion for three years in the pole-vaulting - 1946, 47 and 48.

There was a priest there by the name of Fr. Ryle, a Kerry man. He was a young fellow and I'd served his ordination in the college. Anyway, Fr. Ryle was a great athletics man. He went to the Olympic Games and came home with three or four copybooks filled with details and times of everyone that won anything - weight-throwers, runners, pole-vaulters. He tried us out with

different athletics. He was big into training and fitness, and he'd have you pulling yourself up on ropes exercising and getting the muscles going. He got Barrington's, the blacksmiths in Ballinasloe, to make his version of starting-blocks, for the races. I remember being at the first Connacht Sports when he got them and Dick Roche from Woodford, County Galway, was our sprinter and was used to blocks. The others kicked up over him having blocks when they had none.

So he said to one of them, "Here, I'll give you this for the next race". Sure he nearly killed himself coming out of them, because you had to be careful. There's a knack to coming out of starting-blocks, or you would be fired out on top of your head.

Fr. Ryle decided to try out pole-vaulting, and got us to go into the woods and get a pole - an ordinary stick, something straight and light - as light as you could. There was no special bamboo pole available then. It was just an ordinary stick about ten foot long. If it broke it could be very dangerous. Everyone had a go, but I seemed to be the best at it. You had to be careful how you went over the cross-bar, as there was no special area to land on. They might have dug a small hole in the ground with soft clay in it, but if you missed it you landed on solid ground. I remember the first time I saw a bamboo pole. They got one

for the Connacht championships above in Galway, and it was going to be a gift... or so we thought! It was light and it was safe, but it was a dead loss because it was too wide for us to grip, so we used our own home-made poles instead. I jumped against Val McGann who was the Irish Senior Champion. Val, at the time, was doing eleven foot six which was the Irish record. He used a bamboo pole. He made eleven foot six and then went up to twelve foot. The first record I had was something about eight foot nine, but when I finished, it was about ten foot ten. The world record at that time was thirteen foot something. I beat Val McGann once, but I got so many inches as an odds on him.

I did the Hop, Step and Jump too. That's more difficult than the Long Jump. Fr. Ryle had us trained in such a way that we could run in to the starting point with our eyes closed and make a perfect jump. He trained us using a football tied above on this bar going across, and we'd to jump up and grab it. That was to get the height right



**Duggan Park, Ballinasloe, 1945/'46.  
George Delaney pole-vaulting.  
He jumped against the Irish Champion,  
Val McGann on the day.**





for the Hop, Step and Jump.

Rugby was a big game in Garbally. From September to St. Patrick's Day you played rugby, and from St. Patrick's Day on it was all Gaelic and Hurling.

### GAA

We had no Gaelic pitch in Ballyhaunis in the 1940s. We used to play little bits of matches of our own in the Friary Field, above beside the graveyard. In 1949, I think it was, there was a Fr. O'Donoghue up there and he took an interest in our game. He brought some of us to the Mayo trials: Albert Lyons, Paddy Jordan (the Lord have Mercy on them) and myself. I happened to get on the Mayo Minor team, but we got beaten in the first match. We were playing in Castlereagh, but I never saw one of the lads on the team before. We had never met or trained together.

There was no club in Ballyhaunis at the time, so we didn't belong to any club. Martin Cunniffe, who lived in Killasser, had a hackney car – a big old Buick – and he asked us to play with Swinford. He used send up this big Buick for the three of us to go down playing. Then Mick O'Connell, Pat Keane and Mick Tarmey got their heads together, and they have to get credit for starting the Ballyhaunis club then. When the club was started, there was no money to do anything, and no field to play on. Anyway, they got a field then above in Lisduff. Before you get to Waldron's house, there's a road into the bog, and we got a field there, in about five or six hundred yards. We'd to put up goal posts in it, and it was a Good Friday. The poles were got down in Loughglynn and Bertie Lynch brought them up with the V8 truck. We couldn't do any work until after the Stations of the Cross were over, then we all dug the holes and set up the goal posts and crossbars. We played thirteen matches that year, and we lost all thirteen.

Once the club was started I played until we won the Junior Championship in 1957. I was playing very good football at the time. I played two League matches with Mayo, one was down in Carlow, but we got beaten in the two of them anyway. We'd no senior team in East Mayo, so Saint Aiden's was formed, which took in Ballaghaderreen, Swinford, Kiltimagh and Ballyhaunis.



**Taken in O'Connell Street, the day of Mayo's All-Ireland Victory, 1951. L-R: Paddy Forry, George Delaney, Paddy Waldron, Tommy Smyth.**



**Taken when Ballyhaunis won the County Minor Championship, 1953/54. Back, L-R: Tom Foudy, Paddy Forry, Mick Tarmey, George Delaney, Cyril Foudy, Joe Kenny. Front: Paddy Waldron, Val Byrne, Denis Curtis, Noel Waldron**

That was in the fifties. I retired from football in 1957 - I didn't play any matches that year. It was getting harder to get out with business commitments, and I wasn't getting any better. Work was taking up more of my time, and I was about to get married, so that was the end of one part of my life, and the start of another ...

**We hope to feature more of George's memories in the next issue of Annagh, focusing on the family business in Abbey Street, and on his starting up in Bridge Street in 1951.**







George Delaney Snr. with his grandson George (son of Paddy and Moira), Abbey St. Taken circa 1971/'72 in the old grocery section, where the current snug is now inside front door on the left.



Here's a photo of the most fashion-conscious snowman in all the land, Christmas 2010.



Ballyhaunis Football Team on a trip to Coventry in the early 1980s  
Back, L-R: Mal Nally, Oliver Hannon, Willie Coyne, Tom Cribbin, Pat Freeley, Ivan Freeley, Brendan Morrissey, Pdraig Prendergast, Eamon Glynn, John Tighe, Tommy Moran, Mike Lyons, Robbie Herr, Michael Waldron, Pete Gilmore.  
Front: Aiden Kelly, Mike McQueeney, Kevin Henry, Frankie Dillon, Billy Lyons, Gerry Lyons, Val Rattigan, John Prenty, Tommy Aut Tighe. Child in front: Michael Keane.



## Photos from the 1950's & '60's



*Above:*  
The McGuire brothers of  
Ballindrehid,  
taken at Joe McGuire's  
Wedding in London  
in the 1960s.

L-R: Dermot, Tommy,  
Brendan, Joe,  
Kevin and Paddy.



*Left:*  
Taken in Swinford, 1961.

L-R: John Joe Fitzmaurice,  
Dom Fitzmaurice,  
John Coffey and  
Tim Moran.

*Right:*  
Picture taken on  
Clare Street, 1950.

L-R: Patsy Glynn,  
Charlie Glynn,  
Delia Glynn,  
Fintan Glynn,  
Eddie Mulhern and  
Kathleen Mulhern.





# Gorthaganny Monument Honours Dermot Earley

BY SINÉAD FREYNE

President Mary McAleese made a special visit to Gorthaganny on Saturday 27th August last to officially unveil a spectacular life size memorial statue of the late Dermot Earley, former Irish Defence Forces Chief of Staff and folk hero of Roscommon football. It was apt that the people of his home village paid lasting tribute to him on the eve of a sell-out All-Ireland semi-final between Donegal and Dublin at Croke Park. Roscommon had beaten Armagh at the same stage in the Championship in 1980. Dermot's performance on that day, later in the final against Kerry and throughout his sporting career led to him being known as one of the greatest footballers in GAA history.

On one of the two plaques at the monument site, it reads:

## "Sporting Icon

Dermot Earley's reputation as one of the "greatest ever footballers never to win an All-Ireland medal" was carved out of consistently high performances in the Roscommon jersey at senior level over a twenty year career stretching from 1965 to 1985. During his football career, Dermot was known throughout Ireland for his skill, power, tenacity, leadership and above all sportsmanship. He won five Connacht Senior medals, one National League medal, one All-Ireland U21 medal, two Railway Cup medals and one All-Ireland runners up medal. He also won two All Star Awards in 1974 and 1979".

Before unveiling the statue, President McAleese said that in Gorthaganny and in County Roscommon Dermot Earley was a "hero, a statesman, a man of remarkable character, skill and sheer goodness. For the people of Roscommon, he was a Cuchulainn-type figure, an exceptional sportsman who had a rare talent to inspire and motivate". The almost 2,000 people who gathered to honour him heard the President say that "Dermot's work took him all over the world. He brought with him



the values, the education and the deepness of spirit that started here in Gorthaganny. He had a philosophy that went right through to the bone and marrow of the man - family, community, and faith."

He was just sixty-two when he died on 23rd June 2010. Following forty-four years of service with the Defence Forces he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) shortly before his death. The bronze statue by Seamus Connolly has been erected beside Gorthaganny National School where his late father Peadar was the local Principal for many years and close to the house where he grew up.

The Army No. 1 Band played throughout the ceremony and a lone piper played The West's Awake before three wreaths were laid at the monument – one by Earley's widow Mary, another on behalf of the local community by childhood and lifelong friend Martin Walshe, and the third by Roscommon GAA County Board Chairperson Michael Fahy. Military honours were rendered at the ceremony.

In attendance at the unveiling were his family; his mother Kitty, his wife Mary and children David, Conor, Dermot, Paula, Ann Marie and Noelle, as well as his brothers Peter and Paul, and sisters, Denise and Margaret, nieces and nephews. Also in attendance was Bishop of Elphin, Dr. Christopher Jones, a large representation from the Defence Forces including the Chief of Staff, Lt. General Sean McCann, and even bigger representation from the GAA fraternity from Roscommon, Mayo and Kildare as well as thirteen of his team mates who played with him in the 1980 final against Kerry.

## Ballyhaunis Roots

Dermot Earley had strong Ballyhaunis connections through his mother, the former Kitty Byrne. She was born in Castlebar, but both of her parents - Willie Byrne and







Baby Foudy – came from Ballyhaunis. Willie Byrne came from Main Street, and was son of Thomas Byrne and Maria Flynn. Willie's brother John continued the family business on Main St., and it passed to his son Val. Baby Foudy came from Bridge St., and was daughter of Michael Foudy (a Co. Clare native who came to Ballyhaunis in the 1890s) and Mary Anne Lynskey from

Gurteen. The Foudys lived and had their business where Delaney's Hardware is today. The Earley family have many cousins in the Ballyhaunis area still, including members of the Byrne, Cribbin, Moran, Caulfield and Halpin families (Main St.), O'Brien and Morley families (Knox St.), Gilmore and Flanagan families (Brickens) and Lynskey family (Gurteen).



## O'Rourke Family Visit Ballyhaunis

The O'Rourke family pictured during a visit to Ballyhaunis in August 2010. At the back is Paul O'Rourke. Centre, L-R: Doreen O'Rourke (mother), Joe Byrne, Vincent O'Rourke (father) and Paddy Joe Tighe. Front: Aidan and Daniel O'Rourke (sons).

Paul gives the following information: "My great-grandfather Patrick O'Rourke was born in Annagh on 1st Feb 1868, son of Michael Rourke (farmer) and Margaret Rourke (formerly Bride). Owen Rourke of Annagh registered the birth. Patrick was baptised 9th Feb 1868 at Aghamore RC

Parish Church. He came to England in the late 1880s and is recorded in the 1901 census in Accrington, Lancashire. He married Maggie Hogan on the 28th May 1898 at Sacred Heart RC Church, Accrington. Maggie was born in England, her father John was from Tipperary and her mother, Julia Collings from Kilkenny. Patrick died 9th March 1953; his wife Maggie died 11th September 1962, both in Accrington.

Their son (my grandfather) Michael O'Rourke was born 17th June 1899 in Accrington and, apparently, was sent back to Ireland as a child to live with his grandparents Michael and Margaret O'Rourke in Annagh. We don't know the exact years of his childhood stay in Annagh but my father says he attended school in Ballyhaunis before returning to England."





# Scoil Íosa

BY KENNETH DENNEDY (PRINCIPAL)

Ag deireadh na bliana ba mhaith linn Beanachtaí na Féile a glacadh roimh chuile duine í bpobal Scoil Íosa agus í bpobal Béal Átha hAmhnais . As another busy year comes to an end, all associated with Scoil Íosa extend a warm Season Greetings to all members of our community, past and present.

2011 proved to be an exceptionally eventful year in Scoil Íosa with the commencement of the construction project which will alter the school landscape and bring finality to the 2001 amalgamation of St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy and Scoil Mhuire Boys National School. The work on the new school is expected to continue until July 2012 with the entire school population being in situ for the beginning of the 2012 – 2013 school year.

## Retirements

This year saw the retirement of two popular members of staff, Mrs. Kathleen Lyons and Sr. Geraldine O'Farrell. Deputy Principal Kathleen Lyons, a native of Athenry, Co. Galway, joined the staff of St. Joseph's Convent National School in 1977 having previously taught in Mother of Divine Grace National School, Ballygall Rd., Glasnevin, and for a short time in Began National School. In 1979 she moved to St. Mary's Boys National School where she served with great dedication and loyalty until her retirement. For the past number of years Kathleen had served firstly as Assistant Principal and latterly as Deputy Principal. In both these roles she brought a professionalism and enthusiasm while at all times remaining totally focussed on the fortunes of the children with whom she worked. Kathleen commitment to her

many roles was unrivalled as was her constant striving to improve standards of literacy and numeracy among her charges. As a member of the school management team through her advice, guidance and no nonsense approach, she made an immense contribution to the advancement of Scoil Íosa.

Sr. Geraldine O'Farrell joined the staff of St. Joseph's National School in 1995 as the first Resource Teacher for Travellers appointed to the school. Her previous experience included time spent teaching in Castlebar and Clifden before moving to teach in St. Dedacy's Catholic School in San Diego, California. On her return to Ireland Sr. Geraldine spent a period working with the Travelling Community in Clondalkin Travellers Training Centre in Co. Dublin. The experience which she took with her to Ballyhaunis greatly enhanced the quality of teaching available to those children suffering education disadvantage in the area. Sr. Geraldine was a great champion of the underprivileged and gave of her time willingly and without complaint, and beyond the call of duty. She was a great champion of children with both social and educational needs and worked with enthusiasm to further the attainment of the pupils in her care. Her retirement brings to an end the presence of a member of the Mercy Sisters on the staff of Scoil Íosa, thus heralding the end of an era.

Both Sr. Geraldine and Mrs Kathleen Lyons are wished well for their respective futures.

## Sports News

2011 proved to be a very good year for sports teams in Scoil Íosa with teams participating competitively in Football, Hurling, Soccer and Cross Country.

**Boys Football:** Our boys football team, under the stewardship of Kevin Henry, reached the Cumann na mBunscoil semi final having progressed as unbeaten winners of our qualification group. On the way to the semi final the team recorded wins over Claremorris Boys N.S., Westport N.S. and St. Joseph's N.S. Ballinrobe, setting up a semi final meeting with local rivals St. Aidan's N.S. Kiltimagh. Despite an excellent performance in a highly competitive encounter, the boys failed narrowly to progress eventually losing by four points. Congratulations to all involved.

Football Panel: Aran Rattigan, Neil Carney, Hamza Azhar, Dylan Gaughan, Mudsir Rehman, Dara Healy,



**Mrs. Kathleen Lyons and family at her Retirement Mass and Presentation. L-R: Liam, Fergal, Kathleen, David, Noirín and Austin Lyons.**







**Scoil Íosa Cross Country Runners (Boys).**

Michael McDonagh, Evan Henry, Cormac Phillips, Thomas Maughan, David Cunnane, Liam Herr, Darren Coyne, Conal Caulfield, Eddie Cleary, Partick Caulfield, Sean Herr, Eamon Phillips, Gary Higgins, Barry Cribbin, Kevin Henry (Teacher).

**Girls Football:** The past year also saw the girl's team coming along in leaps and bounds. Trained by Elaine Brady, the team performed well in the qualification phase of the Cumann na mBunscoil competitions before losing out narrowly on qualification for the knock-out stages. Girls Football is generally developing well and leaves us in a good position for future years.

Girls Football Team: Helen Gallagher, Aoife Nolan, Megan Gaughan, Gemma Lilly, Caoimhe Lilly, Meadhbh Caulfield, Roisín Lyons, Marina Carney, Aibhinn Herr, Olivia Cleary, Laura O'Connell, Chloe Ryan, Emma Lyons, Michelle Lyons.

**Hurling:** Our school hurling team also qualified for the county final having easily accounted for all obstacles along the way. Scoil Íosa qualified to meet Ballyvary Central N.S. in the final played in McHale Park in early June. The term classic is rarely used to describe a meeting of primary school children but this match had every desirable ingredient of a competitive sporting event being high on skill, excitement and commitment from both teams. Unfortunately, there had to be a runner up and on this occasion Scoil Íosa experienced the heartbreak of a narrow defeat after three periods of extra time. Sincere thanks to Dónal O'Brien for his efforts to advance hurling within the school.

Hurling Panel : Sean Herr, Eamon Phillips, Dylan Gaughan, Uneeb Naseer, Liam Herr, Gary Higgins, David Cunnane, Patrick Caulfield, Cormac Phillips, Evan Henry

Our school also competed in the Mayo 5 aside Soccer championship finishing group runners up behind the eventual winners Scoil Padraig, Ballina. We achieved quite a deal of success in the Schools Cross Country



**Scoil Íosa Cross Country Runners (Girls).**



**Scoil Íosa Hurling Team, with Trainer Donal O'Brien**



**Scoil Íosa Girls Football Team. Trainer Kevin Henry.**

Competition with Ellen Phillips and Darren Coyne qualifying for the Connacht Final and our Senior Boys team failing to qualify by a mere two points. Athletics has become one of our growth areas with over 100 pupils from 4th – 6th classes participating in athletics course sessions during September and October.





## Choirs

Choirs from Scoil Íosa have been very active over the past year with the Children's Choir continuing to sing monthly at Mass in St. Patrick's Church. Coupled with this our Intercultural Choir took part in the North South Peace Proms with the Cross Border Orchestra. This involved over 600 children from schools in Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon coming together in a gala concert held in the Royal Theatre Castlebar in mid February. Our choirs were directed by Mrs. Ita Fahey (Children's Choir) Ms. Sheena Flanagan and Ms. Olivia Burke (Peace Proms).

## School Staff 2011-2012

Kenneth Dennedy (Principal), Kathleen Lyons (Deputy Principal), Jimmy Duggan (Assistant Principal), Ita Fahey, Stella McGrath, Aising Toal, Elaine Brady, Ann Durkan, Olivia Burke, Sharlene Ruane, Ciara Fitzmaurice, Sheena Flanagan, Ciara Byrne, Iona Cunnane, Mary Fleming, Lisa Watchorn, Dónal O'Brien, Kevin Henry, Seamus Caulfield, Carmel Cassidy and Mary Dillon (School Secretaries), John Hurley (Caretaker).

## Board of Management

John Griffin (Chairperson/Patron's Nominee), Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P. (Vice Chairperson/Patron's Nominee), Kenneth Dennedy (Principal), Kevin Henry (Teachers' Nominee), Paula Grogan (Community Nominee), Olive Lyons (Community Nominee), Tommy Caulfield (Parents' Nominee) Patricia Uí Shuilleabháin (Parents' Nominee).

## Parents Association

Fergal O'Mahony (Chairperson), Yvonne Walsh (Secretary), Cathal Carroll (Treasurer), Maeve Morley,

Tommy Caulfield, Laura Burke, Martin Walsh (Committee).

## Fundraising Committee

Frank Brown (Chairperson), Ann Lyons (Secretary), Paula Donnellan (Secretary/PRO), Aoife Keane, Mary Kay Phillips, Ann Phillips, Helena Byrne, Dolores Byrne, Lorraine Waldron, John Durkan, Liam Lyons, Dr. Khalid.

## Confirmation Classes (2nd April 2011)

6th Class (Mr. O'Brien): Jessica Carroll, Jennifer Cleary, Darren Coyne, Lauren Gallagher, Katie Haugh, Gary Higgins, Diarmuid Keane, Caoimhe Lilly, Gemma Lilly, Emma Lyons, Michelle Lyons, Ellie McDonagh, Michael McDonagh, Eileen Maughan, Aoife Mulrennan, Eamon Phillips, Jordan Squire, Amy Taylor, Ellen Maughan.

5th Class (Mrs. Lyons): Marina Carney, Piotr Cieslikowski, Maja Cieslikowski, Olivia Cleary, Joicy Da Costa Nunes, Brendonas Graf, Roisín Lyons, Evan Henry, Aoife Nolan, Laura O'Connell, Benas Pakonis, Cormac Phillips.

5th Class (Mr. Duggan): Eddie Cleary, Maedhbh Caulfield, David Cunnane, James Duggan, Helen Gallagher, Megan Gaughan, Liam Herr, Aibhinn Herr, Thomas Maughan, Chloe Ryan

## First Holy Communion (14th May 2011):

Children in 2nd class who received their First Holy Communion: Jamie Allen, Gabriella Cervenakova, Teresa Cleary, Tommy Cleary, Tara Cullen, Anna Cunnane, Patrick Daly, Kevin Durkan, Ruth Henry, Daniel Hill, Jakub Jurak, Modesta Kucinskaite, Peter Maughan, Barbara McDonagh, Simon McDonagh, Dara Rattigan, Tamara Squire/Keane, Hannah Waldron, Cian Walsh, Selina Ward, Joshua Webb, Tamzin Whelan /Manning.

*Pictured below: Scoil Íosa Peace Proms Choir*







**First Holy Communion Class, May 2011).** Kenneth Dennedy (Principal), Canon Joe Cooney P.P., Fr. Benny McHale, C.C., Stella McGrath (Teacher) and Catriona Biesty. *Photo: Glynn's Photography*



**Confirmation, 5th Class, April 2011.**

Front: Fr. Benny McHale, C.C.; Archbishop Michael Neary, Canon Joe Cooney, P.P.  
Back: Teachers, Kathleen Lyons & Jimmy Duggan. *Photo: Glynn's Photography*







**Scoil Íosa Confirmation, 6th Class, April 2011.**

Front: Fr. Benny McHale, C.C.; Archbishop Michael Neary, Canon Joe Cooney, P.P..

Back: Donal O'Brien (Teacher). *Photo: Glynn's Photography*

## Scoil Íosa Fundraising

BY FERGAL O'MAHONY

As you are probably aware Scoil Iosa, Abbeyquarter, is currently undergoing a transformation. When complete, this €3.25m project will provide our community with a state-of-the-art Primary School. While the funding of this transformation is being given by the Department of Education, funding must also be sought from the local community to improve the sports and recreation facilities, which will include a multipurpose pitch available for all sports such as GAA, Soccer, Rugby and Cricket. This project must be fully funded by community contribution to the tune of €50,000.

A Fundraising Committee was set up in June 2011 to secure the community contribution required. The committee consists of thirteen voluntary members: Frank Brown (Chairperson), Martin Walsh (Treasurer), Ann Lyons (Secretary), Paula Donnellan (PRO), Aoife Keane, Mary Kay Phillips, Ann Phillips,



**Keith Higgins buying the first 'brick' from Aoife Keane and Ann Phillips in support of the future expansion of Scoil Iosa Primary School, Abbeyquarter.**





Helena Byrne, Dolores Byrne, Lorraine Waldron, John Durkan, Liam Lyons and Dr. Khalid.

To date the Fundraising Committee has organised a number of events that have raised in the region of €7,500. One of these events, the Buy-A-Brick Campaign, was launched in August 2011 at the Abbey Pattern. On the day it raised €1,400 and there are plans to continue this campaign further by reaching out to local businesses and households to sponsor the bricks being used in the

building of the refurbished school through the purchase of 'brick tickets'. A record of donations will be kept and displayed in the school for generations to come.

The Fundraising Committee also has plans to run a series of other fundraising events in the future. To keep up to date with their progress and to get details of upcoming events go to [www.iosaballyhaunis.com](http://www.iosaballyhaunis.com). Bricks may also be purchased online through this website.

**Dermot Eagney (in his new car) with Edward Mulhern and Tom Fitzgerald. Clare Street, August 1954, and standing beside one of his later cars, in Rochford's, in the 1980s.**



## Pub Quiz



**John Morley, the manager of Phillips', Una Phillips, Alison McDermott and Margie Phillips.**



**Alison McDermott presenting the Perpetual Shield to Tommy Joe Lyons, Team Captain of the winning pub, Phillips' Bar.**

**THE ANNUAL BALLYHAUNIS CHAMBER - SIMULTANEOUS PUB QUIZ 2011 WINNERS**





# Alice Lyons looks forward to 100th Birthday

BY MIKE BYRNE

As the editorial team at Annagh Magazine prepare to put yet another edition of the popular annual to bed, and safely with the printers, plans are being finalised at Brookvale Manor Nursing Home for the 100th birthday celebration of Alice Lyons, on November 24.

Alice, who has been a resident of the Hazelhill Nursing Home since 2005, is well known throughout the entire region, having operated a thriving retail operation on Clare Street for close on six decades. As she looks forward to the 100th birthday bash, with son Thomas (Clare Street), and daughter Alacoque (Surrey), son-in-law, Wally, grandchildren, David and John, and of course her former neighbours from Clare Street, we salute the lady, whose home was a welcoming haven for so many people over many years.

The former Alice Tarpey was born in the village of Cloonlara, in Began, on November 24, 1911. She was one of ten children, her sister, Imelda (Manchester), is the only other surviving member of the family. Following her marriage to William Lyons (RIP) from Lecarrow, in 1939, the couple settled in their new home in Clare Street. Alice soon opened her grocery store, comprising of light



groceries and a full range of confectionaries, at the front of the Clare Street residence. Willie (as he was popularly known), worked for Gallagher & Sons builders providers, Main Street and also for P.J. McGarry, during the building of the Star Cinema, which opened to the public in 1947. Sadly, Willie passed to his eternal reward in 1947, the year of 'The Blizzard'.

Being left a widow at such an early age failed to dim the spirit and the great enthusiasm and zeal which this woman had for life. We all remember Alice as a lady who loved to laugh, loved to have fun and certainly lived life to the full. All of this she did, while at the same time working hard to provide a living for herself and her family.

Her hostelry on Clare Street was one on which legends were built. In these times of late night 'Take Aways' and the likes, for past generations, Alice's on Clare Street was the only place to cater for the young men and women heading to the Eclipse Ballroom for the Sunday night dance. In the days when Tooreen Dance Hall was at its peak, the late night revellers would return to the Clare Street outlet, enjoy a mineral, and strike up with fellow travellers for a late night chat. A great meeting place in its day, the place to be and be seen and make friends. Many are the romances which began at Alice's Shop on Clare Street.

Alacoque has fond memories of young ladies coming in from the country for the dance, park their bikes, and drop in to the kitchen to apply the make-up, making everything ready for the big night ahead.



This picture was taken in Salthill, Galway in 1951, sixty years ago. Alice Lyons is here with her mother Mrs. Tarpey and two children Thomas and Alacoque. Noreen Finn was from Erriff and was a lodger with the Lyons family. She was a dressmaker and emigrated to Manchester when she was in her forties. Also in the photo is another former lodger with the family, Teresa Mulcahy who was from Limerick and was an egg tester in the town. Back (L-R): Noreen Finn, Teresa Mulcahy, Alice Lyons. Front: Alacoque Lyons, Mrs. Tarpey and Thomas Lyons.



Clare Street Children, August 1957. Back (L-R): Fintan Glynn, Austin Biesty (from Boyle), Christy Morrison, John Cleary, John Gallagher and Charlie Glynn. Front: Pat Freyne, Brian Byrne, Gerry Bannon, Michael Cleary, Tom Fitzgerald, Edward Mulhern, Bernard Freyne, Frankie Dillon and Dolores Freyne.







**Taken in June 1959. L-R: Angela Byrne, Helen Grogan, Stephen Nichols, Imelda Nichols with Niall Eagney on her knee and Imelda Nichols. The Byrne, Grogan and Eagney children were all of Clare Street, while Mrs. Nichols was a sister of Alice Lyons. Stephen and Imelda were her two children and cousins of Thomas and Alacoque Lyons.**

In more recent years, Alice's shop was a popular visiting place for the young children of the town heading back to school, stocking up with their favourite sweets for the second half of the school day. There was something special about 'Alice's Shop', the fine display of sweets and confectionary always looked so tempting and inviting, and of course the merry and cheerful lady behind the counter, added to the attraction of this facility. Alice operated the business right up until her 80th birthday, back in 1991, when she finally retired from active service to the public.

In her retirement years, she liked to relax with a group of friends at the weekly card session in Mulhern's on Clare Street. With neighbours Maureen Cleary (RIP) and Martin Crehan, and fellow players Martin Caulfield (Carrowkeel), Paddy Waldron (Redford), Dermot



**Top right: Taken outside the home of Sean and Maureen Cleary of Clare Street. The two children are Thomas Lyons and John Cleary with John's uncle Joe Griffin also of Clare Street. Joe died at the very young age of seventeen years.**

Waldron (Island), and the lady of the house Frances Mulhern, this weekly school was the setting for some great banter, craic and so many memories, a story maybe for another day.

In 2005, Alice entered Brookvale Manor Nursing Home, where she has been cared for with the love, affection and attention one could only expect from the Hazelhill residence. It is here, on November 24, the 100th birthday of Alice will be celebrated with Holy Mass, a drink, or maybe two, and who knows, maybe a song or two as well. An occasion to celebrate the life and achievements of one of our town's most wonderful ladies, a lady who touched the lives of so many over the past 100 years.



**Pictured outside The Crown in Cricklewood, after Mayo beat London in May 2006.**

*Back, L-R:*  
**Paul Donnellan,  
 Tom Eagney,  
 Pado Cunningham,  
 Noel Langan,  
 Georgie Hannan,  
 Brendan Morrissey.**  
*Front:*  
**Martin Grogan,  
 Bernie Keane,  
 Seamus Grogan,  
 Shane Tighe,  
 Clar Grogan,  
 Brian Hunt.**







Elm Hill, a two year old Irish Draught Filly, winner of the All-Ireland Show in Limerick, August 2011. Bred and owned by Ray Sloyan, Brackloon. Horse shown by nephew Seamus Sloyan, joined by Conor and Aidan Sloyan.



Stephen Nolan, Kilmannin (pictured right), receiving Top Goal Scorer Award from Lough Harps FC. Stephen scored an outstanding thirty-seven goals in the season.



Thomas J. Carroll of Knox St., Ballyhaunis at the top of Machu Picchu in Cusco, Peru, April 2011.



Theresa Mueller, Carrowreagh, celebrating her seventieth birthday last September.



*Pictured above:* Proud Mums Celebrating U-16 Boys Football County Win L-R: Anne Lyons, Noreen Coyne, Mairead Quinn, Martina Kelly, Anne Sutton, Geraldine Collins, Nuala Nolan, Gabrielle Lyons.



*Pictured right:* Martin Conroy of Ballyhaunis Boxing Club, sporting his bronze medal which he won at the European Junior Boxing Championships held in Hungary in July last. Later in July Martin went on to reach the quarter finals of the World Junior Championships which were held in Kazakhstan.





**Ciaran Ó Raighne (Inverin) and Mary Ellen Frehill, (Clare Court) at Grogan's Stations, Knockbrack 2010.**



**Fearna Tiffany, National Senior Purebred Simmental cow, who also went on to win the Overall National Female Simmental Champion in the 2011 Tullamore National livestock show. She is owned and bred by the Neenan brothers, Coolnafarna, Ballyhaunis. The Neenan brothers established their pedigree herd 'Fearna Simmentals' in 1998 and have enjoyed much success to date. Tiffany has been this year's success story, winning numerous Simmental Championships plus four Interbreed Championships in the Summer shows. They have also won two other National titles with other animals in previous years, including the coveted 'Supreme Simmental Champion' at the final RDS Spring Show. Pictured with Fearna Tiffany are Mark (kneeling), Gerry and John Neenan, with Gerald Smith (Judge).**



**Tom Meehan (President, Ballyhaunis Golf Club) presenting the President's Prize to winner John Moran.**  
*Glynn's Photography, Castlerea/ Ballyhaunis.*



**Left to Right: John Halpin, Rosaleen Curley, Breege Halpin, Pauline O'Brien Rogers (Melbourne, Australia), Una O'Brien Halpin (Kildare). Pauline is a sister-in-law and Una is the mother-in-law of Mary Halpin O'Brien (Nar Nar Goon, Melbourne), in the 1980's.**

*Right:*  
**Tom Meehan (President, Ballyhaunis Golf Club) presenting his Prize to Ladies Winner Siobhan Herr.**  
*Glynn's Photography, Castlerea/ Ballyhaunis.*







**Martina Dillon and Michael Webb sitting at Dillon's window in the 1980s.**



**Vincent Levins, Bridie Levins, Caroline (Levins) Byron, John Joe Lyons and Danielle Byron, outside The Harp Inn (owned by John Joe Lyons of Began), Huntingdon Beach, California.**



**Cynthia Clampett, CEO of Mayo Roscommon Hospice, Tommy Feeney (Proprietor, Ave Maria Nursing Home, Tooreen), Mary Marsden (Palliative Home Care Team), Anne Feeney (Proprietor, Ave Maria Nursing Home, Tooreen), Noreen Whelan (Palliative Care Nurse) at the presentation of a Syringe Driver to the Ave Maria Nursing Home from the Palliative Care Team.**

## The Dillon Estate Maps

COMPILED BY PAUL WALDRON  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY VINCENT FAHY  
([www.whitethornphoto.ie](http://www.whitethornphoto.ie))

As stated in last year's magazine (p. 142) the National Library holds a collection of manuscript maps of townlands in the Dillon Estate, which date from the 1830s to 1860s. For each townland (or part of a townland) they show the quality of land and the extent of each holding after the land was 'striped', along with the name of the occupying tenant at the time. Unfortunately, many of the original maps are missing from the volumes they were bound into, but hopefully their whereabouts will eventually be discovered.

**Here are three more townlands on the Dillon Estate, made at different times and by three different surveyors:**

**Tullahane**, surveyed in 1834 by Edward Gallagher.

**Derrynacong**, surveyed in 1858 by John Cunningham.

**Cloonascragh or Mountain**, surveyed in April 1849 by Michael Howley.

The map of Tullahane shows the townland officially known as Tullaghaun. Notice that the names of townlands bordering it to the north and south are given as 'Tullahane' too, but that 'Garraun' and 'Ballybeg' were written in later in pencil. This was before the original Ordnance Survey was carried out in the late 1830s, and shows that Garraun and Ballybeg, which were later designated as official townlands in their own right, were then regarded as parts of Tullaghaun. A list of the main lease-holders on the Dillon estate from circa 1805 lists 'Garrane, Ballybeg and Middletown' as parts of 'Tullaghan'. Notice too that the bordering townland of Derrintogher is given as 'Bargarrieff', and that Ballyglass Lower is given as 'Toneroegee', for similar reasons. Other points of interest on this map are: the well named 'Tubberagillane'; the old spellings of *Ballyhawnis* and *Gurranelahan*; the location of a corn mill and 'reservoir' (mill pond), along the boundary with Toneroegee (Ballyglass Lower); and the showing of a 'Deanish fort' (ringforts were often referred to in the old days as Danish forts).

The map of Derrynacong was surveyed in 1858, just two years after Griffith's Valuation was compiled. Griffith's Valuation (1856) documents the holdings as they were before the land was 'striped', while this map shows the newly divided holdings and identifies their occupiers. Cloonascragh is a placename rarely if ever heard nowadays. In that list of the main lease-holders on the Dillon estate from c.1805 (referred to above) Cloonascra is given as the collective name for the townlands of 'Forthill, Mountain, Tawnaghmore, Gurteenmore, Grallagh Garden and Lisbane'. Here it refers to just the townland of Mountain.





# TULLAHANE

The part surveyed by Robert Smith 1824



N <sup>o</sup>	Tenants Names	Arable	Reclaimed	Bottoms	Reclaimable	Bogs	Totals
1	Michael Conway	2 0 8	4 0 5	1 0 10	0 0	0 0 0	5 0 25
6	D <sup>o</sup> D <sup>o</sup>	5 0 8	3 0 31	2 1 31	4 1 8	1 0 28	16 0 26
2	Pat Gilleary & Co	25 1 1	12 3 38	7 1 19	7 0 29	8 0 22	60 3 29
3	Luke Deskin	5 0 37	3 2 5	2 3 8	1 4	0 0	11 3 14
4	Pat Goldfray	8 3 30	3 3 2	2 0 3	2 3 29	1 1 10	18 3 34
5	Pat McDonnell	5 0 3	2 38	1 1 18	2 2 8	3 2 24	13 1 11
	Roads and Lanes	1 1 38	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 1 38
	General Total	50 3 37	28 0 39	17 0 19	17 0 38	14 1 4	127 3 17

$25. 2. 26 - 15. 1. 1 - 9. 3. - 10. - 9 - 6. - 22$   
 $25. 1. 11 - 12. 3. 38 - 7. 1. 19 - 7. - 29 - 8. - 22$

Map courtesy of The National Library of Ireland.





Gorteenbeg

Moneymore

## References

Arderry

Lurga

	Timothy Ament	Arable	Reclaimed Bog	Reclaimed Bog	Total
✓ 1	John Ament	3 10	5 0 0	2 0 10	10 3 22
✓ 2	Peter Ament	1 30	2 2 4	3 1 10	8 2 11
✓ 3	Pat Ament	4 0 0	1 2 20	3 0 22	12 2 20
✓ 4	James Kelly	3 3 14	5 2 26	4 0 11	14 2 20
✓ 5	Pat Fitzmorris	2 5 20	10	1 1 10	3 0 30
✓ 6	William Quin	3 2 0	1 5	2 20	2 0 2 11
✓ 7	Pat Forde	2 3 30	1 2 10	1 0 10	4 0 10
✓ 8	Mr. Forde	9 2 27	4 0 20	3 20	11 2 28
✓ 9	Thomas Hunt	2 0 25	2 31	3 2 20	6 1 06
✓ 10	James Cox	1 0 20	20	20	2 1 16
✓ 11	John Fitzmorris	6 3 31	3 22	3 31	6 1 27
✓ 12	Pat Fitzmorris	4 1 4	20	20	3 1 11
✓ 13	Thomas Brinley	5 0 11	1 2 0	15	2 2 24
✓ 14	Martin Dwyer	5 1 16	1 1 0		3 0 27
✓ 15	James Hunt	3 0 20		1 20	5 1 14
✓ 16	Pat Boland	6 2 1	1 0 10	2 21	1 2 20
✓ 17	William Boland	8 1 20	1 20	2 11	1 18
✓ 18	Pat Forins	3 3 20	1 15	1 11	1 0 16
✓ 19	Martin Waldron	3 2 30	1 1	32	10
✓	Road				1 23
	Total	72 0 2	21 2 26	19 2 46	31 2 5





# DERRYNAONG

1858

Scale



*Brookloon South*

*John Cunningham C.E.*



*Killunagher*

Map courtesy of The National Library of Ireland.







Map courtesy of The National Library of Ireland.

R E F E R E N C E												
N <sup>o</sup> TENANTS	GOOD ARABLE			SECOND QUALITY			SUPERIOR ARABLE			BOTTOM		
	A	R	P	A	R	P	A	R	P	A	R	P
1 BARTHOLOMEW FINN	-	-	-	2	2	20	2	3	3	1	5	6
2 JAMES FINN	-	-	-	2	3	11	1	3	3	1	7	8
3 THOMAS GREALLY	3	1	22	3	2	1	-	-	-	4	1	13
4 THOS FITZMAURICE SEN	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	3	1	3	11
5 DONNICK NOWLAN	6	1	20	-	-	-	2	-	3	1	2	3
6 PATRICK NOWLAN	1	1	12	1	2	2	-	-	-	2	2	17
7 OWEN NOWLAN	3	2	14	-	-	-	3	2	2	1	1	18
8 THOS FITZMAURICE JUN	6	3	13	-	-	-	2	3	3	1	2	14
9 DAVID FITZMAURICE	6	3	13	-	-	-	1	-	3	1	3	2
TOTAL	30	3	202	10	2	32	19	3	17	16	2	58







John Prenty, Mary Prenty, Christy Cooney (Uachtarán CLG) and Pat Egan, Galway, pictured with the Old Sam Maguire Cup and a collection of medals won by Jack Lynch which were on display on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Croke Park earlier this year.



John Prenty, CEO Connacht GAA, on the occasion of H.M. The Queen's visit to Croke Park, being introduced to the Queen, Prince Philip, President Mary McAleese and Christy Cooney (Uachtarán CLG). Also present were the President of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, Pat Quill, President of the Camogie Association, Joan O'Flynn, President of the Handball association, Walter O'Connor, President of the Leinster Council, Seamus Howlin, Secretary of the Provincial Council of Britain, Tadhg Meehan.



Photo from the 1950s. L-R: Paddy Jordan, Maureen Jordan, Kathleen Cunningham, May Moyles, Dora Forde, Madge Neary, Doreen Forde, Denis Sweeney.



Enjoying the Tooreen dance were Una Shiels, Ballyhaunis, Joan Sexton, Dundalk, Breda Burke and Mary Higgins, Ballyhaunis.—Pic.: Frank Dolan.

Newspaper clipping from 1989



Pictured are Mai Lynch, Ennis, Co. Clare, formerly Byrne from Clare Street (left), and Imelda O'Hanlon, Manchester, nee Biesty from Pattenspark, old school pals from the Convent of Mercy in the 1950's, renewing acquaintances in Ballyhaunis back in the early 1990's.







Darren Munnich who graduated from the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps on 8th October in Rotterdam. Darren is the son of Michael and Joan Munnich. Darren's mother Joan Keegan came from Main St. and has been living in Holland for the last thirty years. Darren is also grandson of the late Michael Keegan and Mary Keegan who now resides in the Brickens Group Home.

Darren is wished every success in his future in the United Intervention team by the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps.



Pat O'Connor (Hazelhill), a member of the Women's Football Association of Ireland, presents the FAI Women's Intermediate Cup to Yvonne Byrne, Knox St. (pictured right) and Cora Staunton of the victorious Ballyglass side following their 3-1 win over Raheny United in the final at Milebush Park on Sunday 4th September. © Michael McLaughlin Studios, Westport.



Corrine Flatley, Clare St., who celebrated her seventieth birthday on the 22nd of September. She celebrated her special birthday with her family and friends in the Hazel, Ballyhaunis.

Above: Corrine with her family Aiden, Pdraic, John and Mae.  
Below: Corrine with her grandchildren.



Michael Lyons, Bridge Street, celebrates his 75th birthday in the Ave Maria Nursing Home in Tooreen. Included are Michael's nephews Pdraic and Aiden Flatley, and sister Corrine Flatley, and some of his grandnieces and grandnephews.







# BALLYHAUNIS GAA CLUB 2011

BY VINNY CAULFIELD, SECRETARY

2011 has once again been a busy year on and of the fields for Ballyhaunis GAA Club. On the field, County titles were annexed at U-16 Football, Senior Hurling Championship and League. Also, our Senior Football Team gained promotion to Div. 1B of the Mayo League, and our U-13 Footballers won Div. 1 East Mayo Football, and were within a whisker of winning County Div. 1 League, while their counterparts at U-12 finished unbeaten in all games. Our U-13 and U-14 Hurlers also reached County Finals. Off the field, our members have been busy; improvements have been made to our training and playing fields, a new sand-based training area is planned for next season and improvement of the lighting for the training field is also planned. The Club is committed to providing sporting facilities for all our young people and with this in mind, a ladies section has been formed in the club and we hope to field teams at U-12 and U-14 for girls in 2012, while also catering for the younger girls at U-8 and U-10 by competing in blitzes.

None of this would be possible without the continued help of you, our supporters and friends. Your support, both financial and moral, is appreciated by the officers and members of Ballyhaunis GAA Club. We hope that we can repay this loyalty to the Club by ensuring we field teams that will represent you with honour, pride and no little skill.

At this time of year we must also remember friends and family that have passed on. We especially remember former Club Officer Michael Waldron. News of the sudden passing of 'The Minister', as he was known to all, in July of this year was greeted with shock and disbelief. Michael was widely known, highly respected and much loved throughout this country and abroad. One of the genuine characters of the community, Michael's sad death has robbed us all of a truly larger-than-life and legendary figure and taken from our club its anchor, torchbearer and chief. Michael was an Irishman, proud of his roots, his family, his community and his heritage. He was a lover of all things Gaelic; our music, song and dance, our poetry and our literature, our history and heritage, and above all our Gaelic games. Michael understood the huge importance of promoting underage football in the club and nurturing talent from an early age. He served Ballyhaunis GAA club as officer, selector and most loyal supporter over a lifetime of commitment. During his time in England in the 1960s and early 70s he was a leading light in the Roger Casements GAA Club of Coventry. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and salute Michael's contribution to Cumann Luthchleas Gael, Beal Atha hAmhnais and extend our heartfelt sympathy to his family and wide circle of friends. Ar dheis De go raibh a anam dilís.

2011 has seen many of our young people once again having to leave our shores in search of employment. We hope that when things eventually turn around they, like many Ballyhaunis people before them, will return and contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of this country. To all the readers of Annagh magazine, whether you're in Agloragh, Adelaide, Clagnagh, Chicago, Johnstown or Johannesburg, we wish you a Happy and Holy Christmas, and a peaceful and prosperous 2012.

## U-8 Boys Football

U-8 Football training took place each and every Friday evening from March to the end of October under the management of former County under-age and senior club players Tommy Caulfield and David Burke. The focus on these one hour sessions was to impart the basic skills of Gaelic Football in an atmosphere of fun, friendship and respect. During the course of the season we took part in a number of blitzes hosted by Michael Glavey's, Moy Davitts and Mayo Gaels, as well as a series of games with near neighbours Eastern Gaels. We were joined in the month of June by Ethan and Calum Cleary, two fine young players from the Orang Eire Og Club in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Ethan and Callum are grandsons of John and Mary Frances Cleary, Clare Rd.

This year's games at U-8 level were organised according to the go-games programme, the central philosophy of which is to promote full participation and fair play while catering for the development needs of the participants. A very successful year was rounded up by the now traditional Mick O'Connell Tournament.

The U-8 panel comprised of Jamie Allen, Kian Burke, Ronan Byrne, Daire Caulfield, Sean Caulfield, Rachel Cleary, Tyler Coyne, Kevin Durkan, Michael Finn-Richardson, Holly Gallagher, Lorna Higgins, Thomas Maughan, Brian Mc Hugh, Padraic McHugh, Sean Morley, Erin Murray, Clayton, Nolan, Dara Rattigan, Eoin Ryan, Aiden Sloyan, Cian Walsh and Dallan Walsh.

## U-10 Football

Training for the U-10s commenced in March and concluded with the annual staging of the Mick O'Connell Cup on the October bank holiday weekend. During the year they competed against Mayo Gaels and Moy Davitts in a new blitz style competition. The games were played under the 'go games' rules which gave players the opportunity to play in different positions and placed less emphasis on winning and more on enjoying the game. They played seven rounds in this competition as well as a blitz hosted by Michael Glavey's, the Barry Butler Memorial competition and the Joe Webb Cup. Management would like to thank all the parents who helped out with lifts to matches, refereeing games and preparing tea and sandwiches after competitions.





Panel: Soheab Arshad, Tommy Cleary, Daniel Hill, Ethan Keane, Pierce Nestor, Haroon Shabbir, Tristan Walsh, Aidan Byrne, David Finn, Conor Keane, Darren Maughan, Daniel Murray, Diarmuid Phillips, Luke Walsh and Joshua Webb. Manager: Brian Murray.

### U-12 Football

U-12 training takes place at the pitch every Friday evening from March to October. The emphasis on our training is the basic skills of Gaelic Football: soloing, passing, tackling, etc. The U-12 League this year was played on a 'go games' format and we were in a very strong League with five other teams, Kiltimagh, Aghamore, Ballintubber, Moy Davitts and Westport. Our opening game was away to Kiltimagh on a wet and windy evening. This turned out to be our toughest game which we won by three points. We proceeded to win all our games in the League. We also played a number of challenge games throughout the year against Ballygar, Aghamore and Dunmore.

In our final competition of the year, the Joe Webb Cup, four nine-a-side teams captained by Tommy Maughan, Evan Henry, David Cunnane and Liam Herr participated in what turned out to be a fantastic day with all the players showing great skill and spirit. The team captained by Tommy Maughan emerged as the eventual winners.

The Webb family were well represented on the day and the Cup was presented to the winning captain by Joanne Webb. All of the children received medals and refreshments after the competition. We would like to thank the Webb Family for their continued support of our under-age football in Ballyhaunis: a fitting tribute to the late Joe Webb.

Overall 2011 was a very successful year for our U-12 team. The panel's behaviour on and off the pitch was impeccable and we would like to thank all the parents who provided transport to matches throughout the year. Finally, we wish to thank the officers of the Club for all their help and support during the year and we look forward to another successful year in 2012.

U-12 panel: Jaegar Ali, Niall Coffey, Evan Fitzmaurice, Conal Caulfield, Patrick Caulfield, Neil Carney, Barry Cribben, David Cunnane, Jack Coyne, Brendonas Graf, Dara Healy, Evan Henry, Liam Herr, Gary Higgins, Tommy Maughan, Michael McDonagh, Uneeb Naseer, Cormac Phillips, Aaran Rattigan, John Reidy, Conor Sloyan and Mac Angel Ubazuono. Management: Seamus Caulfield and Martin Fitzmaurice.

### U-12 Hurling

Our U-12 Hurlers participated in a number of games this year and performed admirably at all stages. They then went on to play in a mini league in the later stages of the year. In their final game against Moytura they showed how they had progressed throughout the year by winning 8-05 to 5-08.

U-12 panel: Uneeb Naseer, Neil Carney, Daniel Hill, Evan Godfrey, Ryan Keadin, Gary Higgins, Cormac Phillips,

Jack Coyne, Liam Herr, Conor Keane, Dylan Webster, Danielle Coyne, Dara Healy and Conal Caulfield.

### SCOIL ÍOSA: Boys Football

Scoil Íosa's first match for the Division One School League was against Claremorris at the Ballyhaunis GAA pitch resulting in victory for Ballyhaunis by eighteen points in bad weather. Next up was Westport, again in Ballyhaunis, and it was a very difficult game, but from a last minute goal the 'haunis won by a point. The next challenge was Ballinrobe in Ballinrobe. It was an overcast day and they were a hard team, but once again the Red and Black prevailed. The next game was semi-final day in McHale Park against Kiltimagh. Unfortunately, we succumbed to the better team on the day. Great heart could be taken from the fact that the boys were trailing by eleven points at half time.

### SCOIL ÍOSA: Mini Sevens

The Mini Sevens started in early October. In the group was Scoil Íosa, Aghamore, Barrnacarrol, and Ballindine. The venue was Garrymore. First up was Aghamore whom Scoil Íosa accounted for easily. The next match was against Barrnacarrol, but unfortunately the result didn't go the way Mr. Henry's charges planned. Finally, the last game was Scoil Íosa versus Ballindine. It was a 'must win' game for the boys and they narrowly lost out by three points again. Third place was little consolation for the boys having played so well at times. On the panel were Neil Carney, Evan Henry, David Cunnane, Thomas Maughan, Gary Higgins, Cormac and Eamonn Phillips, Mudasar Rehman, Abusafyan Ahmad, Geger Ali Ahmed, Liam Herr, Patrick and Conal Caulfield, Michael McDonagh and Darren Coyne, our Captain.

### SCOIL ÍOSA: Boys Hurling - Seven a-side

The Boys Mini Sevens started in early February. There were five teams in the group. There was Tooreen, Kilmovee, Knock, Logboy and Ballyhaunis. The panel consisted of Eamonn Phillips (Captain), Gary Higgins, Sean Herr, Liam Herr, Cormac Phillips, Evan Henry, David Cunnane, Uneeb Nasser, Conal and Patrick Caulfield. The first game was against Logboy whom they beat by five points. This was followed by a two point victory over Kilmovee - an awful close game. They played Tooreen after that but unfortunately lost by a couple of points. The last game was against Knock which we drew. We finished second in our group with Tooreen finishing in first place.

### U-14 Football

Training for U-14 Footballers started in March. Challenge games were played against Swinford and Kiltimagh before we started our League campaign in Div. 2. We had victories over Westport, Ballaghaderreen, Carras and Belmullet which qualified us to meet Aghamore in the League semi-finals. We were defeated by our near neighbours only after a replay. In the East Mayo Championship we also lost out to Aghamore at the Semi-final stage.

The County Championship started in August and the





feeling was that we could do well in this competition. However, defeats to Ballina Stephenites and The Neale, and a solitary victory over Burrishoole, meant that we failed to progress beyond the group stages. Thanks to all the players from the management team of Paddy Phillips, Johnny Cribben, Jason Foody and Seamus Egan.

### U-13 Football

The U-13s campaign kicked off once the Under-14s were finished, and, after inexplicably losing a game we had dominated against Ballina Stephenites, the boys showed their true worth in the games that followed. They racked up a series of convincing wins and lost only narrowly to a Castlebar team that had swept away all other teams by wide margins. Victory in the final away game against Knockmore ensured that they will be competing in Division 1 of next season's U-14 competition.

### East Mayo U-13

In the East Mayo U-13 we fielded two teams. Our A team competed in Div. 1 while the B team competed in Div. 3. Our B team, made up of U-11 and U-12 players, gave a great account of themselves and despite losing to Eastern Gaels, Kilmovee and Kiltimagh B, they displayed an excellent brand of football which won them many admirers.

In the A competition we started with a shaky enough performance and just about managed to sneak a lucky victory over Aghamore. In the following game against Swinford we upped our performance and ended up winning comfortably. We now faced Kiltimagh in the final, and on a day in which we blitzed our opponents, we had twenty-two 'stars'.

Panel: John Cunnane, Sean Herr, Eamonn Phillips, Piarais Caulfield, Gary Higgins, Brian O'Neill, Jack Coyne, Thomas Maughan, Calum Gardner, Darren Coyne, Oisín Henry, Cathal Carney, Liam Herr, Patrick Caulfield, Liam Foody, James Reynolds, David Cunnane, Cormac Phillips, Evan Henry, Eddie Cleary, Carlton Ubazeuono and MacAngel Ubazeuono. Team management: Paddy Phillips, Jason Foody and Kevin Henry.

### U-13 Hurling

The season for our U-13 Hurlers started on 25th June with a win over Castlebar in Castlebar by a score line of 3-04 to 2-02. The next match against Ballina was conceded and Ballyhaunis defeated Westport in the next round by 1-08 to 0-1. Again, another concession by Ballyvary left Ballyhaunis straight into a County Final against Westport who avenged their earlier defeat on a score line of 2-03 to 1-02.

Panel: Oisín Coffey, Neil Carney, Michael Hill, Ryan Keadin, Gary Higgins, Brian O'Neill, Cathal Carney, Calum Gardiner, Jack Coyne, Eamon Phillips, Liam Herr, Evan Godfrey, Dara Healy, Uneeb Naseer, Conal Caulfield, Cormac Phillips, Barry Cribbin, Neil Coffey, Danny Hill, Dylan Webster and Carlton Ubazeuono.

### U-14 Hurling

Their first match out against Ballina in our home ground was on the 3rd of April. As the final whistle was blown the lads won 2-8 to no score. The next match was an away game to Belmullet, a long journey from Ballyhaunis, but this didn't affect the lads at all. As the game progressed both sides showed great skill and determination with the match very tight as time approached, but as the sound of the referee's whistle echoed around the pitch Ballyhaunis came out winners by just two points. The final score 3-8 to 5-0. The 17th of April saw the lads' dreams come through as they edged out Ballyvary by only a three point win, sealing their place in the Final and being the only team to win all three of their matches. As the day arrived for their final in Tooreen against Ballina, luck wasn't on the side of the Ballyhaunis lads as they lost out by just three points at the end of the match. The final score, a bitter 2-5 to 2-2.

Their first round of the Championship saw them play Castlebar in Castlebar. The match didn't seem to be going Ballyhaunis away with the final score 9-3 to 1-1 in Castlebar favour. The second round saw the lads return to their old selves with the fight put back in their hearts. The game showed the amazing skill on both sides with Ballyhaunis making sure Ballyvary had no chance of coming back with the final score line of 7-12 to 1-3. The last round of the Championship saw our last game to be against Belmullet. The lads' hunger had return with the chance to lift a cup again in front of them; they knew a win was needed. They showed determination and, in the end, won 5-10 to 2-3. As the lads reached McHale Park for their Final against Castlebar, once again everything went wrong on the day and saw the bitter disappointment back again as the final whistle was blown with a score line of 7-7 to only 0-3.

The team consisted of O. Coffey, C. Lannon, M. Hill, G. Higgins, B.O'Neill, S. Herr, P. Keadin, C. Gardiner, R. Kilbane, J. Cribbin, C. Carney, J. Kelly, L. Herr, S. Carrick, E. Phillips, C. Phillips, R. Keadin, E. Godfrey, J. Coyne, J. Ronayne, E. Cleary, T. Cleary, D. Healy, N. Carney, N. Coffey.

Managers: G.. Hayes & S. Hayes. Selectors: P. Higgins, G. Lyons and R. Lucey.

### U-15 Football

The U-15 team commenced the League campaign in Div. 2A and played all games in successive weeks concluding the season on 16th October. With a combination of players who had enjoyed Championship success with the U-16s and U-14s who reached the League semi-final, the panel won two of their five games playing some very attractive football along the way. The last game was played minus four players unavailable through injury. The Club wishes a speedy recovery to the lads.

Winning the two opening games by substantial margins the next three were lost to very strong opposition and the panel were placed third in the table on scoring difference. Drawing from a small panel of players who demonstrated great commitment to training and games, the lads completed the season well buoyed up by their





performance and eager to tackle the U-16 League and Championship of 2012.

The players who represented the club at U-15 were: R. McCormack, S. Sutton, J. Kelly, S. Ryan, Joe Lyons, M. Phillips, R. Nester, S. Nolan, A. Ali, R. Kilbane, James Lyons, J. Cribben, W. Rehmon, D. Egan, E. Omoarebun, N. Folliard, J. Coyne, C. Henry, C. Gardner, C. Reidy, J. Fahy, F.A. Mohammad and S. Carrick.

### U-16 Football

Coming off the pitch after being defeated by ten points by Islandeady in our first League game last March, it was hard to be optimistic about the year that lay ahead. It wasn't just the defeat, but the way we seemed to give in when things weren't going our way that worried the management. In the dressing rooms afterwards players and management promised each other that whatever happened in the future we would never again throw in the towel before the final whistle.

Our opponents for the next game, Crossmolina, faced a Ballyhaunis team that were not going to be beaten and we emerged winners by four points. This was followed by a one point loss to Castlebar Mitchells in a game in which we dominated everywhere except the scoreboard. In the next game, away to Moy Davitts, we were defeated by a highly rated home team in a thirteen goal thriller. Kiltane conceded the following game and in our last League game away to Naomh Padraig a win would have put us in the semi-finals. Unfortunately, luck did not shine on us that evening in Killala. Every time we nudged in front, the opposition found a goal from somewhere, and in the dying moments the crossbar, post, goalkeeper and wides all conspired to keep us from scoring, when eventually time ran out for us. All in all we have seen a big improvement in the squad over the League campaign and eagerly looked forward to the summer and Championship football.

Training was upped after the Junior Cert for the first round of the East Mayo Championship and it was clear to be seen that the lads were hungry for football. A challenge match against Castlerea proved this when we turned over a talented Roscommon outfit. We faced Charlestown in the East Mayo semi-final on Sat. 9th July in Aghamore before a large Ballyhaunis following, and turned in our best performance so far by defeating our opponents by 22 points in a game where everyone played their part. Parke, Tourmakeady and Lahardane were all dispatched in the County Championship and we now faced the team that had defeated us in our opening League game, Islandeady, in the County Semi-final. Our opponents never stood a chance that evening in Balla and every time Islandeady looked like getting within striking distance Ballyhaunis upped a gear and emerged victorious 4-12 to 2-12. In the County Final we faced Burrishoole in McHale Park, Castlebar. We turned around at half time, three points down. In the dressing room at the interval selector Martin Finan rallied the players and, in a low scoring second half in which our defence said "thou shalt not pass", we were ahead by 2-6 to 0-9 when the referee blew the final whistle. It was

amid scenes of great joy our Captain, Morgan Lyons accepted the trophy on behalf of the team from Chairman of Mayo Bord na nÓg Seamus Touhy. At the time of writing we still are awaiting to play Moy Davitts in the East Mayo Final.

Panel: Haseeb Arshad, Damien Callaghan, Jason Coyne, Joey Fahy, Cyril Collins, Shane Healy, Neil Folliard, Sean Gildea, Jack Hughes, Jamail Kezze, James Lyons, Joseph Lyons, Morgan Lyons, Tom McDonagh, Robert Morley, Mohammad Ahmad, Rory Nestor, Stephen Nolan, Michael O'Rourke, Ebeleghe Omoarebun, Mark Phillips, Waqas Rehmon, James Reidy, Mark Sutton, Ryan Kilbane and Azad Ali.

Management: Stephen Nolan, James Reidy, Martin Finan and Vinnie Caulfield would like to thank the panel of players for their commitment to games and training during the year, and thank parents and supporters for all their help. Congratulations to Morgan Lyons who represented Mayo U-16 in the Ted Webb Cup.

### U-16 Hurling

The Ballyhaunis U-16 hurling team had a reasonably good season this year. We played in the 'B' Division this year because early on in the season we were lacking the numbers both at training and at the matches. We got off to a great start in the League beating both Belmullet and Westport comfortably. Caiseal Gaels then conceded the next match. We now faced Ballyvary in the final in which we were defeated 2-11 to 3-09.

After the final we took a break before Championship started. We had recruited a few talented players during our League campaign and they were developing into skilful hurlers. We lost out to Westport in our first game. Our next game came against a very weak Caiseal Gaels team in which we dominated from the first whistle. The next game against Moytura was the one we all expected to be our hardest game of the Championship. We fought well in one of our best performances of the year, but we lost out eventually by two points. Now we were set to play Ballyvary again and with the loss of the League final still in our minds, we had our best performance of the year outclassing them in every division of the pitch. The final score was 4-10 to 2-11. We hoped now that if we could just win our next game we could make it into a Championship final to have another shot at Moytura, but it wasn't to be. Castlebar beat us by one point in a game we had to win and possibly should have.

We can take a lot of positives from our season in that we are developing a good squad of players. Hopefully now, we will be able to get a shot at the "A" Championship in two years' time. We would like to say a special thanks to Michael Regan our Manager and our Mentors Ray Lucey, Gerry Lyons and Peter Higgins for helping us out at training and at matches. Team: Mohammad Ahmad, Mark Sutton, Mark Phillips, Steven Ryan, Jack Hughes, Morgan Lyons, Sean Gildea, Shane Healy, Haseeb Arshad, James Lyons, Waqas Rehman, Jason Coyne, Ryan Kilbane, Joseph Fahy, Kevin Kilbride, Joseph Kelly, Patrick Keadin, Michael O'Rourke, Cyril Collins, Omo Ebeleghe, Joseph Lyons and Jamil Kezze.





## Minor Football

In the Minor League we competed in Div. 3. At the beginning of the year the panel set a target of qualifying for the knock-out stages of the competition. We started with a well deserved victory away to Kiltimagh and kept up this good form by defeating Naomh Pdraig at home. This was followed by defeats to St. Muirdeach's and St. Gerard's. We got back on track with a win over The Neale and now with three games remaining, one win would see us through to the League semi-finals. A narrow defeat away to Davitts was especially hard to take in light of some officiating which left mentors, players, parents and supporters from both teams dumbfounded. A defeat away to Mayo Gaels left us needing to win our last game against Breaffy and, despite playing our part in an open and high scoring game, we went down by a goal.

As summer and the Championship approached the panel suffered from players being unavailable through work commitments. This affected numbers at training and matches, and resulted in two defeats in the Summer League to Ballaghaderreen and Kiltimagh. In the East Mayo Championship we lost out to Kiltimagh by eight points.

Looking back we feel that if a full panel had been available a lot more games could have been won in both League and Championship, and all the more disappointing when teams that we had defeated ended up qualifying for county finals.

Congratulations to Eoghan Collins (Island) who lined out for the Mayo Minor Football Team in the Minor League and Championship. The management would like to thank the panel for their efforts during the year.

Panel: Haseeb Arshad, Jarlath Carney, Eoghan Collins, James Cribben, Eugene Durcan, Jason Fahy, John Flynn, Sean Griffin, Ultan Griffin, Iqbal Hannan, Gearoid Keane, Jamil Kezee, Patrick Kiely, Kieran McDermott, Tom McDonagh, Shane Murphy, Conor Nolan, Darren Nolan, Stephen Nolan, Adrian Phillips, Daire Richardson, Joe Sutton, Shane Healy, Morgan Lyons and Sean Gildea.

## Minor Hurling 2011

Ballyhaunis Minors played Tooreen at home in their first game. This was a hard fought game and many felt Ballyhaunis should have won. In the end they drew 0-12 to 1-9 points. Next came Castlebar. Ballyhaunis were missing a few and were well beaten on the day 6-6 to 0-4 points. Ballyhaunis next played Tooreen in Tooreen. Again this was a game in which the lead was swapped throughout, but in the end Tooreen won 1-9 to 0-8 points. The luck just didn't go Ballyhaunis' way on the day. To finish the group stages Ballyhaunis had to play Castlebar again. Castlebar were the convincing winners 2-10 to 0-9 points.

On a year that had great prospects things just didn't fall Ballyhaunis' way. We would like to thank all the lads that trained all year and now some of them have joined the Senior panel and won their first County medal with the Senior team. Management: Adrian Brennan and Jason Swords.

## U-21 Hurling

Ballyhaunis conceded to Tooreen in their first game as Ballyhaunis were unable to field due to players' work commitments. Next Ballyhaunis played Castlebar in Castlebar. Ballyhaunis were the convincing winners on the day beating Castlebar 4-10 to 0-7 points. This left the three teams on level points but due to Ballyhaunis having conceded to Tooreen the teams had to play-off to decide who would meet Castlebar in the final. Ballyhaunis faced Tooreen in Ballyhaunis. Tooreen just pipped the fourteen man Ballyhaunis team on 0-14 to 1-7 on the day.

Well done to all lads involved in training all year and now a lot of them have joined the Senior panel and won their first County medal with the Senior team. Also a few of our U-21s represented Mayo this year. Congrats to Brian Hunt, Liam McDermott, Thaigh Morley, Damien Kiedan and Ciaran McDermott.

Management: J.P. Coen, Pierce Higgins, Adrian Brennan and Jason Swords.

## U-21 Football

In the U-21 Championship Ballyhaunis were hoping to make progress on last year with most of the team still eligible for the grade. In the first game we earned a draw away to Garrymore. Our next game against Charlestown we were forced to concede because of lack of players due to work commitments. A victory in our final group game against Kiltane would have kept us in the competition, and things were looking good for us as we led by as much as ten points in the second half. In the most bizarre of finishes Kiltane turned us over and ended up winners by four points thus ending our interest in the competition.

## Intermediate Football

The Intermediate team operated in Division 1C of the League and went on to play in the Intermediate Championship. The season started on a high note when we overcame Louisburgh comprehensively in the first round of the League in Louisburgh, and this was followed up with victories over Achill, Kilcommon, The Neale and a superb win over Kilmaine which leaves us fighting for promotion having suffered narrow defeats to both Bonniciconlon and Aghamore. Ballyhaunis faced Swinford on our home pitch in our final League match, with the winner earning promotion to Div. 1B. In a game in which 'haunis rediscovered their hunger, the visitors felt the backlash from a team that wanted it more. Ballyhaunis ran out four point winners

However, the story of the year was undoubtedly the team's performance in the Championship when we topped our group, with victories over Parke, Achill and Moy Davitts before beating Belmullet in the County quarter final before going out at the hands of Burrishoole. Overall, progress was made and it all augurs well for next season. Congratulations to Keith Higgins who represented Mayo in League and Championship and continues to be one of the top footballers in the country.





Congratulations to Niall Prenty on being selected Ballyhaunis Footballer of the year for 2010. Thanks to everybody who helped out during the year: Lisa Keadin, John Higgins, Deirdre Browne, Maire Caulfield, Fr. Stephen, Darren Conlon, and a big thank you to Vinnie Freyne Jnr. for photos and videoing of games. Special thanks to Tommy Grogan of Grogan Concrete for sponsoring jerseys.

### Senior Hurling

Another good season at Mayo level for the Ballyhaunis Hurlers has brought two more senior trophies to the East Mayo men. Starting training back in March, a bit earlier than they wanted, last year's beaten Connacht Intermediate Finalists were back on the road again.

The Genfitt Cup was one of our first competitions. Wins against Castlebar, Tooreen and Ballina led to a battle against Westport in the last round, which Ballyhaunis won. That led us straight into a final which, for a number of reasons, was not played until the end of August. In this final against Tooreen, we were behind for a lot of the game, due to the fact we were playing a lot of young players who had not played in a county final before, and the younger players needed the experience to develop their game. Despite playing poorly for most of the match, we came through with good second performances from fit-again Liam Lyons and Fergal Lyons, Niall Murphy and Luke Cribbin and new players, Peter and Paul Walsh. When the final whistle was blown we were ahead by two points, the job was accomplished and Captain Niall Murphy, raised the Genfitt Cup which was presented to him by the Hurling Board Chairman, John Hopkins.

The Senior Championship was more straightforward for Ballyhaunis this year as Ballina and Belmullet withdrew due to a lack of players. In the round robin we beat Castlebar, Tooreen and Westport, and like last year, we found ourselves in a semi final against Castlebar.

In the interim, Ballyhaunis were invited to participate in the Ratoath Elevens, in County Meath, where we had given such a good account of ourselves last year. Again, like last year, we won all our group games to get into the play-offs. Unfortunately, here we met a more physical team in eventual outright winners, Celbridge, who prevented us from reaching the final. However, the experience was invaluable and would stand in our favour later in the year.

The County Semi-final was played in McHale Park where Ballyhaunis had a good win, beating Castlebar on a margin of 2-23 to 0-04 to set up a final with Westport. The County Senior Final took place on the 25th September in McHale Park, where Ballyhaunis turned in a great performance, with scores in the first half from main marksmen, Keith Higgins, Stephen Hoban, Christy McCrudden and Niall Murphy, while the back unit, led by 'Man of the Match' Peter Healy, kept Westport at bay, holding them just two points from play and one long-range free. The Senior title belonged to Ballyhaunis again and the four-in-a-row was achieved.

Many thanks to the management team this year - Team

Manager, J.P. Coen; Coaches, J.J. Hoban and David McConn; Team Selectors, Martin McDermott and Donal Moran.

Special thanks to - Hurling Chairman, Gerry Lyons; Secretary, Peter Higgins; our Kit Man, Ray Lucey, and Physio, Lisa Keadin. Thanks also to our Club Executive this year who pulled out all stops to help us reach our goal. A special thanks to Tadhg Buckley and family whose company, EPS (Electrical Pumping Services), kindly gave us a new set of jerseys. Sadly, Ballyhaunis lost two of its best friends, Maura McDermott, beloved wife of our selector Martin, and Jim McKermitt, father of our player Hughie. Both losses were very sad for us all, as Jim in particular had in the past been involved with the Senior Team. May they rest in peace. On Monday 31st Oct. we were defeated by Four Roads of Roscommon in the Connacht Semi-final.

Panel: Adrian Brennan, Tadhg Buckley, Eoghan Collins, James Cribbin, Luke Cribbin, Joe Flynn, Sean Griffin, Peter Healy, Keith Higgins, Pierce Higgins, Stephen Hoban, Brian Hunt, Damien Keadin, Gearoid Keane, Kieran Kiely, Patrick Kiely, Fergal Lyons, Liam Lyons, Derek McConn, Paul McConn, Christy McCrudden, Kieran McDermott, Liam McDermott, Hugh McKermitt, Tadhg Morley, Niall Murphy, Donal O'Brien, Jason Swords, Paul Walsh, Peter Walsh and Micheál Walsh.

As in other years Ballyhaunis have represented Mayo in Hurling.

U-14: Ryan Kilbane, Joseph Kelly. U-16: Morgan Lyons.

U-21: Brian Hunt, Liam McDermott, Tadhg Morley;

Senior: Donal O'Brien, Derek McConn, Keith Higgins, Brian Hunt, Stephen Hoban, Adrian Brennan, Liam Lyons.

Special Congratulations to Paul McConn on being selected as Ballyhaunis Hurler of the Year 2010, and on his selection as 'The Western People Hurler of the Year 2010'.

Many thanks to all who helped out in 2011, especially people who provided transport, sandwich makers and supporters, etc.



**Ballyhaunis VHI GAA Cúl Camp 2011 Stars of the Future, Shauna Murray, Eamon Phillips and Patrick Caulfield, pictured with their coaches and Club President Hugh Rudden.**







### **Ballyhaunis GAA Club Senior Hurlers – County Champions 2011**

Back row L to r: Kieran Kiely, Peter Healy, Liam Lyons, Fergal Lyons, Patrick Kiely, Liam McDermott, Luke Cribbin, Hugh McKermitt, Niall Murphy, Tadhg Buckley, Jason Swords, Gearóid Keane, Adrian Phillips, James Cribbin, Owen Collins, Sean Griffin, Peter Walsh, John Flynn.  
Front row L to r: Donal O'Brien, Pierce Higgins, Brian Hunt, Adrian Brennan, Stephen Hogan, Paul McConn, Michael Walsh, Damien Kedian, Liam McDermott, Paul McConn, Christy McCrudden, Keith Higgins, Paul Walsh, Shane Murphy.



### **Ballyhaunis GAA Club Senior Footballers 2011.**

Back row L to r: Liam Lyons, Isaac Carroll, Sean Hunt, David McNamara, Jarlath Carney, Rory Finan, Kevin Moran, Ciaran Griffin, Gerard Grogan, Joe Freeley, Kevin Nestor, Paul Jordan, John Gallagher, Aidan Fitzmaurice, Kevin Byrne, Fergal Kelly, Seamus O'Dwyer, Christy McCrudden, Stephen Hogan, Kevin Gallagher, Jason Morley.  
Front row L to r: Joe Sutton, Niall Prenty, Conor Freeley, Adrian Brennan, Declan Doyle, Enda Griffin, Brian Mulrennan, John Prenty, Keith Higgins, Eoghan Collins, Liam McDermott, Brendan Rudden, Brian Hunt.



### **Ballyhaunis GAA Club Under-16 Footballers 2011**







*Top: Under-13 Hurling team 2011.*



**Under-13 Football East Mayo Div. 1 'A' winners.**



**Edel Conway and daughters at All-Ireland Semi-final, Mayo v Kerry.**



**Under-12 Football team with Keith Higgins, Seamus Caulfield, Tommy Caulfield and Martin Fitzmaurice.**



*Above: Eamonn Murren, Vinny Caulfield, Seamus Grogan, Robbie Herr at All-Ireland Semi-final.*



*Left: Tadhg Buckley (EPS) presenting set of jerseys to Ballyhaunis Senior Hurling Team. L – r: Vinny Caulfield, Niall Murphy, Tadhg Buckley Snr., Michael Walshe (Capt.) Michael Webb (Ballyhaunis GAA Club Chairman), Tadhg Buckley Jnr., Gerry Lyons (Chairman, Hurling Sub. Com).*





**Tommy Grogan (Grogan's Concrete) presenting a set of jerseys to the Ballyhaunis Senior Football Team.**

Left to right: Frank Browne (Manager), Paul Webb (Selector), John Prenty (Captain), Tommy Grogan (Sponsor), Michael Webb (Chairman).

## London City Marathon 2011

BY MARK CURLEY

Running a marathon has been a goal of mine for some time, and in November 2010 I applied to run the London City Marathon. I decided to run the marathon for Croí and raise as much money as I could for a very worthy charity. Croí is a charity that has helped improve cardiac care in the West of Ireland. Croí has played a major role in educating people through Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Programmes as well as supporting The Cardiac Surgical Centre for the West of Ireland at University Hospital, Galway. My family and many families across the province have benefitted from the work that Croí has carried out and so my motivation was, in some small way, to thank them for their fantastic work.

On the 17th of April 2011 I ran the 26.2 mile marathon course and posted a time of 4:19. The support I received from family and friends was amazing and I raised over €3,500 for Croí. The training was long and tough but the marathon is one of my proudest achievements. I'm often asked would you run another marathon? Of course I would, and I hope to run the New York City Marathon in 2012. Maybe by then I'll have forgotten how painful they are!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who sponsored me for their most generous contributions. I would particularly like to thank everyone who helped organize and run the Cake Sale, not to mention all of the people who donated cakes. The Cake Sale was a major success and, again, I would like to thank everyone who bought cakes and made donations.



**Marathon Finish Line. L-R: Tracy Kennedy, Rebecca Doherty, Natalie Curley, Cathriona Curley, Mark Curley, Hugh Curley and Keith Curley.**



**Cake Sale. L-R: Tracy Kennedy, Mary Niland, Mark Curley, Roisín Curley and Mary Gurren.**





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ANNAGH WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL ITS PATRONS, PAST AND PRESENT.  
PLEASE SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY.

*All numbers are 094 code unless otherwise stated.*

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<b>Phillips Shoes, Main St.</b>		9630368
<b>Phillips, Eamon, High Class Victualler, Main St.</b>		9630381
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<b>Ruane, P., Radio &amp; T.V. Dealers/Repairs, Knox St.</b>		9630129
<b>Ryan's Supervalu, Newpark</b>		9630359
<b>Scoil Iosa Primary School, Abbeyquarter</b>	Fax/Tel 9630505	Tel 9630310
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<b>Timoney, Martin, RECI, Electrical Contractor, Carrownedan</b>		Mob (087) 2398402
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You can contact Annagh Magazine at the following email address: [info@annaghmag.ie](mailto:info@annaghmag.ie)





## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Annagh Magazine Society. While every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in this magazine is up-to-date and correct, no responsibility will be taken by the Annagh Magazine Society for any errors which might occur.

## Deadline

The deadline for contributing articles and photographs for Annagh 2012 is Friday, 19th October 2012. Email: [info@annaghmag.ie](mailto:info@annaghmag.ie) Annagh would like to thank all its patrons, past and present. Please support local business and industry.

## Some Guidelines for contributors of articles and photographs:

If you wish to contribute an article or photograph for next year's magazine, you can contact Annagh by email at [info@annaghmag.ie](mailto:info@annaghmag.ie), or visit our website [www.annaghmag.ie](http://www.annaghmag.ie).

The deadline for contributions to Annagh 2012 is Friday, 19th October 2012. The eventual inclusion of any article is subject to the discretion of the editorial committee.

## Articles

Articles should not exceed 4000 words.

Hand-written or typed submissions are acceptable.

Articles submitted by email or on CD should preferably be in WORD format. We cannot accept material in Microsoft Publisher format.

It is the policy of the magazine not to include obituaries or memoriam notices.

Due to space constraints, not all photographs or articles can be guaranteed inclusion.

The list of baptisms, marriages and deceased comes directly from the Parish Registers.

The deceased list includes everyone whose funeral Mass takes place in the Parish Church.

The earlier in the year that material is submitted, the better.

All work done on Annagh Magazine is done on a voluntary basis. New members or any help you can give will be most welcome.

## Photographs

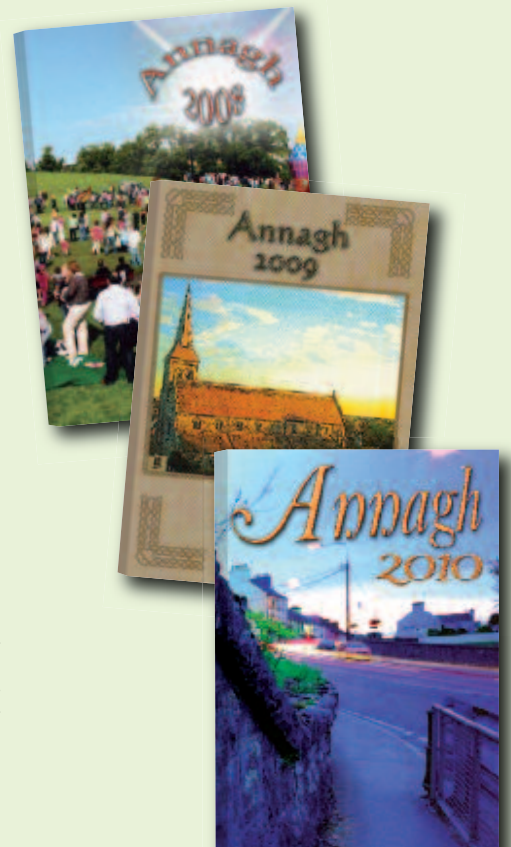
All photographs should be fully named and dated, if possible, and the owner's name included on the back. The contributor's name will be published only if this is requested.

Photographs sent digitally, by email or on CD, should be in jpeg format, and scanned at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi. If they are any smaller, it may not be possible to publish them at an appropriate size.

Photographs should not be imbedded in WORD documents: they can be sent separately as jpegs. Captions should be typed at the end of the article, with reference no. of relevant photo.

Photographs will be returned as soon as possible once the magazine goes to print.

**Annagh 2011 Cover Photographs by Fergal O'Mahony (front) & Jaroslav Jurak (back). Photo of 'Emigrant Train Leaving Ballyhaunis Station' courtesy of Mayo County Library.**





*Emigrant Train leaving Ballyhaunis Station.*



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