

ANNAGH

2024



Foreword



As I write, we're in the early days of October and there is a real feel of Autumn in the air. There is a noticeable drop in temperatures and the leaves are already falling, assisted by the recent winds and rains. I was surprised to see some of the last remaining swallows surfing the cool winds earlier today. Most have already left some weeks ago on their long journey to sunnier climates, thousands of miles away in Namibia and South Africa.

On the world stage, the news headlines are being dominated by the continuing war Gaza, which has already spread to Lebanon, causing over a million people to flee their homes and communities. It is an anxious time for family members of Irish soldiers serving with the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, as they try to avoid being caught in the crossfire. The war in Ukraine, caused by Russia's invasion of a sovereign nation, continues with no end in sight. The upcoming Presidential Election in the USA is being watched closely as both candidates and parties focus their attention on the key swing states.

The issue of migration continues to be a contentious and divisive issue as millions flee war, persecution, famine and the effects of climate change. Here in Ballyhaunis, we can justifiably be proud of the manner our parish community has opened its arms to welcome people of varied nationalities and cultures. Nowhere is this more visible than in our schools. So many individuals and voluntary groups are working to help people to feel welcome and to integrate into our community.

One of the highlights of the past year here in our parish took place on 25th May last when five couples from our Brazilian community were married in one ceremony here in our parish church. There was a real sense of joy and community celebration. Thanks to Irene, our sacristan, who co-ordinated the whole event.

The past year has seen a jump in the number of marriages here in our church with an average of one wedding per week for the past six weeks. This has seen numbers return to pre-Covid levels.

Finally, I commend the Annagh Magazine Society for all the work they've done in bringing together all the material between these covers, giving us a wonderful record of people and events, past and present. It is eagerly awaited each year by all in our parish and our diaspora scattered throughout the world.

As Advent and Christmas approach we pray that the Christmas message of peace and hope will find a home in the hearts of all who are engaged in war and violence and be an inspiration to all who are working for peace in our world.

Stephen Farragher

Fr. Stephen Farragher, P.P.

EDITORIAL

A very warm welcome to *Annagh Magazine* 2024, the 47th successive issue of our annual parish publication. The eagerly anticipated publication of *Annagh* has become a cherished tradition for Ballyhaunis people everywhere and holds a very special place in the hearts of our overseas readers.

I am very grateful to our outstanding editorial committee for your hard work and commitment in producing yet another memorable issue. Thank you for continuing to give of your time to expand and update the historical record of our community. Your dedication is the backbone of this publication, preserving our collective memories for generations to come.

Annagh Magazine Society extends our sincere condolences to the families of our former members Joe Keane and Micheál Smyth who passed away in recent months. Micheál was a valued member of the editorial team in the early days of *Annagh* and gave sterling service to the magazine over many years. Joe was President of *Annagh Magazine Society* for over twenty years and his vast source of local knowledge and history was huge asset to our publication.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha uaisle.

We are grateful to the Family Resource Centre for facilitating our regular meetings in the Friary House. We wish to extend our sincere condolences to the family, work colleagues and friends of Stephen Grogan, co-ordinator of the Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre, who died suddenly in August.

A special word of thanks goes to our talented graphic designer, Sinead Mallee, whose creativity and vision bring our pages to life. We also extend our gratitude to the team of printers at KPS Colour Print Ltd. in Knock for their professionalism and advice.

I also wish to thank all of our contributors for your wonderful stories, photographs, and reports. It is important to remind our contributors that we usually set the deadline for submissions around the second week of October. Meeting this deadline is crucial for the smooth progress of our publication and timely submissions are greatly appreciated. We cannot guarantee the inclusion of material submitted after the deadline.

Annagh Magazine Society would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all of the remarkable volunteers in our community for your dedication and the generous gift of your time to so many groups and organisations. We would also like to commend all those who have engaged in fundraising for so many worthy causes throughout this past year.

Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude to our patrons for your continued enthusiasm and financial contributions. Your generosity ensures the ongoing success of our yearly magazine.

On behalf of *Annagh Magazine Society* I hope that you all enjoy reading this latest edition as much as we have enjoyed compiling and creating it for you.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh agus gach dea-ghuí oraibh.

Tommy Caulfield

(Chairperson, *Annagh Magazine Society*)

Joe Keane on the occasion of his 101st birthday, 20th Sept. 2024. President of *Annagh Magazine Society* 2003 - 2024.



The Ragged Jacket

*Although I'm but a working man,
And live by honest labour;
I will always do the best I can
To assist a needy neighbour.*

*Health and contentment are all my wealth,
With honesty to back it;
Although I'm poor, my meaning's pure
And I wear a ragged jacket.*

*All men are equal born at first,
In this and every nation;
The rich among the poor would be
But for wealth and education.*

*But when we're laid beneath the sod,
With one hundred years to back it;
Where is the man can tell the bones
That wore the ragged jacket?*

This poem, with its sartorial theme and metaphors, was Joe Keane's favourite party-piece.

Annagh Magazine Society 2024. **President:** Joe Keane; **Vice-President:** John Halpin; **Chairperson:** Tommy Caulfield; **Asst. Chairpersons:** Seamus Mulrennan; Jim London; **Secretary:** Noreen Ruane Dalton; **Asst. Secretary:** Paul Waldron; **Treasurer:** Edward Mulhern; **Asst. Treasurer:** John Kilduff; **P.R.O.:** Nell Rochford; **Asst. P.R.O.:** Gabriel Smith; **Patrons' Officer:** Mike Griffin.

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LOOKING BACK ON THE YEAR 2024

Mike Byrne

NOVEMBER 2023

The month of November is a sad one for the village of Carrmack and indeed for the residents of Brickens Retirement Home when well-known and renowned singer Kevin Prendergast dies suddenly at his residence in Brickens... Scoil Íosa deputy principal Kevin Henry gives another stirring performance in the All-Ireland Scór competition when he represents Ballyhaunis and Mayo GAA at the All-Ireland Finals in Killarney... Cemetery prayers were recited in the Friary and Parish cemeteries on Sunday, 5th Nov... Main Street publican Stephen Nolan is nominated by Fianna Fail to contest the next county council election at a well-attended convention in Ballyhaunis at the end of the month. He has operated the popular Mac Siúrtáin's Bar on Main Street with his wife Nuala for many years... The newly transformed Community Hall on Main Street was certainly alive with the sound of music of an international flavour this month for what was a most enjoyable and uplifting evening of the finest of local and international music... Ballyhaunis Community School held their inaugural 'Wonderful World Photograph Competition' in recent weeks, and when it came to judging the best of the photo gallery, management and competition judges were amazed at the quality of the photos submitted. Expert local photographer, Fr. Stephen Farragher, PP., kindly offered his service to help in the selection process. The winners were: 1st Ellen Murphy; 2nd Fiona Duffy; 3rd Kayleigh Devaney; Joint 4th Jorja Hession and Ana Posaric... Ballyhaunis Town FC received great news this month when they received the FAI Club Mark Entry Level. This award certifies that the Ballyhaunis club has met all the requirements set out by the FAI. Well done all with special mention for club treasurer Tom Colleran who put in much work on making sure that all the boxes were ticked in order to reach this standard... David McConn, Alma Gallagher, Lisa McConn and Siobhán Conlon completed the 2023 Dublin City Marathon on 29th October 2023. They were "Running to keep our Defibrillators Running" and raised a massive €5,320 towards the repair and purchase of defibrillators. The cheque was handed over to the Ballyhaunis Defibrillator Group committee - chairperson, Orla Moran; secretary, Paula Grogan; and treasurer, Mary

Sykes... Acclaimed Ballyhaunis singer Olwyn Murray took centre stage at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2023 this month when she performed live at the F1 Paddock Suites. Olwyn, the All-Ireland Talent Show finalist from a few years back, is currently living in Dubai where she performs at some of the country's top venues. Daughter of popular Knox Street publicans Adrian and Breeda Murray, Olwyn has her own entertainment agency company called P.A.L.E. Events, which supplies entertainment throughout the United Arab Emirates and beyond... Mayo County Council allocates funding to the tune of €10,000 for the erection of a memorial to the late Private Billy Kedian who died in the Lebanon in 1999.

DECEMBER 2023

Ballyhaunis GAA hold their Annual General Meeting this month. Glowing tributes are paid to Gerry Lyons from Knockbrack who stands down from the position of Chairman after a number of years of dedicated service to the club in this position... The annual Christmas concert takes place in the Friary with all local choirs taking part. The event is held each year in support of the local branch of St. Vincent de Paul Society. This year's concert raises over €1,700 for the Ballyhaunis VdP to help cope with the extra demands which the season places upon them each year... Three Mayo animal shelter

organisations benefited financially to the tune of €128,000 this month from Government funding, including the Mayo SPCA animal shelter at Pattenspark which is to receive the sum of €36,375... Archbishop Francis Duffy was celebrant at Masses in St. Patrick's Church on Sat. 16th and Sun. 17th of this month. He was very complimentary about the church and very warm reception he received from parishioners... After just one season between the posts for Ballyhaunis Town FC, Ballyhaunis Community School first year student, James Michael Jennings took part in trials with Longford Town and was signed as one of their under-14 goalkeepers. Congratulations James Michael, the very best of luck in the future... Johnstown native Fr. Patrick Ruane dies in Bathurst, Australia. Fr. Pat, as he was better known, served the diocese of Bathurst for sixty-three years having arrived there in December, 1960.



Former Ballyhaunis Community School student Lorna Donnellan with her TUS Citizenship Award which she received last December (2023). Lorna is daughter of Deirdre and Michael Donnellan, Cloonfad and granddaughter of Anne and the late Tom Murphy, Coolloughra, Ballyhaunis.

He was ordained to the priesthood in the summer of that year at All Hallows, Dublin... Congratulations to former Ballyhaunis Community School student Lorna Donnellan on her winning the 2023 TUS Citizenship Award. Every year, the Technological University of the Shannon, Athlone, bestows a special award, known as the TUS Citizenship Award, which recognises altruistic behaviour which stands out due to its positive impact on a fellow student or in the wider community.

2024

JANUARY

This month brings great sadness to the village of Knockbrack and to the wider community of Ballyhaunis as popular and well-known gentleman Gerry Lyons dies at Mayo Hospice following a brief illness. Gerry was centrally involved with Ballyhaunis GAA Club for close on fifty years where he held many positions as player and officer. He was chairman on a number of occasions and held this position up to a very short time before his untimely passing... Scoil Íosa teacher Aisling Toal retires from her post after some forty years' dedicated service to primary school education in Ballyhaunis. A native of Co. Sligo, Aisling joined the staff of St. Mary's Boys School in 1984 and through those years she has given wonderful service to the local primary school... Great sadness and shock in the Tulrahan area this month when thirty-eight years old Terence Killeen dies in a car accident on his way to work in Ballinrobe where he worked as a mechanical engineer with McHale Engineering since 2007. Son of Tom and Mary Killeen, Redhill, Tulrahan, Terence was a former pupil of Began N.S. and Ballyhaunis Community School... The first of the winter storms hits our shores this month when Storm Isha lashes the country on 21st January bringing much destruction throughout the country. Many businesses close down due to the ferocity of the storm and, two days later, Storm Jocelyn moves across the country bringing with it more gale force winds, adding more destruction and power outages right across the country... Ballyhaunis Town FC held their annual general meeting this month... A group of students from Ballyhaunis Community School travelled to St. Gerald's College, Castlebar where they participated in the Mayo Schools Chess competition 2024. Congratulations to the following who claimed the trophy in the novices section: Jeff Nolan, Paddy Fleming, Dylan and Callum Kelly... Gurteen girl Carlagh Peake clinches her sixth national boxing title when she wins the Under-18 50 kg tournament at the National Stadium in Dublin. Carlagh is the first ever female from the Ballyhaunis Boxing Club to land this prestigious title. This title win puts her on the road to Croatia for the Youth European Boxing Championships in April. Carlagh is a sixth-year student

in Ballyhaunis Community School and is daughter of Sue and Martin Peake, Gurteen... The death occurs this month of Maureen Comer from Killinaugher. Maureen worked for many years at Curley's Jewellery store on Bridge Street where she was hugely popular as a store assistant... The death also occurs this month of Margaret Allen of Tooraree (formerly Comer), a popular and highly esteemed lady from this district... At the January meeting of the Ballyhaunis Pastoral Council, members discuss the subject of Funeral Liturgy and the possibility of this being carried on by members of the public in future. Members of the funeral ministry team may be involved in leading some of the prayers at the family home or the funeral home, in the church or at the graveside. The meeting heard that the Diocesan Pastoral Council is working on putting a training plan in place for funeral ministry teams in the various parishes.

FEBRUARY

Ballyhaunis GAA Club announces the Players of the Year for 2023 this month: Liam Herr of Devlis (Senior Footballer of the Year) and Conor Henry of Gurteen (Young Player of the Year)... It was also celebration time for the ladies from the local club this month when the Ballyhaunis LGFA Players of the Year were announced: Eva Henry (Senior Player of the Year) and Katie Madden (Young Player of the Year). Well done to all: keep up the good work... This month is a sad one for the neighbourhood of Gurteen when Henry Madden passes to his eternal reward following a brief illness. Henry was a highly regarded member of the Gurteen/Carrowkeel and Ballyhaunis communities over many years, a hardworking farmer and talented photographer... Great celebrations at Ballyhaunis Community School on Saturday afternoon, 17th February when the school's senior footballers capture the Connacht Post Primary (C) Gaelic Football Championship following a dramatic comeback in the second half against Gortnor Abbey College, Crossmolina, winning in the end by a four point margin... The death takes place of Anne O'Dwyer of Abbey Street. Anne was so well known and very much loved throughout the town of Ballyhaunis over many years... Clare Street native Valerie Curley celebrates thirty years in business in Ballyhaunis. Daughter of Pauline and the late Bertie Curley, Valerie has been operating the very popular Valerie's Hair Salon on Barrack Street with great success over those three decades... Well done to the Ballyhaunis Community School Boys senior team who won the Connacht Final on Sat. 17th Feb... Ballyhaunis Town FC featured strongly when the Mayo Football League teams of the year were announced as well as nominations for players of the year. Receiving nominations for the under-17 Team of the Year were Adam Kelly, Jason Jennings, Kyle

Burke and Isaac Owusu. Isaac was also nominated for the under-17 Player of the Year. Congratulations also to Evan McNamara who was awarded the under-18 Division Two Player of the Year... The death occurs this month of Eugene Morley of St. Gerald's Crescent. Son of the late Paddy and Kathleen (née Waldron) Morley, Woodpark, Eugene was well known for many years as a very efficient and much-loved bar tender at George Delaney's Bar, Bridge Street... The death also takes place this month of Christopher (Blackie) Mongan, Tooraree. Son of Martin (Jnr.) and Winnie Mongan, he was grandson of the late Martin and Catherine Mongan of Abbeyquarter... The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, publishes the first ever Town Centre First plans for twenty-six towns across every county. Speaking on local radio after the announcement, Deputy Dara Calleary confirmed that Ballyhaunis will be the next town to be approved to develop a Town Centre First plan as part of phase two of the initiative. Funding of €30,000 is being allocated to complete a comprehensive town plan to develop Ballyhaunis town centre when phase two comes into operation... The death occurs in Salthill, Galway of the late Ellen (Nell) O'Brien (formerly Mulligan, Hazelhill). She was sister of the late Bertie (Hazelhill) and Tony Mulligan (Galway)... Popular Clare Street hair salon proprietor Alma Carney retires from business after many years of successful trading. Alma opened for business in Clare Street back in 1979.



On Sunday, 3rd Mar. 2024, to mark the start of *National Tree Week*, Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P., blesses the tree saplings and seeds that will be planted in the various Station Areas in the parish.



Pictured are some of the recipients of saplings blessed earlier at Mass in St. Patrick's Church on Sunday, 3rd Mar. 2024. The saplings will be planted in different Station Areas in the parish to mark the beginning of National Tree Week. L-R: John Joe Flanagan (Spaddagh), John Morley (Clagnagh), Marian Regan (Killinaugher), Aoife Regan, Mary Murphy (Bracklaghboy), James Clarke (Abbeyquarter), Vincent Higgins (Knockbrack), Jarlath Fahey (Devlis), Michael Plunkett (Scregg), Maura Fitzmaurice (Abbeyquarter), Richard Waldron (Gurteenmore), Kay Curley (Hazelhill), Tommy Lynch (Derreens), Joe Byrne (Johnstown).

MARCH

The month of March gets off to a great start for Kenneth Murphy of Devlis when he is the winner of the Ballyhaunis GAA Club's much sought after prize of a trip for two to New York to watch Mayo play New York in the Connacht Championship in April. Kenneth is son of Dom and Geraldine Murphy, Murphy's Garage and Gala Supermarket, Devlis... A free Electric Recycling Day took place in the Knox St. carpark (the Lochán) on 2nd of this month... The Ballyhaunis Family and Community Resource Centre (FCRC) welcomes three new members to its voluntary board of management: Grahame Cleary, Muhammad Usman Sarwar and Keith Jones. Congratulations to Tzyy Wang who was appointed chairperson of the FCRC at the same meeting... Sunday, 3rd March marked the beginning of National Tree Week, in conjunction with which, after the 10 am Mass, Fr. Stephen Farragher, PP, blessed a number of beech and oak saplings and seeds. Representatives from each station area took a sapling to be planted throughout the parish. This project was coordinated by horticulturalist, Margie Phillips, Main Street. This was a follow up to 'The Season of Creation' event which took place in our parish last September... Students of Scoil Íosa made their First Confessions in St. Patrick's Church on 5th March... Gurteen girl Carlagh Peake has been selected to represent Ireland in the 2024 European Youth Boxing Championships to be held in Croatia in April. This is her

third time representing her country... What a memorable St. Patrick's Day experience it was for local fireman Padraic Murphy, Knock Road, when he was invited to participate in the Cleveland Saint Patrick's Day Parade this month. Padraic, representing the Mayo County Fire Department, was accompanied in the U.S. experience by his wife Patricia (née Mulhern) and children Cian and Hazel... Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns launch their eagerly awaited Biodiversity Action Plan (2024-2028) in the Community Hall. The Biodiversity Action Plan strives to outline priorities to protect, preserve and enhance the town's rich natural resources. Guests from Mayo County Council, Local Authority Waters Programme, ecologists and interest groups attended... An Irish Night was held in the Community Hall on Sat., 16th Mar to celebrate 'Seachtain na Gaeilge'. It was organised by Ballyhaunis Community Council with sponsorship from Conradh na Gaeilge... Well done to the Ballyhaunis Community School student council for organising a 'Wear Red Day' this month. The students organised a questionnaire, decorated the school, displayed anti-racism posters and carried out a short lesson in their classes to raise awareness on the issue of racism. It is clear that BCS stands against bullying and all forms of racism... The annual Good Friday Cleanup took place on 29th Mar., organised as part of the National Spring Clean.... Ballyhaunis GAA took part in the Senior Scór county finals in Castlebar this month, finishing just one point behind the winners. The team comprised of the Caulfield brothers Tommy and Seamus, Kevin Henry and Martin Waldron... Easter came early this year and Ceremonies took place in St. Patrick's Church on Palm Sunday (24th Mar.), Holy Thursday (28th), Good Friday (29th), Holy Saturday (30th) and Easter Sunday (31st Mar.).

APRIL

As the month of April is Spring Clean Month, Ballyhaunis GAA and LGFA organised a clean-up of the town to support the fantastic work of the Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns Committee (who held their clean-up day on Good Friday). There was a great response to the Spring Clean initiative and all those who participated enjoyed a variety of very deserved refreshments afterwards in the Community Hall... Pupils from Scoil Íosa participate in the recently launched Ballyhaunis Diversity Plan by planting bluebells in the grounds of St. Patrick's Church, under the guidance of their teachers, SNA and members of Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns group... Ballyhaunis GAA Club player Jack Coyne plays a key role in defence for the Mayo Senior team when they defeat New York in Gaelic Park, N.Y., in the first round of the Connacht Championship on a final score of 2-21 to 2-6... And staying with GAA matters, congratulations this month to Ballyhaunis GAA Club's Fionn Conlon who has been named among the Mayo GAA under-17 Celtic Challenge



Fourth class pupils of Scoil Íosa, planted bluebells in the grounds of St. Patrick's Church this month, accompanied by their teachers and SNA. Part of the recently launched Ballyhaunis Diversity Plan, the work was carried out under the guidance of Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns members. Courtesy of Fr. Stephen Farragher.

hurling panel for 2024. Fionn is son of David and Siobhán (née Walsh) Conlon, Knock Road... Connaught GAA CEO John Prenty was featured in a brief but very informative interview over the Easter period by 'Off the Ball', reflecting on the background and huge success of Connaught GAA's Centre of Excellence in Beken. It has been a wonderful achievement spearheaded, as it was, by the former Ballyhaunis footballer. And the costs of the initiative has been covered - completely! As the golfing season begins in earnest, John William Burke had a very good start to the summer when he finished in fourth place out of a field of ninety players in very tough conditions, in the under-16 Boys championship at Castlerock Golf Club, Coleraine, Co. Derry over the Easter weekend... That old Al Jolson song from the 1940's, 'April Showers', certainly rang true this month for the west of Ireland when it bucketed-down all of the first seventeen days of the month, leaving most of the country saturated... A great month for Golden Wedding anniversaries as celebrations are held in Johnstown when Tim and Margaret (née Hopkins) Byrne celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary, while over in Scrigg, Mick and Anne Plunkett also have much to celebrate when they also mark the occasion of their 50th (Golden) wedding anniversary this month... The Community Hall hosted the presentation of two hours of footage from the film collection of the late Joe Gilmore' of Brickens this month, featuring scenes from daily life in the west of Ireland from the 1940s to the 1970s. The film was shown on RTÉ Television back in March 1984 as 'The Flight from the Snipe Grass', with commentary by the late Breandán Ó hEithir. On this, the fortieth anniversary of the RTÉ showing, it is appropriate that it be shown in the Community Hall, formerly the Parochial Hall, which hosted so many feature length films during the heyday of cinema in Ballyhaunis of the 1940s, '50s and '60s...

17th April brought great sadness to the local community when news comes through of the passing of much loved local doctor, Alan Delaney. In his early eighties, Alan served this community with tremendous dedication over some fifty years... The death also takes place of the late Brendan Forde, Galway who served as Principal at St. Mary's Boys National School in Ballyhaunis in the 1960s/70s... The death occurs of Kathleen Regan Derrynacong, Kathleen was wife of the late Pat Regan, who departed to his eternal reward in 2011... The death occurs in the UK of Emily Dempsey, formerly of Devils Cottages. Emily, who celebrated her 100th birthday in recent weeks, was wife of the late Mick Dempsey, a former CIE employee, gifted in repairing clocks and watches... A very special book launch takes place at Ballyhaunis Community School this month. Entitled 'Ink and Imagination', the collection of poems and stories written by students from BCS was launched by Professor Eoin Devereux, who travelled from University of Limerick for the occasion. He remarked that, in the ten years of running the creative writing programme at U.L., this is the first time a book has actually been published on the subject. M.C. for the evening was leaving cert student Adam Walsh... A very sad event took place on Upper Main Street at the end of this month when Teotonio Monteiro dies suddenly at his home. A native of East Timor, Teotonio and a number of friends came to work in Dawn Meats as recently as 2nd March. Regulars at weekend Mass, they made many friends in the community. Funeral Mass was celebrated in St. Patrick's Church and, thanks to the generosity of his employers, Teotonio's remains were repatriated to his native country.

MAY

Main Street is a sea of colour on Saturday, 4th May when throngs gather for the official re-opening of the newly refurbished Community Hall, formerly the Parochial Hall, by Deputy Michael Ring, TD. The event is marked with a wide variety of entertainment marking the completion of this wonderful facility, following the great work of the Community Council and its supporters who fundraised extensively to bring it to such a successful completion. During the proceedings, a special presentation was made to Main Street businessman Tom Finn by Fr. Stephen Farragher, in recognition of Tom's many years of dedicated voluntary service as custodian to the Parochial Hall. Also honoured on the occasion was Mike Griffin of Devils and formerly of Clare Street, who received a presentation honouring many years of sterling service to the Parochial Hall... Ballyhaunis Community School student Ethan Henry from Tooreen was in Midwest Radio studios this month where he performed his own composition, 'Lost in Space', on the Tommy

Marren Show. The song is themed around the subject of dementia. There was a massive reaction from listeners all over the country... Ballyhaunis Town FC Under-17s capture the Mayo League with a superb win over Ballina (B) in the final game of the season on a 7-3 scoreline. The boys remained unbeaten throughout the league season. Well done to the entire squad and to the management team of Johnny Powers and James Clarke... Ballyhaunis Councillor John Cribbin announces funding of €5 Million for the redevelopment of the old St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy Primary School on Abbey Street. This long-awaited funding is a welcome boost to Ballyhaunis as we look forward to the complete transformation of the old convent building, which, under the management of the Sisters of Mercy, provided such wonderful education to generations of children in Ballyhaunis over many years... The death takes place this month of the late Kathleen Egan from Knockbrack. A native of Coogue, Kathleen came to settle in Ballyhaunis in 1985 with her husband Michael, having lived in England for some time before moving to Dublin in 1972... Work starts in Abbeyquarter to prepare for an extension to Scoil Íosa which will provide four modular classrooms and two SET rooms, creating much needed extra space for the growing number of students attending the Ballyhaunis primary school... The death takes place in Knocklyon, Dublin of the late John (Jackie) Walsh, formerly of Drimaderra. John, who started out in his working career with Gallagher's Builders Providers on Main Street, went on to join building group Brooks Thomas in Dublin where he later became Managing Director... The death occurs of Teresa Leonard, Knockback. Wife of the late Garda Frank Leonard, she taught in St. Joseph's Convent Primary School and, before that, in Brackloon N.S. where she was highly esteemed and loved by teachers and pupils alike over many years... Ballyhaunis Summer Festival kicks off at the end of this month and runs to Bank Holiday Monday, 3rd June. Fine, dry weather added tremendously to its success this year with a diverse range of events suitable for all ages including Crazy Bingo, Inter-pub Quiz, 'Up for the Match', 'Festival's Fittest Family', Family Fun Day, 'Rock on Knox Street' and Fun Run... Ballyhaunis Community School Juvenile footballers clinch the Connacht title following a very tough battle with St. Paul's of Oughterard. Ballyhaunis came from behind in the final to win in the end by 4-6 to 3-5... Great sadness throughout Ballyhaunis and wider area on the last days of May when news trickles through of the untimely passing of Noel Sloyan, Tully, Carrowbehy and formerly of Brackloon. A member of the last class of students to graduate from the old St. Patrick's College in Ballyhaunis in 1977, Noel was widely known throughout the local and surrounding areas as a highly respected tradesman.

JUNE

On the first day of June, St. Patrick's Church is packed to capacity for a memorial Mass marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the tragic death of Private Billy Kedian while serving with the Irish Peacekeeping Forces in The Lebanon in 1999... Later that day the Corpus Christi Procession takes place. Commencing after 7.30pm Mass, it proceeds through the town ending at the Friary for Prayers... John Cleary (Clare St.) celebrates his 80th birthday on 6th June. A former editor of Annagh Magazine, John, born on D-Day, 1944, was a member of the teaching staff at St. Patrick's College and the Community School, Ballyhaunis. He was a member of the Ballyhaunis Gaelic football side which won the club's first Intermediate county title back in 1967, under the captaincy of his neighbour and friend, Thomas Lyons... Ballyhaunis lady Alma Gallagher creates a little bit of history when she is elected to Mayo County Council following the June 7th elections. Alma, daughter of Martha and the late Martin Gallagher, Drimbane, becomes the first lady to be elected to the Council for the Claremorris Electoral Area. She was ably assisted in her campaign by former Fine Gael councillor John Cribbin, who retired from the local authority having served with great distinction for the past twenty-five years... The death occurs of Ellen Maughan, Cherryfield. Ellen was wife of the late Ted Maughan, the well-known tin-smith... The death takes place also this month of Mary Henry, Crossard, Tooreen, formerly Regan from Killinaugher... Sad news for the retail sector of Ballyhaunis this month when Tom Forde, proprietor of Forde's Ltd, The Square, announces that the Off-License part of the family business, 4D's, is to cease trading in the coming weeks. Established twenty-six years ago, 4D's

has provided a wonderful service to the town and community operating as a thriving business for so long... The death takes place of Anne Kilcourse of Station Rise, Ballyhaunis. A native of Weatherforth, Claremorris, she settled here with her family in the 1980s. Anne and her family were very much associated with Ballyhaunis Town FC since its foundation in 2010... As we look back on the weather during the month of June, the temperatures have been well below average for the time of year - around 13 to 15 degrees - and even lower at certain times of the month. Sunshine has been rare throughout June and, as we reach the last day of the month, temperatures barely rise above the 13 degrees mark. However, rain amounts are relatively low, with lots of dry weather, so, overall nothing to complain about... Ballyhaunis loses a great ambassador for the area this month when John Dillon, Ballindrehid and formerly of The Square, dies. Together with family members, he operated a thriving hardware and travel agency at The Square for many years. A member of the famous Ballyhaunis Gaelic football team which won the Mayo Senior County Championship back in 1958, John was a founding member of the board of Ireland West Airport Knock and former board member of Midwest Radio... The annual Cemetery Mass in the Parish Cemetery is celebrated on Sunday afternoon, 30th June.

JULY

University of Galway's governing authority, Údarás na hOllscoile confirms this month the appointment of Professor Peter McHugh as Interim President. Prof. McHugh takes up his new role in September. A former student of Ballyhaunis Community School, Peter is son of the late Peter and Tess (née Kelly) McHugh of Main



Children who made their First Holy Communion on 18th May took part in the Corpus Christi procession on Saturday, 1st June 2024 and scattered petals along the route from the St Patrick's Church to the Friary. Courtesy of Fr. Stephen Farragher.

Street, Ballyhaunis. We congratulate Peter on this latest accolade in his life and wish him all the best in this position in the times ahead... Fr. Arul Jayaseelan returns for the second time to Ballyhaunis to assist Fr. Stephen for the month of July. A priest of the diocese of Dingidul, in Tamil Nadu, India, Fr. Arul is undertaking postgraduate studies in Rome and will spend the summer in Knock Shrine and Ballyhaunis before returning to Rome... Assessment work takes place this month around the pedestrian bridge linking Bridge Street to the Friary Grounds preliminary to installing a new footpath there... 15th July marked a very special day in the lives of popular local couple Jarlath and Ita Fahey when they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Jarlath and the former Ita Ryan from Knock were married in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Knock on this day fifty years ago and afterwards celebrated with family and friends in Churchfield House Hotel, also in Knock, one of the most popular wedding venues at the time... Up to eighty members of the Finnegan clan from Ireland, England and the U.S.A. gather in Ballyhaunis for their first ever Clan Gathering. The weekend celebration is hosted by Leona (née Finnegan) Connery at the family home in Bohogue where many of the clan originated. A great weekend was had by all, with many cousins meeting for the first time... Mary McNaught dies after a brief illness in Dublin. The former Mary Kearns from Upper Main Street was wife of the late Patrick McNaught, son of the late Garda Neil McNaught who served in Ballyhaunis for many years during the 1960s and early 70s... John William Burke jets off to West Essex Golf Club in England to compete as a Golf Ireland International where he earns his first Irish international cap... The death occurs this month of Micheál Smyth, formerly of Clare Street and Upper Main Street. He taught in the old Vocational School (The Tech) for a number of years before joining the first group of teachers in Ballyhaunis Community School in 1977. Many were the glowing tributes paid to him by former colleagues and past pupils alike following his passing... Twenty-five years after his tragic death while serving with the Irish peacekeeping forces in The Lebanon, Ballyhaunis native Private Billy Kedian was honoured when a monument was unveiled in his memory in his native townland of Moneymore on Saturday, 20th July. A very large crowd turned out for the ceremony, including army personnel, family and friends of the late Private Kedian as well as Billy's former classmate and newly elected Councillor Alma Gallagher, who was officiating at her first official

engagement following last month's election. The official launch of the monument was performed by Minister of State for Defence Jennifer Carroll-MacNeill. Private Kedian was son of the late Willie and Doris Kedian, Moneymore... The death also occurred this month of Theresa Lynskey (née Lynch) of Kilmaine. Theresa is fondly remembered as a dedicated member of the teaching staff of Ballyhaunis Community School over many years... On Wednesday, 4th July, Fr. Stephen Farragher, PP, hosted a Ministry Appreciation evening in the Ballyhaunis Rugby Club, to say 'thank you' to the many people involved in various ministries in the parish... Following the unveiling of the memorial honouring the late Private Billy Kedian last weekend, 'Friends of Private Billy Kedian' announced the proposed launch of another initiative in his memory – a community air ambulance base in his home town of Ballyhaunis. Said to be the first of its kind in the country... Family and friends of the late Lance Corporal Patrick 'Bob' Gallagher gathered in great numbers at Bath Iron Works, Maine, U.S.A., on 27th July for the christening of the USS Patrick Gallagher, a destroyer named after the Ballyhaunis man who was killed while serving with the US Marine corps in Vietnam in 1967 at the age of twenty-three. This was a proud day for the entire Gallagher family, many of whom travelled across the Atlantic to be present for this very historic occasion. The event was streamed live across the globe and many gathered in the Community Hall to view the historic occasion.



US Navy ship, USS Patrick Gallagher, was christened at Bath Iron Works, Maine, U.S.A. in July this year. It is named in honour of Lance Corp. Patrick Gallagher, from Derrintogher, Ballyhaunis, who was killed while serving with the US Marine corps in Vietnam in 1967 at the age of twenty-three. The event was attended by family members from both sides of the Atlantic.

AUGUST

Barry Freeman's Captains Prize was played for at Ballyhaunis Golf Club on the August Bank Holiday Weekend, and despite poor weather conditions on the final day, all players came through with flying colours. In the end it was Liam Cunnane who came away with the top prize, claiming his first win in a major competition. Top prize for the ladies was won by Fiona Prenty... The death occurs of Odella (Dolly) Fitzmaurice of Spaddagh. A woman of great faith who was deeply respected by all who knew her over many years... As part of Heritage Week, a slide show is held in the Community Hall featuring photos from the Glynn photography archives of people and events from Ballyhaunis and surrounding areas over the past forty years or so. The slides are shown on the newly installed cinema screen at the Main Street venue... Mary's Meals Volunteers from around the country came together in Ballyhaunis in the middle of the month, ahead of the final leg of their sponsored walk to Knock Shrine for 15th Aug. to raise funds for the charity. Refreshments and entertainment was laid on for them in the Communal House, Clare Court... What a memorable month of August it has been for Ballyhaunis golfer John William Burke: midway through the month he captured the Munster Under-16 Boys Amateur Open Championship at Shannon Golf Club, and, taking a giant leap into the international arena of the golfing world, he learns that he has been selected to represent Ireland in the forthcoming Italian International Under-16 Championship, the Teodoro Soldati Trophy, in September. John William is one of six players from around the country picked to represent Ireland in this most prestigious tournament... Ballyhaunis GAA grounds on the Knock Road is the venue on the last day of the month for the unveiling of 'Gerry's Chair', a seat/bench to commemorate the late Gerry Lyons from Knockbrack who died recently following a brief illness. Gerry was a lifelong member and great ambassador for the local GAA Club. This event is attended by many of his former club colleagues and friends, as well as his wife Anne and family. The chair was kindly donated by his colleague Padraic Timon and friends at Chameleon... Also on GAA matters, and also taking place on the last day of the month, a sizeable group of former Gaelic footballers from the club gather at Delaney's Bar on Abbey Street to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the clubs Under-16 County Final win back in 1984. The team manager on the occasion was the late Gerry Lyons... The death takes place this month of Stephen Grogan, Hazel Lawns. A native of Began, Stephen was very central to many of the activities undertaken by the Abbey Partnership and Abbey Trust over the past couple of decades. His very sudden departure was met with great sadness by the many

people who worked alongside him and indeed by all those who knew him from around the local district.

OCTOBER

The death takes place in Strokestown, Co. Roscommon of Ado Kenny, formerly of Knox Street. A most frequent visitor to his native town over the years, he was a former chairman of the Showjumping Association of Ireland. Ado's wife, Gertie passed to her eternal reward just one week before his death... The death takes place also this month of Bill Comer of Killinaugher. Bill, whose sister Maureen passed away in January of this year, was a well-known and popular member of the community... Heartiest congratulations to St. Jarlath's Gaelic Football squad who clinched the Homeland Under-16 'B' Shield trophy this month following their fine win over Tourmakeady in the final. St. Jarlath's is comprised of the combined Ballyhaunis and Eastern Gaels (Bekan) GAA clubs for under-13s to under-19s... Fantastic news this month for the Friends of Private Billy Kedian Air Ambulance Base Ballyhaunis project, when it was confirmed that a site has been identified and the pre-planning office of Mayo County Council have agreed that it is suitable for this project, subject to a full planning permission application... Very sad news this month for the parish and surrounding areas when news filters through of the death of Paddy Fitzmaurice at his home in Abbeyquarter. Paddy worked as a postman in the local area for many years. His Post Office colleagues, past and present, formed a guard of honour for Paddy on his last journey to his final resting place in Abbeyquarter, not far from his home... Also, this month, the death takes place following an illness of Catherine Waldron of Holywell. The former Catherine Feeney from Erriff, was wife of Walter Waldron... Ballyhaunis golfing star John William Burke performed well in the final round of the under-16 Italian International Championship when he finished with a three-under-par back nine. He was placed 16th out of a field of 144 players from around Europe and was delighted and honoured to represent Ireland and indeed Ballyhaunis Golf Club for this very prestigious tournament... Among the five Gala convenience stores chosen throughout Mayo in the Gala Award for Excellence was Murphy's Gala store in Devlis, operated by Dom and Geraldine Murphy and their loyal staff... The death occurs of Myra Healy, Dunmore, Co. Galway. The former Myra Fitzgerald of Johnstown, worked in the telephone exchange in Ballyhaunis for many years where she was widely known and held in deepest regard by all... Despite damp weather conditions, crowds turned out in great numbers to the Friary Field on Saturday, 15th September for the 'Remembering Brídann' Day. Brídann Keane (formerly Halpin, Main Street) died in September, 2018. Daughter of John and Breege Halpin,

she touched the hearts and lives of so many through her courage as she battled through kidney failure. The Remembering Brídann event was a great success and helped to raise much needed funds for the Irish Kidney Association, which strives to help and support so many on dialysis as well as those who are recovering from kidney transplant procedures... Jim and Rita London, Knock Road celebrate their Fiftieth wedding anniversary. Dingle native, Jim, a long-time member of the Annagh Magazine Society and former Principal of St. Mary's NS and later Scoil Íosa. Rita (formerly Canning from Ballyvary) operated a very successful Play School facility on the Knock Road for many years. Both have contributed handsomely to the life of the Ballyhaunis parish over their many years as part of the local community... The death occurs in Roscommon town of Patrick Gaffney. Pat, as he was so affectionately known, was a hugely respected member of An Garda Síochána in Ballyhaunis for many years and was promoted to Detective some years before retiring from the force... At a well-attended meeting of Ballyhaunis Boxing Club this month, officers were ratified for the coming year... The death takes place of the late Nora Margaret Lyons from Leow, Ballyhaunis, following a brief illness... The Private Billy Kedian Air Ambulance Base project is launched in spectacular fashion when supporters turn out to support the fundraising event which, when realised, will provide a life-saving facility to the entire west of Ireland. Minister Dara Calleary arrived by helicopter to launch the project which is being spear-headed by the Friends of Billy Kedian group... A very large crowd turned out at the Augustinian Abbey on 15th September for the annual Harvest Mass, with chief celebrant Fr. Stephen Farragher, PP. The celebration is greatly enhanced by the singing and harmonies of the Ballyhaunis Male Choir, under the direction of Moira Delaney, accompanied by Paula Donnellan on the organ... Ballyhaunis Community School and the entire local region is devastated by the tragic deaths of current pupil, thirteen years-old James Daniels from Swinefield, Cloonfad, and past pupil Harry Fagan (nineteen) from Lavallyroe, following a road traffic accident near Cloonfad. Harry's brother Dermot, aged fifteen, also involved in the collision, is being treated in Mayo General Hospital.

OCTOBER

Another fantastic week in the sporting journey of Ballyhaunis golfer John William Burke from Devlis when the Irish Under-16 Girls and Boys teams were announced ahead of their matches against England at Burnham and Berrow Golf Club. He was among those selected for the international in England starting on 5th October. Meanwhile, on 1st October, the 2024/25 Senior

Schools qualifying games were played in Ballinrobe Golf Club, where John William, representing Ballyhaunis Community School, finished second in the tournament. Well done to John William and to Conor Stapleton of St. Gerald's College, Castlebar, who go on to represent their respective schools in next years national event... The death occurs at her home in Larganboy of Margaret Hudson (née Finn). Margaret, aged ninety-seven, was wife of the late Alf Hudson, a dedicated manager of Ballyhaunis Football Club in years past... At the Blás na hÉireann 2024 Irish Food Awards, taking place in Dingle, Co. Kerry, over the first week of October, celebrating the very best of food and drink, Western Brand Chickens from Ballyhaunis are among the prize winners... The death occurs of Tom Guilfoyle from Greenwood. Tom was brother of the late Mary Jordan from Knox Street, who passed away in July, 2023... Heartiest congratulations this month to Ballyhaunis Community School sixth year student Ella Morley from Began who won the All-Scotland Championship and Champion of Champions in Irish Dancing over the first weekend of the month. Ella is daughter of John and Claire (née Gallagher) Morley, Began and granddaughter of Dom and Eithne Morley (Began) and of Bernard and Jean (née Finn) Gallagher, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis... Great milestone birthdays on Clare Street this month when most popular bar owner Pauline Curley celebrates her ninetieth birthday. Pauline (née Webb) operated the well-known Clare Street hostelry Curley's Bar for many years along with her late husband Bertie, before handing the reins over to daughter Ann following her retirement from the bar some years ago. Meanwhile, further down the street on Clare Street, another retired businessman celebrates a special birthday when Seán Freyne marks his eightieth birthday. Sean operated the family's garage and filling station business, where Ballyhaunis Credit Union now stands, for many years... Meanwhile, in Coventry, Austin Boyle celebrates his 100th Birthday. The Ballinphuill native was born 15th Oct. 1924. and was joined in the celebrations by his family and friends from England and Ireland... The death occurs of the late Fr. William Byrne at Dalgan Park, Navan, Co. Meath. Fr. Willie, as he was affectionately known, a native of Main Street, Ballyhaunis, served with the Columban Fathers in Japan for a long number of years. He was a brother of the late Val Byrne who died in 2023... On Friday morning, 17th Oct. Joe Keane passes away peacefully, one month into his 102nd Year. Joe was a Master Tailor all his working life as well as fulfilling the roles of FCA officer, sacristan, historian, raconteur and President of Annagh Magazine Society... Great celebrations as Ballyhaunis Boxing Club member, Carlagh Peake, returns home having won Silver in the World Youth Boxing Championship in Montenegro.

MAYO SPCA, PATTENSPARK

Lucie Kavanagh

Mayo SPCA has faced a challenging year to date (October 2024) and, at the time of writing, we are grappling with kitten season which, each year, brings an influx of feline families in need of refuge. In all of our social media posts, we urge everyone who has a cat, to please ensure that they are neutered and spayed. This includes not only pet cats but cats that might have turned up in your garden and that you are now feeding regularly. While you might not see cats like this as "yours", the reality is that if you feed a cat and they keep coming to you for food, they have "adopted" you and one or two cats is better than twenty. We can help you trap and neuter one or two cats but twenty or thirty becomes very challenging and more of a community issue. Everyone can help to stop the annual suffering of thousands of cats and kittens every year if each person does their part. In recent weeks we had a virus run through the shelter – sadly, a risk when vulnerable kittens are being found outdoors with very little immunity – and lost seven of our kittens, which was a terrible loss to the mother cats and volunteers caring for them.

The need for neutering and spaying extends to dogs as well as cats and each year we see more and more unwanted litters of puppies, the most poignant this year being the eleven puppies abandoned in Castlebar at an age when they should have been with their mother still. Thankfully, all survived and, at the time of writing, they are heading to their wonderful forever homes.

Mayo SPCA regularly takes dogs out of the pound and we are always saddened at those who have clearly been loved and cared for at some point in their lives. It can be because a family have fallen on hard times themselves and maybe in a situation where rented accommodation wouldn't allow them to keep a loved pet.

Getting a Dog

As always, we urge people to do their research before acquiring a dog or puppy. Can you manage the commitment practically? Can you commit to approximately fifteen years with your canine companion and the yearly costs of food, vet bills (standard and unexpected),

boarding fees, chip, stimulation activities and overall supplies and equipment? Have you researched the breed that will fit best with your lifestyle? If you are buying, are you aware that an ethical and professional breeder will not be advertising on social media, won't rush or pressure you into buying, and will be happy to show you the puppy with their mother and siblings, vaccinated, wormed and chipped? Are you aware that rescuing a dog or puppy will give you the support and advice of rescue

volunteers and a dog that has their vet work done and is known well by the team and recommended to you based on your mutual needs and preferences? This is never a decision to be rushed into and for those who find that it might not be the time to add a pet to their household, we would love to see you as a new volunteer. We can guarantee you a "fix" of dogs and cats, puppies and kittens, for as long and frequently as you need.

Volunteers

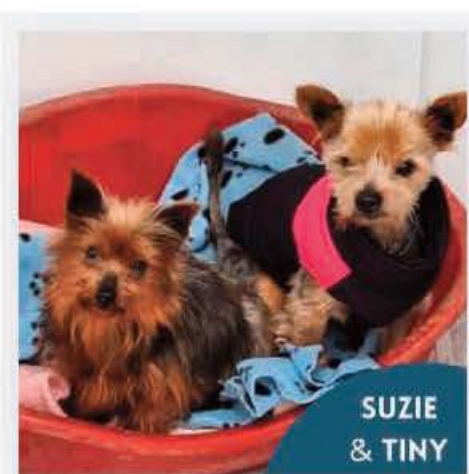
Volunteers with Mayo SPCA can help us in a wide variety of ways depending on your skills and preferences and we are delighted with any time you can spare us, no matter how much or little. Some people help from within their own communities. This might be through holding a small fundraiser or church gate collection. It might also be by taking part in a TNR project (Trap, Neuter, Return) where they help to trap and transport feral cats to the vets for neutering and then return them to their colony where locals feed them in return

for their amazing rodent reduction skills.

Volunteers often foster for us. Foster care is so important and we are so grateful to our dedicated fosterers. Some take in kittens who have been found alone but are too young to survive without major care and intervention. They look after these babies night and day until they are old enough to go to their forever homes. Some people help by taking puppies in and guiding them through their formative months, again, where a mother might not be present. Sometimes an animal might be too old, traumatised or ill to manage life in the shelter comfortably and foster care is a wonderful alternative.



Volunteers who come and work shifts at the shelter truly keep the rescue going on every level. These are the people who turn up every day, in all weathers and work regularly, whether it's one shift a month or a few each week. They are the people who clean kennels and cat litter trays, walk dogs, feed hungry mouths and, above all else, provide love and care to our animals and convince them that us humans are not so bad. Dogs like Candy (pictured) who arrived to us absolutely shut down and unable to engage with anyone, would have no chance at life without the patience of the volunteers who sat quietly with her, respected her space, showed her respect and love and rejoiced when she began to take small steps towards interacting. Candy still has a way to go but already she has a doggie friend, enjoys her routine at the shelter and knows that the volunteers are safe and trusted people... a trust that will hopefully extend to life outside of the shelter in time. We also have Susie and



Tiny, an older couple found in a terrible state, used for breeding all of their lives. Poor Susie at the age of ten was pregnant with a puppy that didn't survive. Susie and Tiny will likely live out their days in the shelter where they are healthy and happy. They are why we urge people to please, please, never buy puppies from a breeder who just wants a quick buck.

Thanks

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us this year: every volunteer who helps us at the shelter or from their own localities, the adopters who give such wonderful lives to our residents, our fosterers, community supporters, everyone who donates food, toys and money. Thanks also to the Gardai, the dog wardens, the local schools who let us come in to talk about what we do and the students who come to help us out, and all of the people in Mayo communities who support us, share our posts, remember our animals and wish us well.

Ballyhaunis Footballers 1988



Ballyhaunis Under-10 GAA Footballers, winners of the Castlebar Mitchells Blitz 1988, with Martin Carney who presented the trophies.

Back, L-R: Daire Eagney, Niall Tighe, Edward Webb, Patrick Keane, Eoin Butler, Brian Flanagan, James McGarry, Alan Delaney, Karl McManus, Brian Hannon, P.C. Curley, Conor McManus, Michael Regan. **Front, L-R:** Séamas Lundon, Alan Regan, Ian Webb, Simon Webb (Capt.), John Burke, Paul Finn, Seán Hunt, Simon McCafferty, Don Regan. *Courtesy of Jim Lundon.*

SWEET MUSIC!

CONNAUGHT BASED BAND TALK FINDING THEIR SOUND

Diarmuid Byrne (Gurteen)

Siúcra was formed in late 2020, as four of us would get together during the height of Covid lockdowns for jam sessions, in between the fifteenth re-watch of the US Office. The band consists of Ophelia Mortimer (Shrule) on lead vocals, Ben McGowan (Donegal) on rhythm/backing vocals, Diarmuid Byrne (Ballyhaunis) on lead guitar, and Rory Murphy (Kilkenny) on fiddle. The band was later joined by Eoghan O'Shaughnessy (Galway) on bass guitar and Tiernan Bines (Galway) on drums. We came to the name after weeks of deliberation. In the end it was Nicole, Ben's girlfriend, that suggested 'Siúcra', and we liked the sound of it. Short and punchy, and it seemed to fit perfectly with the sound we were going for.

While we have pivoted more to writing original songs, having already released four, we started out (as many bands do) as a cover act. Pulling from a wide range of genres and acts like Springsteen, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton, The Doors, Abba, Britney Spears, and everything in between. Taking classic pop songs like Toxic and making a bluesy, rock arrangement to fit more emphasis on fiddle and electric guitar was a part of what gave us the drive to start writing our own material. Over time our sound has evolved from the blues roots we began with to a more alternative vibe, with hints of prog rock and shoegaze.



Siúcra

Back, L-R: Eoghan O'Shaughnessy, Tiernan Bines, Ben McGowan.
Front, L-R: Rory Murphy, Ophelia Mortimer, Diarmuid Byrne.

While most of the lyrics are written by Ophelia, the songwriting process is usually a mix of voice notes with riffs and chords that came to us in the moment. We then get together and try to hash out a song in rehearsals, it's very collaborative and there's always some trial and error to figure out what works and doesn't.

This year, as part of 'Irish Music Month', we were delighted to be picked by MidWest Radio as their pick

for 'Local Music Hero' to represent the station in a national competition Hot Press Magazine organised. As part of the competition, we performed a live version of our single 'Rollover', which we released earlier this year. It was really cool to work with MidWest and to share the stage with so many great acts.

Since the band's inception, we have collectively played well over two-hundred live gigs, many in Galway venues (where we all live) such as the Roisín Dubh, but have also found ourselves travelling the length and breadth of the Wild Atlantic Way, playing in Tuam, Ballyhaunis and Claremorris and even taking the trip up to Ballyshannon to partake in the Rory Gallagher Festival the last couple of years.

We're really excited for the coming months, as we plan to release our debut EP in the coming weeks, along with our first music video, for our single 'Anxiety', as well as squeezing in some more gigs, this time in Cork and Dublin.

RAMADAN

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is considered a holy month that honours the time when the angel Gabriel revealed the first verses of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, to Muhammad. The holy month of Ramadan began at the first sighting of the crescent Moon on the evening of Sunday, 10th March 2024 and ended at sundown on Tuesday, 9th April. The final evening of Ramadan consists of a celebration called *Eid al-Fitr*, when the traditional month-long fast is ended with a feast.



WEDDINGS



Adrian Cregg (Brickens) and
Allyne Sampaio (Brickens)
who married 7th Sept. 2024.
AK Photography.

Gearóid Keane (Gurteen)
and Ciannait Lehane
(Limerick) who married
in Doolin Church,
Co. Clare, 12th Jan. 2024.



Jack Hughes
(Hazelhill) and Blaize
Pearce (Ardrahan,
Co. Galway) who
married in the
Meadow Court Hotel,
Loughrea, Co.
Galway, 16th Sept.
2024.



Left:
Michael Moran (Knock Road)
and Aoife Hyland (Milltown)
who married in the Church of
the Immaculate Conception
and St. Joseph, Bohola,
28th June 2024.

Below right:
Massa Rahmani and Mohmed
Cherbatji, who married in
Galway Bay Hotel, 22nd June
2024. AK Photography.



Above: Yvonne Byrne
(Derrymore) and Francis
Quinn (Castlebar) who
married in Galway,
Aug. 2024.



Right: Leanne Murphy
(Annagh) and Mark Ford
(Bristol) who married at
Mount Druid, Mullingar,
23rd Sept. 2023.





Breann Toolan (Hellertown, Pennsylvania, USA) and Quinn Redding (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA) who married 7th Sept, 2024. Also pictured are Breann's parents James Toolan (Knockanara) and Debbie Conway Toolan (Holywell).



Brendan Grogan (Abbey St. and Cloghan, Co. Offaly) and Annette Doyle (Cloghan, Co. Offaly) who married in the County Arms Hotel, Birr, Co. Offaly, 23rd Feb. 2024.



Carol Ann Cameron (Knockroe) and Denis Canny (Kilmaine) who married in the Ocean Sands Hotel, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo, 4th April 2024.



Cathy Costello (Bohogue) and Paul Hannon (Bannow, Co. Wexford) who married in Dublin, 5th April 2024.



Catherine Grier (Leixlip, Co. Kildare) and Eamonn Murphy (Leixlip, Co. Kildare) who married in Tankardstown House, 13th June 2024. Catherine is daughter of Mary Grier (Herr) Knox Street.



Celine Brennan (Tulrahan) and Stephen Cahill (Balla) who married in the Mulranny Hotel, 15th Mar. 2024.



Charlene Nolan (Ballyhaunis) and Daryl Geraghty (Cloonfad) who married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, 11th May 2024. AK Photography.



Cormac O'Meadhra (Bray, Co. Wicklow) and Kayleigh Slater (Bray, Co. Wicklow) who married in Seville, Spain, 27th Sept. 2024. Cormac is son of Anna O'Meadhra (Herr) Knox Street.



Paul Freeley (Hazelhill) and Michelle Molloy (Corofin, Co. Galway) who married in St. Colman's Church, Corofin, Co. Galway.

Richie Crinnigan (Tooreen) and Sarah Dempsey (Balla) who married in St. Cronan's Church, Balla, 30th Aug. 2024.



Tomás Concannon (Lecarrow) and Elisa Toner (Armagh) who married in Ghan House, Carlingford, Co. Louth, 3rd April 2024.



David Herr (Doctor's Road) and Ashling Forde (Granlahan) who married in The Lodge at Ashford Castle, 5th Sept. 2024.



Elaine Burke (Brickens) and Padraic Cawley (Easkey, Co. Sligo) who married in Brickens Church, 3rd Aug. 2024.



Elaine Carney (Classaghroe) and Tony Bašista (Spišské Vlachy, Slovakia) who married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, 3rd May 2024.



Elena Feeney (Claremorris) and Pat Keane (Crossmolina) who married in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Knock, 3rd Sept. 2024.



Five couples from the Brazilian community (four from Ballyhaunis and one from Roscommon) who married in St. Patrick's church, Ballyhaunis, 25th May 2024. L-R : Valdinei Dias de Oliveira and Christina Caetano de Freitas; Renan Pereira Alves de Souza and Ana Paula Coutinho de Lima Roriz; Edgar Souza Santos and Valery Neri Goncalves; Eduardo Da Silva Diogo and Samira Soares Pereira; Vanderli Antonio dias de Oliveira and Ana Lúcia de Oliveira. Deacon Wando Araujo, who lives in Roscommon, officiated at the ceremony.

Photo courtesy Fr. Stephen Farragher.



Above right: Fergal Fitzmaurice (Gurteenbeg) and Shahaf Yakov (Waterloo, Belgium) who married in Belgium, 21st July 2024.

Left: Emily Joyce (Tooreen) and Niall Furey (Cloonmore, Tuam), who married in St. Mary's Church, Tooreen, 1st Jan. 2024.



Fergal Lyons (Bekan) and Orla Ni Chonchubhair (Raheny, Dublin), who married in San Silvestro, Rome, 4th May 2024.



Helen Waldron (Johnstown) and Michael Lavin (Lavallyroe) who married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.



Lisa Jordan (Lecarrow) and Peter O'Shea (Adelaide, Australia) who married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, 27th Sept. 2024.



Kevin Byrne (Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon) and Yasmin Grace-Kemp (Claremorris) who married in St. Colman's Church, Claremorris, 28th Aug. 2024. Kevin is son of the former Ann Griffin, Clare St.



Lisa Kirrane (Knockbrack) and Leonard Crowley (Ballina, Co. Tipperary) who married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, 24th Aug. 2024.



Louise McNamara (Knockbrack) and Padraig Fitzgerald (Clooncan, Ballinlough) who married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, 30th Aug. 2024.



Louise Shanahan (Cloverfield, Co. Limerick) and Tim Shanahan (Mainster, Co. Limerick) who married in Ashley Park House, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, 29th Sept. 2024. Louise is daughter of the former Una Lyons, Holywell Upper.



Marguerite McGuire (Ballykilleen) and Chris Maloney (Heywood, Manchester) who married in the Abbey Hotel, Roscommon, 15th June 2024.



Maria Page (Ballinlough) and P. J. Kavanagh (Bonniconlon) who married in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Ballinlough, Co. Roscommon, 12th Apr. 2024.



Maura Naughton (Carramore, Ballyhaunis) and Paul McLoughlin (Mullingar) who married in Siena, Italy, 24th Sept. 2024.



Mel Keegan (Coventry and formerly Main St.) and Emma Hancox (Coventry) who married in Coventry, 28th June 2024.



Paul Prenty (Knock Road) and Kathleen Durkan (Kilcock, Co. Kildare) who married in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tubberclair, Glasson, Co. Westmeath, 27th December 2023.



Riona Murray (Bekan) and James Keane (Barna, Co. Galway) who married in St. Augustine's church, Galway city, 5th Apr. 2024.



Olwyn Murray (Hazel Court) and William Joyce (Ladysbridge, Co. Cork), who married in The Algarve, Portugal, 19th Oct. 2024.



Ruairi Finan (Brackloon North) and Katy Lynch (Croydon, London) who married in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, London, 5th Apr. 2024.



Ruth Judge (Clooncrim, Ballinlough) and Gary Heeran (Gleann, Collooney, Co. Sligo) who married in Monte Do Serrinho, Algarve, Portugal, 28th June 2024.



Sinéad Byrne (Gurteen) and Padraig Earley (Manulla) who married in St. Cronan's Church, Balla, 17th August 2024.



Stephen Hoban (Lisbane) and Josephine Fitzgerald (Ardmore, Co. Waterford), who married in New York, 29th Nov. 2023.



Tracey Carney (Belisker) and Sean Leonard (Grange, Co. Sligo) who married in St. Margaret Mary's Church, Began, 23rd Mar. 2024.



Ultan Griffin (Annagh) and Heather O'Reilly (Dublin) who married in Westport, 7th Sept. 2024.

ANNAGH PARISH STATIONS 2024



Brackloon-Derrylahan Stations in the home of Martin and Mary Finan, Brackloon North, Friday, 18th October 2024

Back, L-R: Patsy Finan, Vince Finan, Orfhlaith Nic Dhonnacha, Jonathan Ryan, Jimmy Finan, Ray Sloyan, J.J. Finan, Sean McNamara, Michael Keane. **Second last row, L-R:** Ben Thornber, Darragh Sloyan, Anne Finan, Mike McDermott, Denis Sloyan, Tom Burke, Fiona McNamara, Willie Broderick, Lisa Morley, Sheila Broderick Mary Cuniffe, Ger Cuniffe, Anne Glynn, Emily Murphy. **Front:** Marie McDermott, Elena Coffey, Rena Burke, Chloe Naughton, Peter Browne, Mary Finan, Mary Ryan. **Seated:** Aisling Thornber, Lorcan Thornber, Katy Lynch, Ruairi Finan, Michael Sloyan, Bernie Sloyan, Anne McNamara, Mairéad Murphy, Bridie Sloyan, Lorcan Finan. **Seated (front), L-R:** Michelle Ryan, Sophia Thornber, Mary Finan, Amelie Thornber, Martin Finan, David Thornber, Kitty Sloyan, Jimmy Joe Sloyan, Margaret Kenny, Meta McNamara, Eimear Finan, Eileen Finan, Fr. Stephen Farragher.



Stations in the home of Brendan and Mary Morrissey, Cave, Friday, 25th October 2024.

Back, L-R: Peter King, Ciarán Waldron, Luke Cribbin, Marjo Butic, Mick McDonagh, Pat King, Genevieve Pender, Vesna Tarnik, Áine Morrissey, Breda Waldron, Patricia Waldron, Breege McLoughlin, Paul Waldron, Susan Hoban, Tony Waldron, Seán Waldron, Marie Cribbin, Jojo King, Maggie Glynn. **Front, L-R:** Fr. Stephen Farragher, Bernard Waldron, Oliver Cribbin, Eithne King, Chloe McDonagh, Mary Morrissey, Isobel Taylor, Brendan Morrissey.

1984 – THE JOURNEY

Ger Winston

This journey started for us in the 1978 and 79 under-10s football tournaments. As is the case today, the commitment of the mentors to train thirty under-10s and convey them to games in a convoy of cars and Bill Eagney's bus, was huge: the two Johns – John Prenty and John Biesty – as well as Jim London. We had nice footballers, if not a little bit on the small side. Val Byrne, Neil Cruise, David Fitzgerald, Patrick Phillips and Joseph Webb, were the main men in the '78 team. Tony Morley, Joe Tighe, Séamus Caulfield, Noel Phillips and Jarlath Jennings, the following year. We were all football-mad youngsters, starting out to be the next Brian Mullins, Jack O'Sheas and Mike Sheehys as our own county team was, at that period, at a very low ebb, but at least our own Micheál Webb had broken onto the Mayo team as goalkeeper, a position he was to hold for nearly a decade. Only a few years previously, the club and county had lost Ted Webb in very tragic circumstances which cast gloom over the county. David Fitzgerald was an outlier, being then a fanatical Roscommon supporter of their great county team of the late 1970s.

The team began to take shape as we moved into under-12 and national school level. We had lost a few soldiers along the way, most notably Jarlath Jennings whose family had moved to Hollymount. Hollymount's gain was our loss. JB, JP and JL were still our tutors, but I would also like to mention John Prenty's brother Tom who put on training drills and sessions that were years ahead of their time. The team was coming along nicely. We got to under-12 and national school East Mayo finals but were beaten by a physically much stronger Moy Davitts team who, within their ranks, had Pádraig Hennigan, who is now our local vet in Ballyhaunis. Around this period, the club was dealt its second blow in the space of three years, with the tragic death of Thomas 'Nipper' Moran. Around this time too, I began following the local senior team; Johnny Cribbin, Ivan Freeley and Tommy Caulfield were starting out in their careers in the Red and Black. One player who was coming to the end of his career was Ger Lyons from Knockbrack. Ger was a tough-tackling, no-nonsense, tigerish wing-back who liked to get forward and kick an occasional point with his citeóg.

In the summer of 1981, I began to spend more time in the Cribbin household in Knockbrack where I got to know and become friendly with the Lyons family and, in particular, Ger. He was the complete opposite off the pitch: quiet in nature, calm, but still with a steely mentality. In late 1981 changes were afoot within the club: John Prenty was moving to county secretary; Johnny Beisty was taking over as club secretary; Jim

London was staying on at national school and under-12 level. At the Bord na n-Óg meeting of that year, Micheál Murren took over as chairperson, while Ger Lyons and my cousin Seán Cribbin were elected as trainers for our under-14 team for 1982. Training started for the team with great vigour and an influx of a few players from Logboy, Began and Brackens. Challenge games in the Spring of that year against Michael Glavey's, Castlereagh and Dunmore, had us primed nicely for the East Mayo under-14 campaign that Summer.

1982

1982 was the summer of the World Cup in Spain and everyone was captivated by a terrific Brazilian side playing football from the Gods – Socrates, Zico, Falcao, et al. Everyone was heartbroken when they were beaten in the quarter-finals by a more pragmatic Italian side who went on to win the tournament. As we entered the championship, our team had a spine: Pat Phillips in goal, Neil Cruise at full-back, Raymond Sloyan at centre-back, Val Byrne and David Fitzgerald in the middle of the field, Noel Phillips, Brian Murray and Joe Webb up-front. We started with three wins in the group stage, we beat Kiltimagh in the semi-final and, in the opposite semi-final, Kilmovee Shamrocks caused a major upset beating our old foes, Moy Davitts. We won the East Mayo under-14 final with a big win over Kilmovee – Ger and Seán had their first piece of silverware. We were drawn to play the county semi-final against the giants of Ballina Stephenites in Kiltimagh in late July. We played sparkling football and led by 1-10 to 1 point at half-time. We ran out eventual winners by 2-14 to 2-4. We had now qualified for the county under-14 final, to be played in Claremorris against holders Ballinrobe. We went into the game 'cock-of-the-walk', but like the Brazil team in that year's World Cup, our dreams came crashing down and we were heavily beaten on a scoreline of 8-7 to 1-3. We were all devastated, but I still remember Ger Lyons, Seán Cribbin, Patrick Phillips and Val Byrne giving rallying speeches in the dressing room. Still, 1982 was a year of tremendous progress for this team and its young management.

Time heals and we were back in college football under the tutelage of Haulie Murren, Hugh Rudden and Aiden Kelly. As 1982 rolled into 1983 good under-14 and under-16 teams did not progress beyond East Mayo, but we won the under-15 Féile seven-a-side under the management of Haulie Murren and Ger Lyons' brother Noel. This included a trip to the National Féile finals in Gormanstown, Co. Meath in mid-August 1983. A very enjoyable couple of days which included coaching



Ballyhaunis Under-16 County Champions 1984.

Back, L-R: Tommy Caulfield, Tony Morley Snr., John Durkan, Neil Cruise, David Fitzgerald, Martin Maughan, Joseph Webb, Paul Clarke, Noel Phillips, Ger Lyons, John Prenty, Val Byrne Snr. **Middle, L-R:** Paddy Phillips, Tom McDonagh, Ray Sloyan, Vincent McNamara, Brian Murray, Val Byrne (Capt.), Séamus Caulfield, Gerry Winston, Michael Cleary, Tony Morley, Joey Tighe. **Front, L-R:** John Keane, Tommy Connolly, Tommy Ruane, Tony Cribbin, Martin O'Grady, Eddie McLoughlin. **Children:** Jason Morley, Laurann Byrne, Sharon Higgins, John Higgins, Paul Prenty.

sessions with Micky Whelan and Colm O'Rourke. A separate article could be written on this trip alone!

1984

1984, the year of George Orwell's futuristic novel written in 1948 – the centenary year of the G.A.A., of Kerry starting out in the second half of their golden years in football, and of Cork winning the hurling final in Thurles – and our own county team was showing green shoots of recovery off the back of winning the All-Ireland under-21 title in 1983, in which our own Tommy Grogan was one of the stars. Reagan was in the White House, Thatcher in No. 10, and Frankie was telling us to 'Relax'. Ireland was in the grip of a deep recession with emigration levels not seen since the 1950s. Still, to us teenagers, life was good. Ger Lyons and Seán Cribbin were again to be our selectors for the under-16 team, but in April of that year, Seán was called to the Garda Training College in Templemore to embark on a new career. The man to replace Seán was my neighbour John Durkan. 'The Durk' was a self-professed Canon Henry Cup specialist and brought great energy and his own unique style to his new role. Training began for our squad in May. We suffered another set-back when Patrick Phillips picked up a hand injury and, although he was recovering well, it was too much of a risk for him playing in goal. The search for a new goalkeeper was on with no specialised 'keeper on the panel. Ger and John landed with Martin Maughan from Tooraree. It was a risk, but to be fair to Martin, he was brave enough to take on this new role and improved beyond recognition with every game we played. Another player, Donal Delaney,

who would be pushing for a starting place, was to be away all summer.

Martin Maughan had now emerged as our number one goalkeeper. Patrick Phillips had a marvellous season at full-back and his occasional role as fly-goalskeeper. Vinnie McNamara and Tom McDonagh were very consistent corner-backs. John Keane, Michael Cleary, Martin O'Grady, Eddie McLoughlin, were all solid when called upon. Joe Tighe, Joseph Webb, Ray Sloyan and Ger Winston were in the half-back line. Midfield – the heartbeat of our team – had captain Val Byrne, David Fitzgerald and Tony Morley. Although Tony was named corner-forward, he played as a third mid-fielder. Séamus Caulfield and Paul Clarke were playing the Paul Galvin role when Paul Galvin was in nappies, as hard-working wing-forwards. Noel Phillips, at centre-half-forward, was selfless and created the space for Val Byrne's bursting runs forward. Tommy Connolly added pace and scoring power. Brian Murray was our main sharpshooter. Alongside him was our own 'Bomber Liston' in Neil Cruise. James Coyne, Kieran Morley and the youngest member of our panel – Tony Cribbin – added to our forward line.

Under-16 Championship

Our first game in the East Mayo under-16 championship was on American Independence Day, 4th July. We started with a good win over Kilmovee Shamrocks. Further wins over Aghamore and Ballagherreen had us in an East Mayo semi-final where our old foes, Moy Davitts, awaited us in Kiltimagh, but we won more easily than anticipated. The East Mayo final was held in Kiltimagh

against Swinford who pushed us all the way. We eventually won after a few heart-stopping moments, when our goal had a few miraculous escapes. The County under-16 semi-final was played on a roasting hot Sunday evening in Claremorris when we emerged victorious against a very good Castlebar Mitchells team.

We were back in a county final, at under-16 level and, as a team, we were mentally far stronger when we met Ballinrobe in Claremorris on 30th Aug. 1984 – two years after our devastating defeat in the under-14 final by the same side. The game played on that dark, dull, dreary evening transpired to be an arm-wrestle of a match. We got an early boost after seven minutes when Neil Cruise was pulled-down for a penalty. As the match reports said in the papers, the goalkeeper was not over-extended in saving the penalty and I think poor Séamus Caulfield is still getting blamed for missing it! Moments later, Neil Cruise scored a goal and we went in at half-time 1-4 to 1-2 up. The second half was by no means a classic, with defences on both sides well on top. We were holding a one-point lead going down the final stretch when Noel Phillips kicked a wonderful score and, moments later, Willie Kelly, the referee, blew the full-time whistle and Ballyhaunis had bridged a thirty-two-year gap to become County Champions at under-age level!

As was in 1952, Val Byrne collected the cup to great excitement. The plan that was hatched in Cribbin's kitchen in 1981 was now complete. The management – Ger Lyons, Seán Cribbin and John Durkan – had a great backup team and help from Haulie and Ned Murren, John Prenty, Val Byrne Snr., Tony Morley Snr., Tommy Caulfield and Eamon Burke, and not forgetting our old friends Jim Lundon and Johnny Biesty. Edwin McGreal has a new book out entitled, 'Our Finest Hour' and for some of us, that was our finest hour. For others there were more to come on the field, like David Fitzgerald, who was to play centre-back on the team that won an All-Ireland minor title a little over a year later, in 1985.



Morgan, Anne, Michelle and James Lyons on 'Gerry's Chair', unveiled in Ballyhaunis G.A.A. Park, 31st Aug. 2024.

Tony Morley went on to play senior football for Mayo for a decade or so, and went on to be involved in the All-Ireland finals of 1996 and 97. Patrick Phillips, David Fitzgerald, Val Byrne, Brian Murray and Séamus Caulfield were all involved when we won the Intermediate Championship in 1988. Tommy Connolly, Michael Cleary, Eddie McLoughlin, Martin O'Grady and Kieran Morley, were all involved in Eastern Gaels in Junior Championship wins. But for emigration, I know that Joe Tighe and Joseph Webb would have had many years playing in the Red and Black. And, for the rest of us, we joined John Durkan as Canon Henry Cup Specialists! Great memories of bus trips around East Mayo, to Kiltimagh, Ballaghaderreen and Charlestown, picking up the lads at the Brackloon road, Ray Sloyan's yarns and David Fitz winding up Patrick Phillips.

Finally, I think of the words of a Sting song, *"Many years have passed since those Summer days, and you'll remember me when the west wind blows upon the fields of barley, when we walked in Fields of Gold."*

Dedicated to the memory of our friend Ger Lyons.



Members of the Ballyhaunis Under-16 County Championship winning team of 1984 who gathered at Ballyhaunis G.A.A. park on Sat., 31st Aug. 2024.

L-R: Michael Cleary, Eddie McLoughlin, John Keane, Paddy Phillips, Paul Clarke, Joseph Webb, Val Byrne, John Durkan (Management), Vincent McNamara, Brian Murray, Raymond Sloyan, Séamus Caulfield, Seán Cribbin (Management) and Noel Phillips.



Left: Pictured is Arlo Thornton, flying the flag for Mayo on a recent trip to visit his cousins in Gurteen during the summer.

Arlo's grandmother was Pauline Chute (née Henry) from Gurteen.



Murdoch Fitzgerald, sporting his Mayo GAA jersey, attended Super Bowl LVIII between the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers at the Las Vegas Allegiant Stadium on 11th Feb. 2024. Murdoch is the son of former Ballyhaunis and Mayo footballer Tom Fitzgerald and his wife Marian. Based in Denver, Colorado, Murdoch has lived in the U.S. for the past twelve years.



Alison Ruane (Bargariff) pictured with RTÉ Sports broadcaster, Marty Morrissey (right) and Davy Fitzgerald (left), newly appointed Antrim senior hurling team manager, at the National Ploughing Championships, September 2024.



Congratulations to Mary McBride (née Fitzmaurice, Gurteenbeg) who was presented with an award for her lifetime work with the community in Melbourne, Australia, at Government House as part of the 2024 Victorian Senior of the Year awards.



Left: Evan Fitzmaurice of Derrynacong travelled as a volunteer with the Irish Pilgrimage Trust (Group 108) on their fiftieth anniversary annual trip to Lourdes at Easter 2024. The Irish Pilgrimage Trust brings children and young people with special needs on a week-long Pilgrimage Holiday to Lourdes each Easter for a unique and life enhancing experience for all those involved.



Ballyhaunis CHAMBER

Tom Forde, President

As President of the Ballyhaunis of Commerce it's my great privilege, once again, to update you on some of the activities we engaged in on behalf of the community of Ballyhaunis over the past year. As I reflect on the year gone by, it has been quite busy, with the Chamber having been involved with a lot of different organisations promoting Ballyhaunis in many and various ways.

To start, I would like to thank William Nestor and his events team for their vital input this year. We had a very successful Summer festival programme which included crazy bingo, pub quiz, 'Ballyhaunis Fittest Family', music festival, kiddies activities, fun run, stalls, arts exhibition etc. There was something for everyone and, with the best of the weather during the June bank holiday weekend, the festival finished on a real high. We appeal to you for your support to help and get involved with William and the festival committee going forward. We hope to build on the success of this year's festival programme and encourage enthusiastic people to get involved. If you have any ideas, please do become involved. We are always looking for new ideas and volunteers to join us.

Christmas Lights

Thanks again to our fantastic events committee and Paddy Phillips, chair of Ballyhaunis Christmas Lights. We look forward to the annual turning on of the lights which takes place this year on 1st December. As I write, we are in the middle of organising this event, looking forward to its success and, of course, to the visit from the main man himself, Santa Claus. I would like to sincerely thank all the businesses for their continued support of the lights which brighten up our town for the festive season. To all the businesses that contribute to our fundraising raffle, a huge thank you. Tickets are on sale in usual outlets and the draw will take place on Tuesday, 17th December. This is a vital part of our fundraising activities for the lights and we thank you the community, in anticipation, for your support. As always some fantastic prizes are up for grabs - just in time for Christmas.

Information Hub

Having just completed work on the old D.H. Burke building, we were close to opening the 'Ballyhaunis Information Hub' during the summer. Unfortunately, due to anti-social behaviour and the reckless behaviour of an individual, we (at the time of writing) have no final date for completion of the project.

I would like to say a special thank you to Joanne

Gresham (Director of Services), Padraic Flanagan, Orla Kinsella, Dept. of Community and Integrated Development, Mayo County Council, Dept. of Rural and Community Development and, of course, our own Anne Cunnane for driving this project which is so vital to our community. This Hub, when opened, will be a one-stop-shop for all community information needs, serving our diverse population with information on all clubs, societies and activities in the area. Help will be available there for those with little English, to fill out forms etc., and point them in the right direction.

Once open (sometime in the New Year) we will have an open day inviting the general public and all organisations around the Ballyhaunis area to attend, and are hoping for a big turn-out.

Community Enterprise Hub Project

The Convent Community Enterprise Hub project embraces the old convent national school, 'public realm', new library and fire station. We are very grateful to welcome the announcement of funds in excess of €5,000,000 for the renovation of the landmark building that once was Saint Joseph's Convent National School. We had numerous meetings and phone calls in conjunction with the relevant authorities at government and county council level to secure this funding to provide an enterprise and community workspace. A new public plaza, along with improved pedestrian connectivity to the town centre, will be created. We wish to thank former Minister Michael Ring TD who, back in 2020, allocated €168,000 to enable a feasibility study to be carried out on this project and promised us that he would see it progress to the end, whatever the outcome. We also want to thank Junior Minister Alan Dillon, County Manager Kevin Kelly, Padraic Flanagan (Head of Claremorris-Swinford municipal district) and Joanne Grehan (Director of Services Mayo County Council), former Cllr. John Cribbin and Cllr. Alma Gallagher, for the support they have shown to this project and we look forward to their continued support going forward, bringing it to fruition.

This new facility will not just house a new state of the art library, but also meeting rooms and remote working facilities to benefit all in and around the Ballyhaunis region. The Public Realm will be developed around the old school building and, hopefully, a pedestrian bridge with access to Clare Street car park and swimming pool, allowing ease of access to all these public facilities.

Other projects

The swimming pool, which is under the ownership of Mayo County Council, is in need of vital funding in order to keep it operational. Breda Caulfield and her committee deserve a lot of credit for having the pool open this summer under extremely difficult circumstances. A special thanks to Padraic Flanagan, Noel Gibbons, Orla Kinsella, Conrad Harley, Conor Smith and Mayo County Council for their help too. Hopefully, in the near future, we can avail of funding from the Sports Capital Funding to develop the pool and maybe extend its use beyond the summer months.

The Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) overhanging bridge on Bridge Street went to design stage with works to be completed out sometime in 2025. This access point from the Friary grounds is essential as the current footpath is too narrow and in very close proximity to a very busy road with constant heavy traffic.

With the development of a new library, plans are being developed to convert the old library building for the benefit of the adjoining fire station.

As you can see, there is a lot of work in the development of this project. I would like to thank Cllr. John Cribbin who has been a tremendous supporter of this project and indeed all Ballyhaunis Chamber projects and all projects for the benefit of the town and surrounding areas. I would like to wish him the very best in his retirement and thank him for all his hard work representing our community over the past twenty years. Thanks also to the officials from Mayo County Council for their ongoing support. A special thanks also to Deputy Michael Ring who has been a strong supporter right from the start and for his passion and enthusiasm in communicating our needs on the National Agenda. Deputy Ring is also retiring before the next general election and, on behalf of all of us, I would like to wish him many happy, peaceful and healthy years ahead.

I also wish to congratulate Alma Gallagher, our new local councillor, and hope we can work together on this and many more projects for the benefit of the community. Thanks also to the newly elected Knock-based Cllr. Paul Lawless, a teacher here in Ballyhaunis Community School. We look forward to working with them both.



Planning permission has been granted for the transformation of the long-disused convent primary school into a new state-of-the-art library with meeting-rooms remote working facilities to benefit the needs of all in the Ballyhaunis area.

Primary Care Centre

As we are all aware work on the construction of the Primary Care Centre (PCC) on the Knock Road has been at a standstill for the past number of years. Ballyhaunis Chamber continues to lobby and ask questions as to why it is at a standstill. Back in June (2024) we received a welcome statement from Deputy Michael Ring: *“Following negotiations, the developer has accepted the original terms set out in the Agreement for Lease and will return to site before the end of September 2024 to complete the project. We await a detailed programme for recommencement and completion.”*

As of yet (Oct. 2024) there has been little activity, but we will continue to push strongly for its completion with the help of newly-elected Cllr. Alma Gallagher who is actively pursuing a full schedule of works report on the project and is committed to delivering this crucial development for our community.

Town Centre Plan

Again, working closely with MCC we were successful in being included in the Town Centre Initiative. Ballinrobe was the pilot town for Mayo with work soon coming to completion. Killala was nominated last year with work commencing shortly. With the support of MCC Ballyhaunis was nominated earlier this year. Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce, along with a number of other local organisations working closely for the benefit of our community, have established a Town Teams Committee. With the assistance of the county council's town Regeneration Officer, Anne McCarthy, we have had a number of meetings to date. At some stage in the near future, we will be inviting all members of the community for their ideas and input so that a plan can be formulated

to develop and regenerate the town and its environs, to help attract more business and develop better facilities. During the summer we lost a much-valued member of our Towns team, Stephen Grogan, a valued member of our community. I wish to extend our deepest sympathy to his family, friends and close work colleagues. Stephen was co-ordinator in the Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre for a number of years working tirelessly on behalf of the local community. May he Rest in Peace.

Smarter Travel

Another initiative mentioned in the Chamber report in last year's Annagh is to develop Ballyhaunis walking and pedestrian trails. We are developing a plan to look at walking tourism and a walking/cycle lane out to the G.A.A. Centre of Excellence (COE) and onto Knock. It might be considered as part of the Camino Walk as we have a holy well and the Friary Church. With a strong emphasis in government policy to develop smart travel, safe cycle lanes, and to encourage everyone to become more actively involved, it would make sense that the COE (Centre of Excellence) become the focus of any such plan. This is a widely used facility on our doorstep and, with heavy traffic on this busy road, it's not safe for pedestrians/cyclists to access. This will be a priority for 2025 along with ensuring that the plans/funding for the 'Convent Community Enterprise Hub' progress. We have continued to actively engage with MCC and government departments to develop this proposal and to date we have received a favourable response.

Pensions Auto Enrolment

As all may be aware, the government rollout of pensions auto enrolment is planned to happen in September 2025. Under this scheme, the employee, employer and government all pay a certain amount into the employee's pension fund. With this in mind, on Friday, 24th Jan.

2025, we will host a breakfast briefing on this topic in Knock House Hotel with financial advisors Martin Fitzmaurice and Brian Flanagan. Martin and Brian will explain the process and there will be a Q&A session. More information and invitations will be sent out nearer the time. This event will be open to all business people in Ballyhaunis and the region.

More Thanks

I am very honoured to be Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce President again this year and would like to thank the Chamber executive for their hard work and dedication, and the Chamber's members for their continued support.

Thanks to Anne Cunnane and her office team who carry out the administration and support all organisations in our community. We are privileged to have such a dedicated and well-resourced team at our disposal.

To Tadhg Buckley and the Board of B.R.I.C.E. Ltd. for their ongoing support and encouragement. We have a great working relationship with Mayo County Council and look forward to their continued support into the New Year and beyond.

To our local representatives, Oireachtas representatives, thank you all.

Finally, we are very fortunate here in Ballyhaunis to have so many active clubs and organisations. We have many vibrant, successful businesses supporting over 2,500 jobs locally. With this successful entrepreneurial spirit, I'm confident this will progress further in the coming years.

Ballyhaunis and district has state-of-the-art, well-resourced educational facilities, along with fantastic sporting facilities locally i.e. soccer, golf, GAA and LGFA, rugby, basketball and many more. All these clubs are run

by local people giving their time voluntarily to ensure their success. Tidy Towns, Community Council, Abbey Partnership and all the other organisations working hard for the benefit of Ballyhaunis and the region. We have a great community spirit and it's my honour to be associated with this enthusiasm. This is what makes Ballyhaunis and its surrounding areas a great place to live, work and play and I for one am proud to come from here.

Thank You all for your support in 2024. I wish you and all your family the very best for Christmas and the New Year.



Survey work being undertaken at the old footbridge accessing the Friary Grounds from Bridge Street, with a view to its refurbishment, July 2024.

A PLEASANT WEDDING SURPRISE

Murt Hunt

My village of Lecarrow is like so many other villages in the Ballyhaunis area with the number of houses getting less, year-in and year-out, and the population getting smaller each year. My late dad often told me of the large population that once lived in this happy village. There was always emigration in years gone by, to the USA mostly as older members of families brought out younger siblings to join them in a new land. However, more and more have emigrated in recent times, and more people have passed on to their eternal reward than were born in the same length of time.

Marriages became very scarce in the road we call Lower Lecarrow but, thank God, that has been turned around in the past few months and we were given an unexpected surprise when two wedding invitations arrived in the post. Time to dust off the supposedly retired suit and tie, and to polish the shoes not used for some time. Neighbours were now happily looking forward to getting some practise in the art of dancing the old-time waltz.

Jonathan Murphy from next door, and bride-to-be, Sheena Hunt (from Ballaghaderreen) was the first invitation to arrive. After so many Hunts leaving the village, it was nice to see we were getting one back, and so nice to see a new house being built in the village. On 23rd August, a large crowd attended St. Nathy's Cathedral in Ballaghaderreen for the wedding ceremony and afterwards a reception in the Diamond Coast hotel in Enniscrone, which was thoroughly enjoyed by one and all.

Our second invitation was from another next-door neighbour, Lisa Jordan, who was making her way from Australia with her soon-to-be groom, Peter O'Shea. They were married in our local church in Ballyhaunis on 27th September, with a reception in Breaffy House Hotel. We were enthralled to hear that the O'Shea family had emigrated to Australia as a result of the Great Famine, and now all the present family were back in Ireland for a happy occasion. It was nice to hear the Lecarrow accents mingling with the Aussie accents at the reception.

So that is the story of our lately married neighbouring couples and hope they have long and happy lives together, and hope for more new houses to be built and a population rise in Lecarrow.

As a postscript, here is an unusual but pleasant reflection, delivered at Lisa and Peter's marriage ceremony:

Wherever we go, whatever we do, whenever there's me, I hope that there's you.

Now money is funny, it can make people odd, you forget to be happy, and you live for your job,

And fashion is a passion, beset with a flaw, you can dress to excess, but you'll always need more,

A muscle toned body may sound like a dream, but nothing is better than chocolate ice cream,

What I'm trying to say, is that happiness grows, not through your wages or body or clothes,

But in laughter and love, and in sharing your life, in the arms of another as husband and wife,

So when you find someone who's weird just like you, who laughs when you're stupid and makes you laugh too.

When you sit on the sofa not hiding your flaws, as imperfectly perfect as the hand that holds yours,

When the fortune of kings or purse of a beggar, won't change how it feels just being together.

When a cuddle and cuppa is all that you need, well then you've found something quite special indeed.

Wherever we go, whatever we do, whenever there's me, I hope that there's you.

CRAIC BY THE CREEK



Pictured at the 'Craic by the Creek' festival near Stockport, Manchester, March 2024. From left: Joanna, Molly and Lauren Griffin. Molly and Lauren are grandchildren of Bridie Griffin (née Lyons Redford). Joanna's father was Delaney from Kilnock, Brickens.

THE HIGH COURT IN DUBLIN AND THE STATUE AT DEVLIS

Fr. Kieran Waldron

When the statue of Our Lady at Devlis was removed several years ago for re-furbishing, it raised some concern locally. Its loss was even discussed on Mid-West Radio at the time. This brought home to the Waldron family how much the land-mark shrine was loved by local people. Nowadays, this is a very busy thoroughfare where drivers must watch the road and concentrate on safety. So, in recent times few have even noticed the statue. A *Connaught Telegraph* report in 1940 recounts that, during the summer months, many Knock pilgrims, both cyclists and on foot, knelt in prayer before the grotto before resuming their journey to Knock. They used it as 'a station' on the way.

Roadside statues and grottoes, like the one at Gurteen, became common in Ireland during the 'Marian Year' of 1954. As will be seen, the providers of the statue had a life-time devotion to the Knock Apparition. The Devlis statue was erected by my parents, James and Rita Waldron many years earlier. Why was this done? What prompted them to invest so much money during lean times in a statue which had to come from an Italian studio? At that time they had a young family of nine children to support.¹

Housing

The story is an interesting one. From the very beginning of the twentieth century, Mayo Board of Health took on the provision of public housing throughout the county. Schemes like the first one at Tooraree (stage one) were already in place with eight houses first occupied in 1911, while ten more in Devlis were first occupied in 1917. Another site at Cherryfield, belonging to John Coyne,



The statue of Our Lady at Devlis: a closeup revealing the level of craftsmanship in this fine Italian marble creation.

was in the council's plan from the early 1930s. However, on 1st October 1934 James Waldron was stunned when he received a formal letter from the Mayo Board of Health stating that a compulsory purchase order had been placed on the field adjoining his Devlis farm-house. It was contemplated that at least eighteen houses would be built in the field adjoining his farm-family home in Devlis. If that project had been proceeded with, the farm-house would have been cut-off from the rest of his small farm. It was to cause him much anxiety for several years. The owner was not against housing schemes. He had no objection to the building of council houses: his objection was to the precise location suggested - so close to his family home. As proof of this, at a

hearing in Claremorris, on 18th December 1934, he formally offered the authorities another portion of his lands in substitution. His offer was refused at a hearing held before an Inspector of the Minister for Local Government. They simply confirmed the decision of the Mayo Board of Health.

He was determined to appeal to the High Court, despite the advice of his Senior Counsel, Mr. Cecil Lavery. In the action in the High Court in early November 1935 his legal team included Patrick J. Gilligan SC, later Minister for Finance. They argued that the lands had been selected without due regard to the situation and to the convenience of the property beside his home, and to the diminution of its value. Also cited was a precedent in Co. Sligo where a similar order was set aside. James Waldron was granted a temporary 'conditional order of certiorari' by the District Court, but the case was to drag on for years. The whole episode was to cause him so much trouble, heart-searching and years of anxiety.

As late as October 1935 the High Court finally met, presided over by Mr. Justice Maguire, Justice O'Byrne and Justice Hanna. They formally quashed the compulsory order of 1934 and left the owner to use the

¹ The youngest of the Waldron family, Peter, was born 7th July 1939, the month of the statue's installation. But, in fact, two of their children had died by then: Joan, born 6th Nov. 1925, died 10th Feb. 1926 and James, born 2nd May 1932, died 27th July 1932. Such deaths in infancy were common in those days. James Waldron kept his own family diary within an old ledger.

lands as he had heretofore. A report of the full hearing was published in the *Connaught Telegraph* of 9th November 1935, and more fully in the *Western People* of the same date.

Shrine

By way of a personal thanksgiving for a win over bureaucracy, James Waldron decided to erect a Shrine to Our Lady at the centre point of that same field near his house - where it still stands today. That field was then affectionately known by its old Irish name 'Páircín Sam' which had been farmed by his family for three generations.

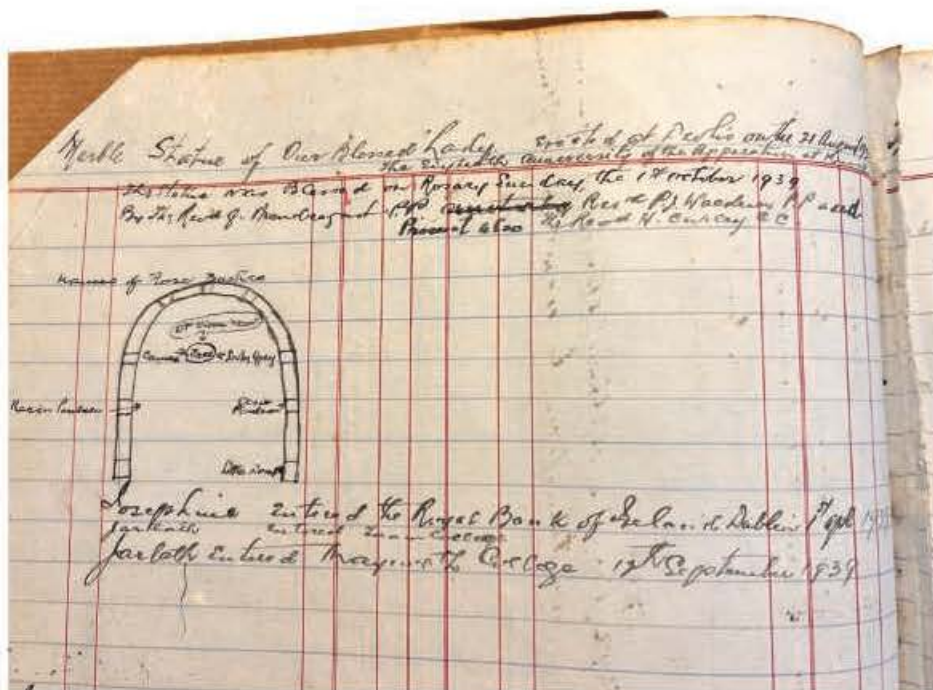
Immediately after the court order was made, he placed an order for a statue of Our Lady from an Italian studio. By then, news of an impending European War grew more ominous every day so some concern was being felt about the safety of the statue on its long trip by sea from Italy. By August of that year of 1939 the statue had yet not arrived. Already the Nazi-Russian and the British-Polish pacts had been signed and debates in the British Parliament were growing more belligerent. However, the good news arrived that the ship was on already on the high seas, bearing the statue to Ireland. The Second War was declared on 3rd September 1939.²

The statue was erected on 21st August 1939, a significant date recognising the fact that it was the sixtieth anniversary of the Apparition of Our Lady at Knock. The grotto was formally blessed by Chancellor Geoffrey Prendergast P.P., on the Feast of the Holy Rosary, 1st October 1939. Also present were Fr. Hugh Curley, C.C. and Fr. Patrick J. Waldron, P.P. Kilkerrin, a cousin of the owner. As a three-year old child, I can still remember that day. My memory of it is somewhat hazy but I believe that the formal blessing was on a low-key basis, confined mostly to family and friends - and without publicity.

Eighty-five years later in 2024, the beauty and fittingness of the Statue invites us to make our own prayers.

*'Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,
That we may be made worthy of the promises
of Christ'.*

² On the positive side, James Waldron records in his diary of 1939 that the eldest family member, Josephine, entered the Royal Bank of Ireland in Dublin, and the second eldest, Jarlath, entered Maynooth as a student for the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Tuam. The other members of the family were: Vona Garvey, Patricia Waldron, Eithne Meagher and her twin sister Sr. Margaret Imelda Waldron, and their brothers Noel, Fr. Kieran and Fr. Peter Waldron.



James Waldron's notes on the statue with details of rose varieties to be planted around it.



The statue of Our Lady at Devlis has been a landmark for eighty-five years.

HOSPICE COFFEE MORNING

A hugely successful and very well supported Coffee Morning in memory of Gerry Lyons and in aid of the Mayo-Roscommon Hospice Foundation, was hosted by Anne Lyons and family in Knockbrack on Saturday, 14th Sept. 2024. The Lyons family wish to sincerely thank everyone who called in to support the Hospice Coffee Morning in memory of Gerry Lyons and those who donated money and supplied treats, chairs, tables, gazebos, balloons and coffee cups. In spite of the dreadful weather conditions, large numbers from Ballyhaunis and surrounding areas called out to Knockbrack to support a very deserving cause and to remember Gerry. Anne, Morgan, James and Michelle have been overwhelmed by the generosity of their friends at Ballyhaunis GAA, by Gerry's former work colleagues at Chameleon and by a very special group of young ladies from Gurteen, who together raised the staggering sum of €11,010 for the Mayo Hospice.

Top right: Anne and Michelle Lyons accepting a very generous donation from a group of young Gurteen fundraisers.

Right: Anne is pictured with Mayo-Roscommon Hospice Foundation CEO Martina Jennings. From left: William Nestor (Chairman, Ballyhaunis GAA), Anne Lyons, James Lyons, Martina Jennings (CEO, Mayo-Roscommon Hospice Foundation) and Michelle Lyons.

Below: Ballyhaunis GAA also turned out in force to support the fundraiser. Photo shows Ballyhaunis GAA chairman William Nestor presenting Anne with a cheque for €600, the proceeds from the club's previous weekend's 50/50 draw. From left: Robbie Herr, Peter Healy, Tomás Murphy, Padraic Murphy, Michelle Lyons, Noelle Barrett-Colleran, Anne Lyons, William Nestor, Morgan Lyons, James Lyons, Micheál Walsh, Tommy Glynn.



WHERE ALL ROADS MEET: A TRIBUTE TO SERVICE

Orla Loftus Moran

The 25th of May 2024 was a very special day for our family Kevin, Claire, Katie, Donal and I, when we gathered with extended family, friends and community in my native hometown Crossmolina to unveil a bust and launch a month-long memorabilia exhibition celebrating the life of our beloved dad and grandfather, Dr. Mick Loftus. This happy occasion was made even more special by the presence of the current Uachtarán of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Jarlath Burns. In unveiling the sculpture Jarlath Burns spoke eloquently, recognising Dad's life of service as a doctor, coroner, sportsman, advocate for the elderly, for health, and as the 28th President of the GAA (1985-1987). He remains the only Mayo person to have been elected to this position, to date.

It is fitting to also acknowledge his connections to Ballyhaunis, where his ties went beyond his regular visits to our home in Gurteen. Until shortly before his death he remained a trustee of Ballyhaunis GAA Club. He was proud to have played alongside Ballyhaunis clubmen Johnny Biesty, Charlie Phillips and John 'Doc' Healy in the successful 1957 All-Ireland Junior Football campaign. His friend, Connacht GAA CEO, and Ballyhaunis man John Prenty was someone our father held in high esteem as a Gael and pragmatic contributor to the development and well-being of the GAA. It was wonderful that despite Dad's advancing age and frailty, John was able to give him a tour of the Connacht GAA Air Dome on a number of occasions. Dad reflected on his visits to Beken with pride and amazement at the achievement. Perhaps fittingly, the final GAA congress he attended at ninety-two years of age took place in 2022 at this venue.



Pictured viewing the display of memorabilia in Crossmolina Civil Centre are Orla, Donal, Kevin, Claire and Katie Moran.

So, if you find yourself passing through Crossmolina, take a moment to stop at the sculpture, positioned perfectly at the meeting point of all roads in the heart of town. Standing there, looking west and beyond, it's a fitting tribute to a dad and grandad whose legacy, much like the view, stretches far beyond what meets the eye.

BALLYHAUNIS PARISH CHOIR

Una Shields

Ballyhaunis Parish Choir sings at Mass in St. Patrick's Church on the first Sunday and third Sunday of the month, and at other ceremonies throughout the year. We also sing at funerals, usually joined by the Abbey Male Choir. Should anyone wish to avail of this service, details can be found through the local undertakers.

Last Christmas (2023) we performed in the Friary along with the Abbey Male Choir, Scoil Íosa, and Le Cairde. This is a very joyous event that instils a Christmas spirit.

We welcome any new members who wish to join us. As Saint Augustine said: "Singing in church is praying twice."

Martina Kelly is our very capable Musical Director. We are blessed to have Martina and our violinists, Moira Delaney, Ita Fahey and Mick Brogan. Their accompaniment enriches the choral atmosphere. We also acknowledge the talent and dedication of our organists, Ludmila Burchovski and Paula Donnellan.



Members of Ballyhaunis Fine Gael celebrate retaining the seat in the Local Elections in the TF Royal Hotel, Castlebar.

After twenty-five years of loyal service, John Cribbin decided not to contest the local election in 2024, marking the end of an era in Ballyhaunis. I was honoured to be selected at the Fine Gael Convention on June 30th, 2023, at the McWilliam Park Hotel, to stand before the electorate and make every effort to retain the seat for Ballyhaunis—a seat that has been held by our party for over seventy years.

Following a thirteen-month campaign, filled with countless conversations and unforgettable moments, I am proud to have been elected as the first woman in the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District, successfully retaining the seat for Ballyhaunis. What made this election particularly special was not only its historic nature, but also its significance for our community. I was blessed to have a dedicated campaign team ranging in age from fourteen to one-hundred years, all of whom offered their unwavering support and invaluable advice.

I began burning shoe leather on St. Patrick's Weekend 2024, knocking on my first door in Abbeyquarter, my neighbour's home. Each evening, I covered a specific townland, braving rain, sunshine, and even the occasional cow crossing. Throughout my journey, I met some truly remarkable people, each trusting me with their stories, hopes, and needs. Every conversation fuelled my determination to retain this seat for Ballyhaunis and serve our town, focusing on the real

issues that impact daily life: healthcare, infrastructure, housing and business development.

Campaign

The election itself was fiercely competitive. Anyone who puts their name on a ballot paper demonstrates tremendous courage and commitment. Social media elevated every step of the campaign, allowing us to reach a larger audience. However, what stood out the most was the sense of community that emerged. This election was not solely about party politics; it was about people coming together volunteering their time, skills, and support to help me connect with constituents across the district. My campaign team embodied the true spirit of our town.

The stakes felt personal as well; putting myself forward in this election meant placing my family in the spotlight, opening ourselves up to public scrutiny in ways we never anticipated. I also felt a deep sense of responsibility to honour the legacy of my predecessor, John Cribbin, who served our constituency with unwavering commitment and determination. This realization resonated with me on every doorstep, reminding me of the big shoes I had to fill.

On election day, I found myself standing on the footpath outside Scoil Íosa, where I attended primary school, reflecting on what had brought me to that

moment. Beyond the competition and the campaign, I stood ready to serve a community I deeply love. Surrounded by my campaign team, who had become like a second family to me, I felt a mix of nerves and excitement. We had dedicated the previous thirteen months to this campaign, and now all we could do was wait. The doors closed, the votes were cast, and the realization set in: the campaign was over, and the outcome was now out of our hands.

After the votes were counted, I was elected on the sixth count at 2.20 a.m. Surrounded by friends, family and supporters, it was a moment of pure gratitude. As I step into this new role, my commitment lies with Ballyhaunis and its hinterland. I am focused on continuing to deliver for the people. My deep involvement in the community, both as a volunteer and through my professional life, has prepared me to bring that experience into my role as your representative. The road ahead is exciting, and I am dedicated to ensuring that the issues we care about are heard and addressed.

Currently, I serve as Leas Cathaoirleach of the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District and have been appointed to the board of the HSE West Forum, Mayo's

Age-Friendly Alliance Board, the Western Inter-County Railway Committee, and The Abbeytrust Ballyhaunis.

Thanks

To everyone who supported me—those who knocked on doors, handed out flyers, or simply offered a kind word of encouragement—thank you. Together, we have achieved something special, and I am ready to work hard on behalf of each and every one of you. A special thanks to my Director of Elections, John Prenty, and to Michael Swords, Pat Higgins, and Jim Higgins, who were integral parts of this journey. To John Cribbin, whose twenty-five years of service as a Fine Gael public representative have been an inspiration, and whose advice and support were invaluable to me, I will be forever grateful. As a proud mother, my children were a huge part of this campaign, and its success is as much theirs as it is mine.

I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve. Thank you to everyone who made this possible. In the words of John Cribbin, "I was elected by some, and I will serve all." That is a promise I intend to keep.

Cllr. Alma Gallagher 087 2617124.
cllragallagher@mayococo.ie

Ballyhaunis and District Credit Union Directors, supervisors and staff circa 1990



Back, L-R: John Tuohy, Frances Mulhern, Eileen O'Brien, Katherine Kilbride, Patricia O'Connor, Cynthia Fitzgerald, Rita London, Justina Lyons, Kathleen Meenan, Margaret Byrne. **Front, L-R:** Michael Lynskey, Mary Rudden, Helen Lyons, Pat Fitzgerald, Hélène McCafferty, Aiden Kelly, Pat O'Connor, Barry Butler, Paddy Brennan. **Kneeling:** Madeline Niland, Ina Freyne, Maura Murphy.

Courtesy of Jim London.

BEKAN FINE GAEL BRANCH RENAMED

Brickens Community Centre witnessed a heartfelt gathering on 16th February 2024, as the community came together to rename the local Fine Gael Branch the 'Michael Sloyan Began Fine Gael Branch', a fitting tribute to a man deeply woven into the fabric of his community.

Speakers on the night included Michael Swords, Branch Chairperson, Cllr. John Cribbin, Deputy Michael Ring, Deputy Alan Dillon, Maria Walsh MEP, Cllr. Michael Burke, former MEP and constituency chairperson Jim Higgins, and Alma Gallagher. Michael's daughter Tracey reminisced about her father's deep affection for Began and its surrounding hinterland, as well as his unwavering dedication to politics and

community involvement. She expressed gratitude for the recognition bestowed on their family by renaming the local branch in honor of her late father.

The renaming of the local Fine Gael Branch stands as a testament to Michael Sloyan's enduring commitment to Began and its people, ensuring that his memory will continue to inspire and guide future generations. The ceremony concluded with Alma Gallagher making a presentation to Michael's wife, Theresa.

Afterwards everyone waited around for a chat and enjoyed a cup of tea and refreshments delightfully presented by the hall committee.



Members of Began Fine Gael and members of the Sloyan family.

Standing, L-R: Maria Walsh MEP, Frank Mullen, Gabriel Sloyan, Kathleen McIvor, John Clancy, Alan Dillon TD, John Cribbin, Cllr. Alma Gallagher, Jerome Sloyan, Cllr. Michael Burke.

Seated, L-R: Jim Higgins, Maura Mullen, Michael Ring TD, Theresa Sloyan, Karol Sloyan, Lorcan McDonald, Tracey Sloyan, Michael Swords.

Ballyhaunis Library

CLARE ST., BALLYHAUNIS

Opening Hours

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	12 noon to 7 pm
Wednesday	12 noon to 7 pm
Thursday	11 am to 4 pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday	11 am to 4 pm

The library is also closed on Saturdays preceding Bank Holiday weekends.



Photo by AK Photography



Left:

Jim and Rita celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary with a get-together in their home on the Knock Road, Ballyhaunis where a beautiful Anniversary Mass was celebrated by Fr. Stephen Farragher, P.P.

Back, L-R: Eoin Scanlon, James Scanlon, Sinead London Scanlon, Enda Scanlon, Pamela London and Seamas London.

Front, L-R: Jim London, Tom London, Muire London and Rita London.



Right:

Jim and Rita London married on 21st September 1974 in the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, City Quay, Dublin City.



Left: Congratulations to Mary Margaret McBride of Annagh who celebrated her ninetieth birthday on 16th June 2024. She was joined by relatives, neighbours and friends at a special Mass in her home to mark the occasion. The celebrant was Mary's cousin Rev. Prof. Eamon Conway (pictured) who travelled from Limerick for the happy occasion.



Right: Congratulations to Bernard Lyons, formerly of Bridge St. and Pauline Curley (née Webb), Clare St., who both celebrated their ninetieth birthdays in October.

Right: At the official opening of the Community Hall on 4th May 2024, Mike Griffin was the recipient of a special presentation honouring many years dedicated service to that place under its current name and previous name, The Parochial Hall. The presentation was made by Ballyhaunis Community Council.

L-R: Mark Godfrey (Community Council), Mike Griffin, Mary Donnelly (Community Council), Michael Ring TD, Dara Calleary TD, Alan Dillon TD.



KILIMANJARO, JULY 2024

Padraic Ruane and Brian Freyne

The idea to climb Kilimanjaro came from a friend of mine, Aidan Gilmore, to mark the year of his 50th birthday. Reluctantly, I agreed, not knowing whether I would be able for this daunting task or not. He asked me if I knew anyone that might be interested in coming along. Enter stage right, my school friend Brian Freyne. In theory, as Forrest Gump might say, "That's a mighty fine idea", but as we started buying the clothes and equipment, and started our training, we began wondering what we had signed up to. Maybe it was a clever marketing ploy in the outdoor pursuits clothing and equipment store to tell us how cold and dangerous it is at the top, thus encouraging us to buy, "only the best", but their sales pitch only served to unnerve us a little more.

I was advised by a friend who had previously climbed 'Kili', that climbing *The Reek* a couple of times a week would put us in good stead. However, when one is out of breath at the statue, worrying thoughts start entering your mind. So, instead of climbing it twice a week in the months before 'the big one', we climbed it three times in total. However, three weeks before we were to fly to Tanzania, we did some 'warm weather' training in the Sierra Nevada mountains in Spain as part of our preparations, climbing to the highest peak in mainland Spain – 3455 metres – which aided our altitude acclimatisation.



Scaling the Barranco wall - not for the faint-hearted.

Kilimanjaro, however, is 5,895 metres high, which meant spending a lot longer 'at altitude' where symptoms of altitude sickness can take hold very quickly and quietly. That is why we chose the longest route to climb, to give ourselves the highest possible chances of making a successful climb to the summit. The Machame or 'Whiskey' route took us four and a half days up, and one and a half days down, following guides and camping at various designated campsites as we made our way along the 65km route. It started in 26-degree (Celsius) heat in the Rainforest at the Machame Gate at the entrance to Kilimanjaro National Park on the 5th of July. By the time we reached the summit at 6.30 a.m. on the morning of the 9th of July, we were standing on a glacier feeling every bit of the minus-10-degrees. The adrenaline buzz and relief experienced whilst sitting at Uhuru peak, the highest point on the continent of Africa, is short-lived as the cold starts to set in. The discomfort of the cold temperatures, blisters on feet, and sheer exhaustion as we made our way back down was worth suffering just to have witnessed the sunrise across the volcanic crater at the top. One of the highlights was waking up to look out across the tops of the clouds, a sight we were lucky enough to capture in a photograph, and one could be forgiven for mistaking it for a picture of white-water waves crashing against a shoreline.



Waking up above the clouds.

Once we returned to the real world once more, we decided to hang on for a few days and take in a Safari – because we had gone that far, sure we might as well. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (commonly referred to as the Ngorongoro crater) served up an array of wildlife doing what they do in their natural habitat.



It was at this very moment Padraic realised the task that lay ahead!



Intrepid Mountaineers, with guides, at Uhuru Peak, Kilimanjaro.
L-R: Padraic Ruane, Aidan Gilmore, Ger Corrigan, Brian Freyne and Michael Gilmore.

THE ABBEY MALE CHOIR

Eamonn Murren

The Abbey Male Choir continues to be busy. We sing once a month at the 10am Sunday Mass in the Parish Church. In the run-up to Christmas 2023 we hosted a very successful and enjoyable annual Carol Service in the Abbey in aid of the local St. Vincent Paul Conference. More recently we sang at the annual Harvest Mass in the Abbey in September 2024.

New members are always most welcome. We wish all our friends at home and abroad a very Happy Christmas and every good wish for 2025.



The Abbey Male Choir conducted by Moira Delaney with organist Paula Donnellan performing at the Harvest Mass in the Friary on 15th September 2024. From left: Paul Donnellan, Eamonn Murren, Luke Murray, Seamus Grogan, Michael Grogan, Jimmy Walsh, Brendan Morrissey, James Clarke, Frank Dillon, Brendan Donnellan, Alan Henry and Brian Hunt.

A STYLISH CENTENARIAN - MARY MCCORMACK

Mary McCormack (née Carney) was born on a small farm in Ballindrehid on the 4th of March 1924. She was the third child born to William Carney and Ann Connell and had two older brothers – Paddy and Tom. They lived a simple farming life in this rural area outside the town of Ballyhaunis. Mary left school at fourteen and went to 'serve her time' in drapery. She started work in Ballyhaunis and later worked in Carndonagh, Castlerea, Loughrea and Athlone. Her early days in the drapery business ignited a lifelong passion for fashion and a sharp eye for women's style. This love for fashion never waned, and she continued working in drapery well into her sixties. Her elegance, keen fashion sense and timeless style remain with her to this day.

Mary's two brothers died in their twenties in 1947. This was an extremely difficult time for the family, and it was thanks to their strong faith that they managed to get through these tragedies. Her father also passed away in 1954. Mary then settled in Athlone and got married in 1955. She had two children, Annette and Peter, who brought Mary immense joy. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't last, and so Mary brought up her children on her own in a very different Ireland to that in which we live today. Her mother came to live with them, and this was a great comfort to her in those challenging times. Mary's mam passed away at the age of eighty-eight in 1968.

Mary's family was always central to her life. Her children both got married and she had nine grandchildren who gave her a great new lease of life in her sixties. She babysat and minded them when they were young. As they got older, she was always interested to know what they were doing and where they were going, and she took huge pride in their achievements and



Mary at work in the drapery business, 1943 and (below) in jovial form, December 2014.



successes. Mary became a great-grandmother to Clara and Maeve in the last two years and she was overjoyed to welcome these babies into her family.

Mary moved from Athlone to Loughrea in her early eighties. She settled-in well to the way of life of this small East Galway town. She has, however, remained a true, loyal Mayo woman to her backbone, never shouting for Galway even though she enjoyed the last twenty years that she has lived there. The move allowed her to be close to her daughter Annette who was delighted with the opportunity to see her every day.

When Mary was eighty-nine, living on her own became more difficult for her and she moved into St. Brendan's Community Nursing Home in Loughrea. She has lived in the Crannogs unit in the home for the past eleven years and this has been a very positive experience for her. She has become part of a bigger family who love her dearly and take amazing care of her. It is probably true to say that Mary would not have lived to celebrate her hundredth birthday in March this year if it had not been for the outstanding support, care, love and friendship that the nurses and carers of Crannogs have shown to her.

For Mary's hundredth birthday, she celebrated in style in Crannogs surrounded by her family and friends. Celebrations began with a prayer service in keeping with Mary's deep faith, and refreshments followed. Mary was excited to see the room full of people who had come to celebrate and was very pleased to be the centre of attention. She even enjoyed a glass of prosecco to mark this auspicious occasion.



Mary's early days in the drapery business ignited a lifelong passion for fashion and a sharp eye for style evident in this picture from 1950.



Left: Mary McCormack with her daughter Annette and son Peter, at Annette's graduation in 1978.



Right: Mary pictured in 2018 with Brian Craven, her first-born grandson.



Mary and family celebrating her 100th birthday, March 2024. **Back, L-R:** Ronan Kelly, John Lawlor, Bernie Jordan, Mary Finn, Peter Fallon, Joe Ryan, Mags McGrath, Annette Lyons, Sean Hodgins, Mary Cormican, Angela Touhey, Patrick Gaffey. **Centre, L-R:** Catherine Nevin, Michelle Fahy, Mary McCormack, Loretta McTigue, Geraldine Skehill. **Front, L-R:** Daniel Chelchowski, Vargese Varge, Mary Mullins.

ABBEY PARTNERSHIP AND TRUST

J. T. Smyth

The Abbey Trust and the Abbey Partnership wish to express their deepest sympathies to the family, friends and work colleagues of Stephen Grogan of the Family Resource Centre. Stephen was a former secretary of the Abbey Partnership, an extremely diligent and an invaluable member, dedicated to the success of the Abbey Partnership and its endeavours.



The Augustinians transferred the property to the Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust CLG under a 999-year lease. The Trust is made up of ten trustees: four from the community, four from Mayo County Council and two nominees of the Augustinian Order. The day-to-day administration of the property is carried out by the Abbey Partnership which is a committee of interested representatives from local organisations. The buildings and park are extensively used by the local community. To assist the Abbey Partnership in all their endeavours two working groups/committees were set up: (1) The Community Garden; and (2) The Friary Church group.

The people of Ballyhaunis continue to have strong attachments to the Friary Church and its grounds. The grounds are used as a town park. The much-needed upgrade of the Ballyhaunis Playground started on the 1st July 2024. The money was allocated to this project from the Community Recognition Fund 2023. We wish to express our thanks and gratitude for the allocation of the funding to this recreation area for children.

Painting

Michael O'Doherty from Dublin donated an oil portrait of his mother, Nora Gilmore, who came from Ballyhaunis. 'The Ballyhaunis Girl' was painted by Fr. Foran, a former Prior and renowned artist in the Friary in Ballyhaunis. It was painted over one-hundred years ago. Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust gratefully accepted the painting for display in its permanent home in the Friary church. The Trust has created a website as an historical archive of the Friary House, the Church and its contents which is accessible to the community and visitors.

The Ballyhaunis Wall Art Project (located in the Friary Field) celebrated their Community Project by having an unveiling ceremony on Monday, 30th October 2023. The mural is a beautiful forty-two metre-long and eight-foot high scenic landscape with a display of three diversity trees, a celebration of diversity, created by the community with work carried out by the community. The project leaders were Mairead Murphy Damron, Rachel Jordan and Edel Kinsella, and a total of 180 volunteers aged four to eighty-four, as well as pupils

from Ballyhaunis Community School, helped bring this project to life. Huge excitement awaited the unveiling of the mural and a large crowd was in attendance. This family fun afternoon with lots of attractions, was a huge success.

Thanks

The Abbey Partnership and Trust wish to acknowledge and thank the Community Garden committee on the success of the Green Flag, which they have strived to maintain for their sixth year Green Flag inspection day which took place on Monday 12th August 2024. The garden looked fantastic, showing the dedication and commitment of all Ballyhaunis Community Garden members. Well done to all involved!

On Saturday, 6th July the Community Garden unveiled a plaque in memory of Inga Ziemele. Inga (R.I.P.) worked in the Garden for years and maintained it to a very high standard.

The Friary grounds hosted a Biodiversity Awareness day on Saturday, 25th May 2024 organised by Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns. The event highlighted the diversity in the park: grassland, woodland, rivers and a wide range of habitats. There were activities for children including a scavenger hunt and a 'match the leaf to the wood' competition.

Remembering Brídann Memorial Walk and Family Fun Day, an Irish Kidney Association Fundraiser in honour of Bridann Halpin Keane, took place on 14th September 2024 and was followed by a Family Fun Day. The event took place in the Friary Field with bouncy castles, face painting, balloons and live music. A very enjoyable day was had by all!

Concerts

In 2022 a committee was formed to raise money for the preservation of the fabric of the Friary church. The church was gradually deteriorating with water running down the walls and the paint was peeling off due to the dampness. Money was also needed to create a secure place to display all the beautiful artefacts that were donated by the community over the centuries. To raise fund, it was felt that the most appropriate use of the church was to hold concerts there. This was not only an appropriate use, but would also introduce the Friary to the new, non-native community and at the same time would help raise much-needed funds.

The first concert featured The Three Tenors and was held on Saturday, 29th April 2023. A total of 219 tickets were sold at €30 each. The Gem on Bridge Street sold

most of these with more sold in McHugh's Café on Main Street. Eventbrite sold thirty-three tickets. The concert was very enjoyable and, with ticket sales of 219, it was also very successful. We raised €500 on the raffle and received donations and sold a number of friary booklets as well. Mayo County Council gave us €500 also. Overall, we made a surplus €2500. We used some of this to buy seventy chairs as we had to borrow chairs for the event from the Community Hall. This left us with €750 from the night. This event went down so well that we were pushed by the audience to set a date for a Christmas Concert, and this was set for 2nd December.

In the mean-time we planned a second concert for the Friary. We invited the famous folk singer Andy Irvine to Ballyhaunis on Saturday, 26th August. Again, we ran a raffle and netted €500 approx. We managed to sell 142 tickets at €20 each. It was disappointing that the turnout was so low, but it was a most enjoyable night and we made a small profit. In spite of the drop in numbers, we continued with The Three Tenors again in December. For this concert we expected a good crowd, but sold only 109 tickets at €30 each with the result that, in spite of the raffle and some donations, we lost €3,000 approx. This effectively wiped out all the surplus profits from the previous shows. However, it was a lovely show. We served mulled wine with mince pies and this generated funds that covered the cost of the wine and pies.

In early Summer of this year, I received an email from James Kilbane looking for a venue for a concert and offering to do it as a fundraiser for us. The date was set for 15th June and the publicity began. We managed to sell ninety tickets at €15 each. Again, the raffle brought in the usual €500 approx., but we would have only made the raffle surplus if James hadn't given back €200 when I paid him his fees. Many people said that this was the most enjoyable concert of the four as people knew the songs and could sing along.

In summary, the concerts as we promoted them were not money spinners and involved a lot of hard work on the part of the committee with very little return. We have not raised enough money to meet the match-funding required to apply for government grants. The result is that we now hire out the church for events at a charge of €200 for charities and fundraisers. The cost of heating the church is €10 per hour and it has to be run for at least four hours beforehand to get the church up to a comfortable level.

To raise the needed funds, we will have to look to the Ballyhaunis diaspora and ask for donations.

Leaving Cert' Class of 1975 – Golden Anniversary Gathering 2025

The Leaving Certificate classes of 1975 at the Convent of Mercy Secondary School and St. Patrick's College will gather in Ballyhaunis in May 2025 to celebrate a fiftieth anniversary special event. This planned afternoon celebration will commence at 12.30pm with an informal meet and greet reception, with a short service of gratitude and in remembrance of former classmates, teachers, parents and friends. This will be followed by a meal at a local restaurant. Further information including date, venue and schedule may be obtained from the volunteer coordinators made up of former classmates. Those who have yet to confirm their attendance are kindly advised to do so as soon as possible. This will be appreciated in order to finalise preparations and booking for this greatly anticipated reunion.

Email: lcclass.7550@gmail.com



Charlie Bird (left) alongside Seamus Caulfield at Croagh Patrick in 2022. Charlie, the former RTÉ journalist and charity campaigner, was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in 2021 and died in April 2024 aged 74. He climbed Croagh Patrick in 2022 as part of a nationwide campaign to raise funds for Motor Neurone Disease Ireland and Pieta House. The 'Climb With Charlie' initiative raised over €3 million for the charities.

A TRAGIC LOSS, SIXTY YEARS ON

Genevieve Morrissey Pender

Sixty years ago, on Friday, 22nd January, the town of Ballyhaunis awoke to the shocking news that two stalwarts of their community had been involved in a horrific accident. One, a member of An Garda Síochána (John Morrissey) and the other (Jim Connell), a local carpenter who was renowned for joinery and furniture making.

Both men had braved the elements to attend early morning Mass, in spite of the town being cloaked in a thin, treacherous sheet of ice. They were returning to their homes in Devlis when a van belonging to Boland's Biscuit Manufacturers, was making its way through the slippery streets, lost control and careered into the two pedestrians, John (my father) was pinned against the wall and died at the scene. He was only thirty-one years old with a bright future ahead. Jim sustained injuries to his legs and was immediately rushed to the Bon Secours Hospital in Tuam where he underwent an immediate operation. Jim spent a long time in hospital but thankfully returned to his family, resuming his woodcraft in his workshop at the back of his house in Devlis. He passed away in January 2014. The van driver was unharmed fortunately, an act of God that left far reaching consequences.

An eye-witness who had been serving Mass that morning told me that when my mother was informed of the tragedy, she ran from the house, which was opposite what used to be Winston's shop, to the scene of the accident. My mother always wore high-heeled shoes which were fashionable at the time and managed to reach my father unscathed. I suppose she was in such shock that all thoughts for her own safety dissipated.

What happened next demonstrates a change in times. My father's remains were laid out in the local Garda Station. As my mother was in a distressed state, Sergt. Curran identified the body. Newspaper articles said that, 'he was a highly respected member of the force and throughout the day, hundreds of residents visited and prayed over him. Later that day, Dr. George Maguire, held an inquest into the circumstances surrounding the deceased's death.' Doctors Joyce and Waldron both presented evidence to the jury which comprised of local people. The inquest was concluded that evening without any family members being present, but the family was represented by Patrick O'Dwyer, solicitor. Thankfully, nowadays, an adequate time-lapse between death and the inquest is allowed, giving family members the space to grieve.

Requiem Mass was offered in St. Patrick's Church on Saturday, followed by a second Mass that afternoon in



Garda John Morrissey (right) and others as yet unidentified.
Maybe some of our readers can name them?

Star of the Sea Church, Quilty, Co. Clare. From death to burial took thirty-six hours, by choice or adherence to convention I'm not sure. My uncle, Canon Morrissey, a parish priest in Swansea, Wales, describes hearing about his brother's death on the radio. Fortunately, there is more awareness and empathy nowadays in circulating bad news.

My father was a native of Quilty, Co. Clare, and having completed his training in Dublin was stationed in Castlebar, Crossmolina, Enniscrone and finally Ballyhaunis. He had just passed the Sergeant's examination and was due a promotion pending an interview the following Tuesday. Alas, it wasn't to happen!

Most of you reading this article may not know me but you will know my brother, Brendan, who still resides in the town. Brendan was just five, I was the middle child - almost three - and Aine, my sister, was sixteen months. We were left without a father but luckily, we had a strong, caring mother who placed our needs to the fore. Her name was Anna, a native of Clones, Co. Monaghan. She chose to adopt Ballyhaunis as her homeplace and lived there until her death at the age of forty-nine years.

We were again plunged into grief and despair, now orphaned at nineteen, seventeen and fifteen. Our local community became our family as neighbours rallied around us, enveloping us in a feeling of solidarity. In particular, I would like to thank our next-door neighbours and close friends the Freyne Family. Bernie and Mary opened their doors to us, offering comfort, care and strength. I, for one will be eternally grateful to them.

In conclusion, my purpose in writing this article is to remember the sixtieth anniversary of my father's death and to demonstrate that, in the face of tragedy, family love sees you through. As a family we have maintained impenetrable bonds, supported further by spouses and children. Even in the dark times, family connection becomes a source of resilience, guiding you through to eventual healing and hope.

As the seanfhocal goes '*Ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid.*'



Pictured with a seized poitin still. From left: Gda. Kevin O'Hara, Gda. John Byrne and Gda. John Morrissey.



John and Anna Morrissey.



Gda. John Morrissey taking a phone call in barracks.

In this, our 47th edition of Annagh Magazine, we thank you, the readers, patrons, contributors, articles, photographs and poems, for making this publication possible. Thanks also to all those who helped get photographs named or provided assistance in any way. A special Thanks to all our sales outlets for selling the magazine. Please support local businesses and industry.

- **Annagh Magazine Society.**

If you wish to contribute an article or photograph for consideration in **Annagh 2025** - our 48th issue - email: info@annaghmag.ie, or visit our website www.annaghmag.ie.

The deadline is **Friday, 10th October, 2025.**

POSTCARD FROM NEW YORK

Vinnie Caulfield

We moved to Annagh from Upper Main Street in 2005. My children Maedhbh and Piarais, along with some friends, were exploring their new surroundings when they came across a very well-preserved old postcard in an old house. We put the old piece of correspondence away and forgot about it until I came across it again recently and decided to make some enquiries. Our neighbour, Mary Margaret McBride, was born and reared in Annagh and was familiar with the people mentioned in the card. She explained that the sender, Michael Moran, had spent some years in the U.S.A. before returning home. As there were three Moran

families in the village at that time, he gives his mother Catherine her full title in the address to ensure delivery to the correct household. The postcard was mailed from New York on 18th Dec. 1907, and reads:

Mrs. Catherine Caulfield Moran
Annaugh
Ballyhaunis
Co Mayo
Ireland

Dear Mother, I Hope that
you will have a very
happy Xmas and
that Mary Ellen will
be very nice to you.
I hope to be with you
all two years from
now with God's help.
With much love and
best wishes for a gracious
new year. From Michael.

Mary Ellen, you
will get your letter
in a few days if
not today.



A VINTAGE SEWING MACHINE

Noah Damron (aged 12)

One sunny afternoon in September, I decided to go exploring in fields behind my house in Annagh. I wanted to find the house where my neighbours Piarais, Maedhbh and Daire Caulfield had come across an old postcard. The postcard was written over a hundred years ago from a son in America to his mother. The story of that postcard made me curious about the house so I set off to find it.

After some searching I came across the old, abandoned house and started looking around. There was a lot of old wood and dusty corners. As I moved around, something caught my eye - a tiny press behind the stairs - hidden behind some boards. I carefully opened it, and there it was - a beautiful old Singer sewing machine! The thread was still in the needle!

Excited, I took the sewing machine home and cleaned it up. As I wiped away the dust, I noticed a serial number: F857797. I decided to do a little research and, to my surprise, discovered that the sewing machine was made in Kilbowie, Clydebank, Scotland. It was a Singer 66K Lotus model, manufactured in 1918, making it one-hundred and six years old!



Above: Singer sewing machine from 1918.

Left: Noah with the newly cleaned up Singer sewing machine.



John Halpin with his wife Maggie (née Infant), and their son Jack. John Halpin ran a very successful photography business in Abbey Street.

His wife Margaret also ran her family's grocery business at the same address.

Jack, their son, married Bridget Mary Caulfield, Main Street and became a well-known businessman for many years. Jack also, as a member of the Annagh Magazine Society shared his great depth of local knowledge and history.

A Ballyhaunis GAA Club Gathering in the Central Hotel



Pictured at a Ballyhaunis G.A.A. gathering in the Central Hotel in the 1970s.

Back, L-R: Ted Webb, Sean McManamon (Galway), Tony Cribbin, Pado Moran. **Centre, L-R:** T.J. Farragher (Garrymore), Dermot Eagney, Paddy Waldron, John Doc Healy, Frankie Dillon, Micheál Murren, Bernard Keane, George O'Dea (Bank of Ireland), Paddy Brennan. **Front, L-R:** Bertie Curley, Patsy Keane, Mick O'Connell, Johnny Biesty, Micheál Smyth. *Courtesy of Michael O'Connell.*

Kilmovee 10k Marathon 2024



Left: Participants in the Kilmovee 10k in aid of Mayo Roscommon Hospice and Kilmovee Shamrocks GAA. **From left:** Brian Gallagher, Brian Mulrennan, James Kilkenny, Joey Ganley.

Right: Taking part in the Kilmovee 10k in aid of Mayo Roscommon Hospice and Kilmovee Shamrocks GAA were Cheree and Brian Mulrennan (Bracklaghboy).



THE MEN WHO MAN OUR STATIONS. No. 94.

Tullamore, Offaly Station Party.

Front Row—L. to R: Gd. P. Mulligan; Sgt. J. Byrne; Supt. O. Brady; and D Sgt. Jas. Galvin. Back Row—Garda T. Halligan; Garda J. Hanahoe; D.O. P. Niland and Gda. J. Fleming.

D.Sgt. Wall.



Garda John Fleming (standing, extreme right) and his colleagues of Tullamore Garda Station pictured in the *Iris an Gharda: Irish Garda Review* of Feb. 1951. Garda Fleming was a granduncle of Jimmy Fleming of Pollnacrougna and Kiltimagh. *Courtesy of Jimmy Fleming.*



John Finnegan, Tavnaghmore (left) and his brother Thomas. Taken in London in 1970.



Pictured at the Garda Dance, Swinford in 1972. From left: Mike Nolan, John Morley and Brian Flanagan. *Courtesy of Mike Nolan, Brackloon.*



The Caulfield family of Bohogue got together recently to celebrate Paul's sixtieth birthday:

L-R: Chris, Gabriel, Bernie, Mick, Celia, Jim, Mary and Paul.

MIDWEST RADIO

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS IN THE MAKING AND STILL GOING STRONG!

Tommy Marren

Congratulations to Paul Claffey and all the crew at Midwest Radio on celebrating 35 years in broadcasting.

Midwest Radio first hit the airwaves on 24th July 1989 and has grown from strength to strength ever since.



Midwest Radio staff in the late 1980s. **Standing:** Gerry Glennon, Padraig Walsh, Paul Claffey, Tommy Marren, Chris Carroll. **Seated:** Maria Mullarkey, Paula Donnellan.

From humble beginnings in the band's changing room at the rear of Midas Nightclub in Clare Street, Ballyhaunis, on a cold November morning in 1985, the first sounds from Midwest Radio were broadcast to the region.

Paul Claffey and Chris Carroll from Castlerea, County Roscommon, came together to realise a long-held dream and so the seeds were sown for what has become one of the great success stories of Irish radio broadcasting. Although operating as a pirate radio station, the listeners didn't seem to mind; the music and banter struck a chord and gave the people of the region something they weren't getting from our National Broadcaster.

Presenters like John Duggan, Gerry Glennon, Barbara Dillon, Michael Neary, Michael Commings and Paula Donnellan became household names in a short space of time. In the Spring of 1989 news filtered through that all the hard work had finally paid off as Midwest Radio received the license to broadcast to the region.

On 24th July 1989, to the strains of Kevin Prendergast's song *My Old Home in Mayo* - introduced by a young Sligo man, Adrian Eames - Midwest Radio, as we know it today, was born. Over the past thirty-five years the station has evolved and developed. With satellite studios in Ballina and Castlebar, it's fair to say that Ballyhaunis has always been and remains the home and heartbeat of the station.



Popular long-serving Midwest Radio presenters, Seamus Duffy (left) and John Duggan.

Our state-of-the-art studios in Clare Street opened in 2003, cementing our relationship with the town. To say it has been a 'rollercoaster' of a time would be an understatement. From Presidential Inaugurations to a Papal Visit, and from landslides to All-Ireland heartbreaks, the staff of Midwest Radio have been there every step of the way.

Modern technology gives us a global reach and, despite the popularity of social media, there's no doubt that Midwest Radio continues to be a platform with character and heart that makes it unique!

Here's to the next thirty-five years!

Pictured at the home of singing superstar Daniel O'Donnell, where they broadcast the Mid-Morning Show live as part of the 35th anniversary Midwest Radio celebrations, are - from left - Gerry Glennon, Daniel O'Donnell and Paul Claffey.



MidWest Radio Staff, 2024.

Back, L-R: Patrina Cuniffe, Cathy Regan, Sharon Behan Woods, Bernie Greally, Mary Raftery, Paul Claffey, Connie Finn, Padraic Walsh, Monica Morley, Teresa Cunningham, Eileen Sloyan.

Front, L-R: David Murtagh, Tommy Marren, Noel Grogan, Rian Bailey, Stephen Grealis, Gerry Glennon.

PUFFING AWAY

Eamonn Murren

Only when Paddy Fitzmaurice of Abbeyquarter passed away in September, did it dawn on me that he was the last man I had seen smoking a pipe. From the days of the clay pipe or 'dúidín' to the more modern Peterson, Chacom and Brebbia varieties, men (and women too) have been puffing away contentedly. The late Johnny O'Shaughnessy of Beech Park was a great smoker of the pipe. I loved the aroma that came from the smoke wafting from his pipe. The look of peace and satisfaction on Johnny's face as he puffed on the pipe was wonderful to behold.



Johnny O'Shaughnessy.

the shape of a half moon to cut the tobacco to size. Other less popular brands were Condor Plug, Mick McQuaid and Golden Virginia.

Cigarettes

Of course, cigarettes were very popular too when I was growing up. My father, Johnny Murren, smoked Player's Navy Cut, most often known simply as Player's. These were non-tipped cigarettes. Other non-filter-tipped cigarettes were Sweet Afton, Gold Flake and Senior Service. Larry Lynch of Holywell and my neighbour Jimmy Barrett were the men for Senior Service. The big favourite was Will's Wild Woodbine cigarettes. Woodbine was the cheapest brand and could be purchased in packs of five.

Popular filter-tipped cigarettes included Carroll's Number 1, Major Extra Size, Rothmans King Size, Benson & Hedges, Kingsway, Albany and Gold Leaf. I remember a brand of mini cigarettes called Boston. They were a miniature cigarette designed to help wean people off the habit and sold for 1/6 for a ten pack. Twenty Major would set you back 4/3 for twenty in 1967. Compare this to the current price of €18-plus and you can see one of the reasons why fewer people are smoking today.

A modern trend among today's smokers is the practice of Vaping. I can understand long-time smokers using vapes to try and break the smoking habit, but find it sad to see so many young teenagers vaping as they walk home from school. The recent ban on selling vapes to young people under the age of eighteen and the new tax introduced in the recent budget might help to lessen the habit.

Overall, there has been a big reduction in the numbers of people engaging in smoking cigarettes, while



Pictured at a GAA Dinner Dance in Tully's Hotel, Castlereagh in the early 1970s. From left: Mary and John Cleary (Clare St.), Maeve Lyons (Kiltaboe), Eamon Curley, Kieran Folliard (Upper Main St.) and Eamonn Murren (Upper Main St.).

Growing up, I can recall quite a number of men of the town and surrounding countryside who were pipe smokers. Sean Corcoran of the Savoy Café on Main Street (now Ballyhaunis Veterinary Clinic) was a committed pipe smoker. Sean could be seen regularly standing at his door enjoying a smoke. Paddy Phillips of The Cape, Joe Webb, Paddy McGarry, Sgt. Nally and Jimmy Noone are other men I can still picture with their pipes. In our own street, my neighbours Mick O'Connell, Vincent Caulfield and Pat Curran also dabbled with the pipe. I also can remember some of our teachers who smoked the pipe including John Cleary, Terry Coleman, Chris Pratt and Fr. Des Walsh.

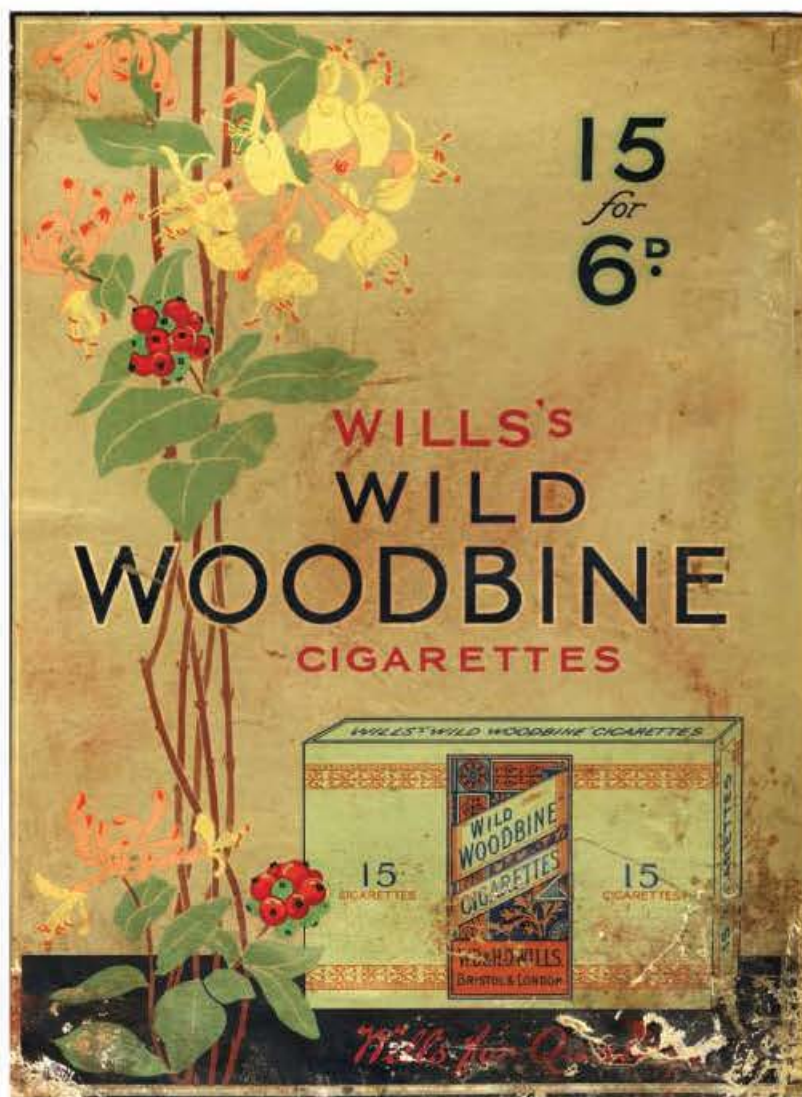
I recall my neighbour Vinnie Caulfield selling the old plug tobacco. Walnut and Bendigo were the big sellers. They came in 2-ounce blocks (known as half a quarter). If a customer only wanted to buy an ounce of plug, Vinnie had a sharp-bladed instrument with a handle in

the pipe smokers of today are an endangered species. The government's anti-smoking laws have helped to bring about this decline. Movies and TV stopped making it seem so glamorous and the ban on tobacco advertising has also helped. But the biggest reason for the decline is awareness of the negative impact that smoking has on our health. Let's hope that this trend continues.

Here's hoping that St. Peter is exempt from the anti-smoking laws and that he has a large smoking room for those mentioned here, and all the other pipe smokers that we recall in the Ballyhaunis of old.



Jimmy Noone pictured at The Square in the 1970s.



Wills's Wild Woodbine Cigarettes Advert
Courtesy of Edward Mulhern.

Remember

Ukrainians.
Remember them, remember us.
Travelling from dark places to dark spaces.
Living or such in a memory of loss.
The touch, the hug, the kiss, the cost
Of staying or of leaving was too much
The sharpened tongue a sword a word
A scar of generations and of such
Magnitude like a thousand hidden cuts
Internally bleeding into a sea of doubt.
They let us in and held the chains
Until we plucked the courage to get out.
No dogs, no blacks, no Irish need apply.
How quickly we forget the slurs!
The overlord can't hear the victims cry.
Pedagogy of oppression reoccurs.
Until we became oppressors just like them.
The herd of history and hearts of stone
Together weave a tale we know again

Witnessing another tribe alone.
Bitterness arrives with memory loss
Of our own story in a different voice
We clap in dance without a fuss
We give from open hearts by choice.
When the storm is over through the mist
We shall sing and speak as one
How we will remember that we kissed
Proud that through love the war was won.
Once we shared the water in the well.
Donated blood to feed the cause
Resuscitated time and time again to tell
That there was hope when all hope was lost.
Remember them, remember us
How we floated on an ocean's pain
Hold the lifebelt out in each painful rush
So they can hold it to breathe again.

– Noel Lyons

BALLYHAUNIS LIBRARY SUMMER STARS PRESENTATION

Children from Scoil Íosa primary school and the surrounding area who received their Summer Stars certificate, medals and goodie bags from local Councillor Alma Gallagher.

Also pictured is Eleanor Freyne, Ballyhaunis Librarian. *Glynn's Photography.*





Congratulations to Sheila and Willie Broderick, Brackloon, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary (50th) on 24th May 2024.

Sheila Sloyan from Brackloon North and Willie Broderick from Clooncoose, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, were married in the Church of Our Lady Help of Christians, Luton, England on 24th May 1974.

Best wishes from all their family and friends.



Private Sean Patrick Finn, son of Robert Finn, Main Street, Ballyhaunis and now of Barden Ridge, Sydney, Australia, who has completed his basic training for the Australian army.

Right: A special presentation was made to Tom Finn to acknowledge his many years as caretaker of the Parochial Hall in Ballyhaunis. He is pictured here with family members.

Standing, L-R: Izabelle Finn, Laura Greally, Lisa Finn, Paul Finn, Charlie Finn, Chloe Finn. Seated: Tom and Christina Finn. *Courtesy Fr. Stephen Farragher.*



Left: John Dillon-Leetch, Port of London Authority (PLA) Hydrographer, was presented with the Alexander Dalrymple Award for 2024 by the UK Hydrographic Office. The accolade recognises the Ballyhaunis man's significant contributions to hydrography and, in particular, his crucial role in advancing the PLA's commitment to navigational safety, conservation, and sustainability. The PLA looks after navigational safety on the tidal Thames and oversees port, passenger and freight operations on the river. During his time as Port Hydrographer, John has enabled the PLA to develop one of the most proficient hydrographic departments in the UK. Pictured, L-R: Sarah, Helen and John and Conor Dillon Leetch.,

BALI... HAUNIS: A JOURNEY ACROSS CULTURES AND CONTINENTS

Dara Healy

If someone had told me last November after writing my last Annagh article that I'd be on four continents in four months and living in another country, I would have thought they were joking. But here I am, all the better for my adventures.

Like many Irish families at Christmas time, there was a member or two missing from the dinner table. They had travelled further afield from home and were scattered all over the world, taking advantage of job and cultural opportunities. In the Healy household, two notable members missing were down under. Mom Helen put aside her fear of long flights and, with me by her side, took the trip to Oz for a Christmas in summer. What's not to like?

We first arrived in Melbourne, the cultural capital of Australia. Melbourne, a city renowned for its vibrant culture, diverse population and arts scene, is often praised for its excellent food, coffee culture, and impressive blend of Victorian and contemporary architecture. It was here we had our Doctor's Road Christmas in the sun, joined by our close neighbours, the Phillips family. It was a surreal feeling having all these familiar faces while tucking into a home-cooked turkey and ham dinner. Melbourne was a terrific start to the trip, but it was time to leave the four-seasons-in-one-day weather and see what Sydney had in store.

Sydney, the Harbour City, possesses the famous sights of Australia that we all associate with the country: the Sydney Opera House, Harbour Bridge and the stunning beaches of Bondi, Coogee and Manly. It was here we met most of the Ballyhaunis expats in Oz, living out their "Aussie Dream." We spent many great nights seeing all the sights and finding time for a quiet drink or two in the pub with Helen, who led the craic and mischief as usual. The rest of Australia was calling, so we took off on the open road, taking in Byron Bay, Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, and the Gold Coast. The beaches, sunshine and laid-back culture were the real standouts from my time here, and the sense of familiarity of home



Children enjoying a game of soccer in a paradise pitch in the Laos mountains.

paired with the Australian weather and culture was truly special. It was here I waved goodbye to the family, booked a one-way ticket to Bali, and embarked on a solo adventure with no plan but a sense of excitement and possibility.

Asian adventure

My first stop was the influencer mecca of Bali, Indonesia, famous for its beautiful beaches, lush landscapes and rich cultural heritage. The island offered a mix of serene temples and Hindu culture and was filled with characters and expats from countries all over the world trying to make a living in this fast-growing region of Asia. Next, I was off to the Philippines, a beautiful country made up of over 7,000 islands and 115 million people. I managed to visit five of these islands and met some of the most hospitable people in the world. The beaches in this country are truly utopian, with colourful coral and fish and blue waters that leave anyone who visits awe-struck. It's hard not to be happy in this country; the Filipino smile and friendliness rapidly put you at ease and they're quick to offer a coconut and a sing-along with karaoke being broken out at any opportunity. I even joined in for a performance of a One Direction number with my new friend Vince. It's fascinating that while they don't know much about Ireland itself, once they hear the name, they



Above left: A Doctor's Road Christmas down under with the Healy and Phillips families. From left: Dara Healy, Dearbhla Phillips, Helen Healy, Shane Healy, Mark Phillips, Sinead Healy (all Doctor's Road).

Right: Helen making friends with local Aboriginal People and learning about their culture in Sydney.

can reel off many of our famous musical exports: Westlife, U2, Niall Horan and The Script.

Laos, the most bombed country on earth, was next on my list. Still trying to piece itself back together after the American secret bombing campaign during the Vietnam War, Laos brought with it a wildness and sense of adventure unlike anything I'd encountered yet. It was here I took a fishing excursion up the Mekong River. This traditional style of fishing with bamboo boats and nets was a far cry from my Aldi rod on the Dalgan River. As part of this trip, I stayed in a remote village with no Wi-Fi, limited English and no roof over the toilet! It was quite the experience seeing what life is really like in a Lao village: how they cook, farm, and make their version of poitin called Lao Lao. It was also here I had a run-in with an eager Lao hunter. I went for an evening stroll to watch a sunset and on my way back in pitch black met a local hunter with an early 1900s French rifle pointed at me. After a quick exchange of hand gestures and nervous smiles, he soon put it down and we shared a laugh. He showed me the gun and how it was operated by a rubber band as bolt, along with gunpowder and pellets. After talking with the village chief, I found out that it was common practice for men of the village to hunt monkeys at night to supplement their meat intake. I also enjoyed a game of barefoot football with the young kids in the most scenic pitch I'd seen in my life, giving the Coe a good run for its money. The language barrier never mattered when you can say "Messi" or "Ronaldo" as I tried my luck as a centre forward.

Cambodia and the Khmer people were next on the road to nowhere. Cambodia is a nation still healing from

the atrocities of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, but they are a nation of proud people showing the strength and resilience of a great country. Cambodia offered delicious food and spectacular landscapes. It can be hard at times to fully realise the situation, but a tour to the Killing Fields and S21 prison gives great insight into what happened and what should never happen with the abuse of power. Cambodians have a great aura of kindness about them, even after all they've been through, and took a particular interest in me and my name. "Dara" in Cambodian means "star" and it makes you wonder how small the world must be when Irish and Khmer people share the same name.

New York

With my Asian adventure over, it was time for a quick pit stop in Ireland for rest and recovery before I joined the Mayo takeover of New York for the Connacht GAA first round. It wasn't all pleasure this time; there was business to be done in New Jersey where I played an energetic gig to a great Mayo gathering at Willie McBride's in Hoboken. I want to sincerely thank everyone who came; it's a night I'll remember forever. As Tommy Caulfield told me, Sinatra got his start in Hoboken, so I know I'm on the right track! The trip was excellent. The novelty of walking down Times Square and bumping into Brian Murray and Robbie Herr never wore off. And the more you walked around, you'd swear the Ballyhaunis crew were New Yorkers all their lives. It was also a great opportunity for the Ballyhaunis expats abroad to meet friends and family and enjoy a taste of home for a brief while. Like most visitors to the Big Apple, we toured the sights of the Empire State Building

and Central Park and enjoyed the hustle and bustle of Manhattan before cheering on my fellow clubman and mate Jack Coyne, who put in a stellar performance in the Bronx at corner-back and was unlucky to be on the end of a questionable wide decision that Kevin Kilbride would love to have debated with officials.

As most Irish youth take a turn east, I decided to take a turn west and reside in New York City, following in my father's footsteps. Sometimes it feels like the centre of the universe with its characters, energy and opportunity at every corner, but it can also feel like a concrete jungle far from my utopian beaches of the Philippines. The travel itch still lingers. With each person I meet and every land I wander through, every new food I try and each new scent, I acquire a new perspective on life. I always feel as though there's always more to see and more to do.

I hope you enjoyed my travel ramblings again. Who knows where I'll be next? One piece of advice I'll give is that it's easy to lose sight of dreams and plans we have in life and say, "When I have enough money, I'll do this trip," or "When I have enough time, I'll travel the world." But the only time we have is now, and remember, there's no tow-bar on a hearse.

"An té a bhíonn siúlach, bíonn scéalach" (He who travels has stories to tell).



Above: Ballyhaunis reunion down-under in Sydney. Clockwise from front left: Shane Healy, Joey Fahy, Helen Healy, Mark Sutton, Derville Gilmartin, James McDonagh, Claire Fahy, Francis Griffin, Dara Healy.



Right: Fishing on the Mekong with my new friend Det.

No Bird Chorus

Murt Hunt

We ask the question, what have we done? Nearly all of our singing birds are gone,
Time was when we enjoyed their morning chorus, in early spring, out of bed before us,
We had linnets, robins, finches and thrushes, give their morning call from trees and bushes,
Where have they gone, no one knows, we've nothing left but jackdaws and crows.
They were once a sign of early Spring, they would rise your heart to hear them sing,
Each bird had their own distinctive song, but now they're silent, what's gone wrong?
Taken for granted in days gone by, as they swooped and skimmed 'neath a clear blue sky,
They picked and scratched in search of food, a daily task to feed a hungry brood.
On bog or river bank, it's all the same, we no longer see what was known as game,
No curlew or duck, moorhen or snipe, no feathered life of any type.
We've reached a stage to cause alarm, no room for wildlife in garden or farm
Herbicides used to kill so called weeds, deprive the birds of insects and seeds.
Some modern methods we will regret, the balance of nature is being upset,
Birds and insects have a part to play, we must all return to nature's way.



Congratulations to Annette and John Clancy (Cloonbook) who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, 12th Oct. 2024 with a gathering of family and friends in The McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris. Annette Morley (Cloonumper) and John Clancy (Cloonbook) were married in St. Margaret Mary's Church, Began on 12th October 1974.



Left:
Bringing Home the Turf. Cathal and James Fleming, sons of Aoife McDonagh (Grallaghgardens) and Jason Fleming (Cloonfad), bringing home the Turf with their Grandad, Michael McDonagh (Grallaghgardens).

Right:
Oliver Cleary (Pattenspark), Conor McManus (Churchpark), Cormac Cleary (Clare Rd.) take a breather on the Camino de Santiago, May 2024.



Right:
A group of friends from Ballyhaunis who walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain in May 2024. Clockwise, from left: Adrian Culliney (Began), Eoin Butler (Doctor's Rd.), Edwin Scally (honorary Ballyhaunis/Began man), Conor McManus (Churchpark), Oliver Cleary (Pattenspark).



HOLYWELL AND THE BURKES 1827-1911

Paul Waldron



Holywell House. Photo courtesy of Helen Healy.

The Burkes of Holywell were amongst the last of the old Catholic landed gentry families resident in the Ballyhaunis area. Their small estate extended to just 562 acres, taking in the townlands of Holywell Upper, Holywell Lower and Derreens (two miles south-west of Ballyhaunis), while they had another ninety-seven acres near Curraghboy, Co. Roscommon. They were in Holywell from 1827 until 1911 and were, by all accounts, decent landlords, generous employers, hardworking and honourable members of the community.

Before the Burkes

A much larger Holywell estate – 2620 acres – had been owned by the Dillon family from the early 1600s until Edmond Dillon died in 1801 (see *Annagh 2023*). In his will he appointed a cousin, Lieut. Col. John Dillon, as successor. However, the will must have been deemed invalid because a year after Edmond's death, the estate was held in three 'undivided parts' by three heirs-at-law: his aunts Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly (Ahascragh, Co. Galway), Mrs. Eleanor Higgins (Claremorris) and his first cousin Arthur Browne (Kilmaine). Eventually, a decree for a partition of the estate was obtained and, by October 1818, it was divided into three distinct entities:

(1) Holywell Upper/Lower and Derreens; (2) Hazelhill and part of Cloonbullig; and (3) Pattenspark, Woodpark, Churchpark and part of Cloonbullig. By this time Mrs. Kelly was dead and it was her husband Hugh Kelly who inherited the first division, including Holywell House. Arthur Browne got the second division and the third went to Mrs. Higgins.

On inheriting Holywell, Hugh Kelly almost immediately mortgaged it to William Burke of Tuam for the sum of £800 sterling. Burke – a wealthy merchant and banker based in Tuam – was not related to the Holywell family, however, this transaction brought the two together in that 'John Burke of Marlborough St., Dublin, one of the attornies', was witness to the deed of mortgage, and it was he who lodged it in the Registry of Deeds on 30th Nov. 1818.

John Burke

This very same John Burke, the Dublin attorney (solicitor), was the first of the family in Holywell. His parents were Henry Burke (a native of Castlebar) and Mary Kelly who married in her native parish of Ahascragh, Co. Galway in 1786. She was a close relative (possibly a sister) of Hugh Kelly mentioned above and,



L-R: Signature of Henry Burke (Senr.), 1807 and John Burke (Senr.), 1807.
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when he died in 1825 without family, he bequeathed the place to John Burke his relative (nephew?) who came to live there two years later.

The Burkes lived at 68 Marlborough St., Dublin through the 1790s and early 1800s, and Henry was an attorney in the courts of King's Bench, Chancery, and Exchequer. Mary died in Holywell in 1830 and was the first of the family to be laid to rest in the vault beneath the Friary Church sanctuary. Henry died in Dublin sometime between then and 1833, though it's not known where he was interred.

John Burke was their only son, born *circa* 1790; it's not known if he had any sisters. He followed his father into law when admitted to King's Inns in November 1807, where the record states that he was then over 16 years of age and that he had been educated by the Rev. John Fea of Great Britain St. and by Luke Kelly of Trinity College in Dublin. At that time, an attorney's training involved admittance to the King's Inns Society and serving an apprenticeship with a qualified attorney for at least twenty whole terms (five years) – in this case, with his father. Assuming he fulfilled this without any breaks, John Burke would have qualified in 1812 and the 1818 deed mentioned above is the earliest known reference to his professional career.

He married Mary Henrietta O'Neill in the old Pro-Cathedral, Liffey St., Dublin, 27th Aug. 1814. Of her, little is known. Her son Edmund's obituary in 1911 states that she was '...Miss O'Neill, of Shanes Castle, Lough Neagh, of the clan of O'Neill who gave to Irish history her bravest heroes', though she can't be definitively placed on the extensive pedigree of that family.

Dublin and Holywell

John and Mary Henrietta had six children: Henry (1815 in Dublin), Hugh (c.1818), John (c.1819 in Co. Galway), Elizabeth (c. 1826), Gerald (c.1828) and Edmond (1830 in Dublin). The family appear to have divided their time between Dublin and the west of Ireland as suggested by the birth of at least two children in Dublin and at least

one in Co. Galway, and by the father's intermittent listing in Dublin City directories through the 1820s, 30s and 40s. In Dublin, the Burke family – or at least the father John – was based in what is now the north inner city, with addresses on Marlborough St., Lower Gloucester Street, Summer Hill and Mecklenburgh St. until the mid-1830s. By 1838 he was at 36 North Cumberland St. and worked in the courts of Exchequer, King's Bench and Common Pleas. His last listing in Dublin directories is in 1843 as: 'Burke, John, solicitor, 21 Blessington street and Hollywell House, county Mayo. Courts: QCE'.

The Burkes lived in John's mother's native Ahascragh for a while in the early 1820s. Hugh Kelly (possibly John Burke's uncle), from whom he inherited Holywell, lived at Creggaun, just outside Ahascragh village and the *Tithe Applotment Book* for that parish (1823) lists 'John Burke Esq.' at 'Suck Lawn', an otherwise unknown address, probably close to the river Suck, crossed nearby by Ballygill Bridge. When the last of the family died in Holywell in 1911, the obituarist wrote, 'It is within the memory of the old people about Holywell that the Burke family came from Ballyguill, County Galway, to settle amongst them.'

As to when the Burke family arrived in Holywell, this is made explicit in a letter of John Burke's written circa 1858, in which he stated: "In the year 1827 I came to reside at Holywell". Four or five of the six Burke children were born by then with Henry, the eldest, twelve years old. In a letter dated 8th

June 1838, he admits to having been in Dublin since January (1838) and asks that his correspondent direct his reply, "... to Holywell, Ballyhaunis, as I intend leaving town in a few days." It seems that the Burkes moved between 'town' and country with the seasons.

Land records

By 1833, when the *Tithe Applotment Book* for Annagh parish was compiled, John Burke was well established in 'Holywell' with an



This armchair in the sacristy of the Parish Church came originally from Holywell House.

annual tithe liability of £4. 4s. 11½d. He involved himself in local activities and movements and, in that same year, chaired a meeting in Ballyhaunis to form the 'Costello Independent Club', at which his eighteen-year-old son Henry was one of the speakers. Later in the same decade, John Burke was appointed trustee of the Logboy chapel plot, leased from John Nolan of Logboy by Archbishop McHale of Tuam.

When the 'Townland Valuation' for Annagh parish was compiled in 1842 it was noted of Holywell Lower that: 'Mr. Burke resides here and has the land in his own hands, except what a few cottiers hold'; and of Holywell Upper: 'There is a part of this townland taken in by Mr. Burke to his demesne, and the rest, which is the worst part, is set at 25/ and 27/ the Irish acre.' While in Derreens: 'Mr. Burke has this in his own hands except a part leased to Timothy Royan under an old lease at a low rent.'

The 'Tenement Valuation' (*Griffith's Valuation*), gathered in 1854, reveals a complicated landholding arrangement within the family. John Burke is given as immediate lessor (landlord) of Holywell Upper; Hugh Burke (his son) as the same for Holywell Lower and Derreens, while two other sons, John Burke jun. and Gerald Burke, are named as 'occupiers' of Holywell House, held from their brother Hugh. None of the nineteenth century census returns for this part of the country survive so it's impossible to say who lived in the house at any time before 1901.

Land Valuation records from October 1854 summed up the house's condition as, 'a stone building, slated; of medium age, but still in sound order and good repair', while the stables and offices were the same but 'new or nearly new'. The valuer noted: 'New range of offices in progress' and 'The present range of offices has been built within the last six years under a loan from the Board of Works, twenty-one years allowed for paying it off.' At that time the Burkes retained 434 acres of the Holywell estate for their own use as a farm and demesne, overlooked by their two-storey-over-basement Georgian house, while the remaining 130 acres was held by fifteen tenants in smallholdings. The buildings had a very high rateable valuation of £14, in stark contrast to that of Mary Waldron's house nearby, with a valuation of 4s. In the same townland of Holywell Lower, Bryan Tarmey had a house and fifteen acres. The Tarmeyes worked as herds for the Burkes over several generations and one local tradition traces their origins to Co. Westmeath.

In Holywell Upper, John Burke (Snr.) retained 31 acres of arable land and 21 acres of bog, while the remaining 98 acres was let to nine tenants in holdings averaging twelve acres: John Hart, Michael Caulfield, Thomas Veldon, Austin Tighe, Patrick Connolly, Patrick Kelly, Winifred Kelly, Thomas Lyons and Matthias

Grogan. The same source has Hugh Burke holding a farm of 163 acres in Derreens, while the remaining thirteen acres was tenanted by smallholders: John O'Gara, Patrick Morley, Mary Waldron and John Ganley.

Vault Controversy

When he first came to Holywell in 1827, John Burke claimed rights to the old Dillon vault beneath the High altar in the Friary church. Shortly before his mother died in 1830, Burke applied to the prior, Fr. Robert Dore, who confirmed this privilege and Mrs. Burke was interred therein. Not long after, in Burke's own words: "...some persons insisted on opening the vault to bury a person of the name of Dillon, son of an illegitimate son of Mr. Dillon, formerly of Holywell." He contacted Fr. Dore who prevented the interment and who, in a letter dated 5th Sept. 1833, gave written confirmation of the Burkes exclusive right to the vault.

In October 1837 Fr. Walter Kelly (the new prior) and John Burke met with a stonemason and carpenter to examine plans for a new altar, to be part-funded by the Holywell man, and discussed the matter of retaining the trap-door accessing the vault. When Burke's mother-in-law, Mrs. O'Neill, died six months later – in April 1838 – one of his sons called to the Friary to arrange her interment in the vault and met Fr. John Finn, another of the friars. Burke recalled what happened next, in a letter written to Fr. Bernard O'Neill, Augustinian provincial, twenty years later (circa 1858):

He [Burke's son] found the chapel locked with a padlock. He demanded the key from Mr. Fynn who told him that Mr. Kelly [the prior] brought it with him to Westport the day before. He asked him what he was to do to inter his grandmother and that it was extraordinary Mr. Kelly should take the key such a distance and particularly as he was aware of Mrs. O'Neill's death. Mr. Fynn told him to get in the best way he could but that he could not interfere. The boy caused the staple to be drawn and the old lady was interred.

According to John Burke, Fr. Kelly later threatened the boy with excommunication and claimed he had the provincial's orders to disinter the remains and to take legal proceedings for breaking open the chapel. In reply, the Provincial refuted these claims and wrote:

I heard Mr. Dore frequently speak of you and your kindness during his stay in that place [Ballyhaunis]. He also informed me that he gave you the vault... I expect that no impediment will be thrown in the way to the peaceable and quiet interment of your friends in the vault to which you have a right, as it does not interfere in any way with the chapel.

Two decades later the controversy reared up again. In

that same letter of 1858, John Burke brought the story up-to-date, stating that his wife (Mary Henrietta) died "three years ago" and was interred therein. Apparently, the same Fr. John Finn (by now, prior in Ballyhaunis) proposed to carry out works in the sanctuary which would block access to the vault's entrance. When challenged by Burke, Fr. Finn said that the vault belonged to Lord Dillon and that Burke had no right to it at all. The friar was taken aback when Burke informed him that, "Lord Dillon has a vault in *another* part of the chapel, that none of his family was ever interred in my vault, that he does not now nor ever did make any claim to it and that he has not the smallest shadow of a title to it." Burke therefore felt obliged to appeal to the provincial, concluding, "...you will not be surprised that my feelings should be wounded at this systematic attempt to exclude me from the vault in which my dear wife and so many of my relatives are interred."

Further to this communication, on 10th July 1858 a notice, signed by John Burke and his son Hugh, was served on Fr. Finn 'near the Convent gate at Ballyhaunis':

Take Notice that I hereby caution you against impeding, closing up or otherwise interfering with the entrance or passage to the vault in the chapel of the Convent of Ballyhaunis which has been the place of burial of my family for 30 years and which we are entitled to as appurtenant to the Holywell Estate and by virtue of the gift and conveyance of the Very Rev^d Robert Dore the lessee of the said Convent lands and of the Very Rev^d B. O'Neill then Provincial of your order.

And take notice that if you decline to comply with this notice and proceed to interfere with or obstruct the entrance or passage to said vault I shall file a Petition against you in the Court of Chancery to obtain an injunction against you to restrain you from so acting and I shall make use of this Notice to charge you with the costs of said proceedings.

Dated this 7th Day of July 1858 eight.

John Burke

Hugh Burke

Access to the vault from the trap-door in the sanctuary was eventually blocked, however, probably during Fr. Anderson's renovations in the 1870s, but a new entrance was made in the east gable of the church allowing access to the vault from the cemetery outside.

The Family

Mary Henrietta Burke (née O'Neill) died circa 1855, and her husband John, sometime between 1858 and 1864, though no records of their deaths have been found. No doubt he too was interred in the vault that caused him

such anxiety over many years.

The eldest son **Henry O'Neill Burke** (1815-89) enrolled in Trinity College in 1833, and followed his father and grandfather into law, being admitted to King's Inns in 1840 and called to the bar in 1844. Described as 'a distinguished scholar and a prizeman of Trinity College', he became noted as a profound legal opinion, and was Junior Crown Prosecutor for Sligo and later Crown Prosecutor for Mayo and Galway. In later life he retired to Holywell and died there, 30th July 1889 aged 74, leaving effects to the value of £441 with his sister Elizabeth as executor.



Signature of Henry O'Neill Burke, 1840.
Reproduced by kind permission of the Honourable Society
of King's Inns.

The second son **Hugh Burke** (c.1818-87) took over management of the estate in his father's lifetime. The estate was subject to a number of rent charges and mortgage repayments and money was always scarce. In 1848, 1849 and 1852, he applied for loans totalling £1,300 from the Commissioners of Public Works under the provisions of the Landed Property Improvement Act which were still being paid-off in the 1890s.

At a meeting in Ballyhaunis on 21st Feb. 1843, Hugh and his brothers Henry, John and Gerald spoke out against the newly instituted Poor Laws, claiming that the work-houses, then being built, would do nothing to improve the conditions of the poor. In the late 1850s the railway, on its westward journey from Ballyhaunis, sliced through the Holywell estate, and twenty-five years later Hugh and his brother Gerald attended a meeting in Ballyhaunis about an ambitious plan to develop another railway line, this time from Ballaghaderreen to Tuam, though this never came to pass.

The same two brothers were stewards at every meeting of the Tooraree Races from their founding in



Signature of Hugh Burke, 1858.

1866 and, when there was a disagreement with Mr. Crawley, owner of the Tooraree farm, the Burkes hosted the meeting at the 'New Holywell Demesne Course' in June 1896. Trains stopped there especially to accommodate punters and participants. Described as 'a prominent figure in the hunting field of his day', Hugh Burke died in Holywell 11th Apr. 1887 aged 69.

John Burke Junr. (c.1819-1902), the third son, was born in Co. Galway (probably at Suck Lawn or Ballygill, Ahascragh). A classical scholar, his 'Translation of Phædrus' Fables' into English verse, won the highest praise from critics. His efforts at poetry and writing novels, however, were met with less enthusiasm, with one critic commenting, 'He did his best; could he do better, he would have done so'. A remarkable letter he wrote in 1843 seeking the patronage of Charles Bianconi, the public-transport pioneer, is interspersed with pieces of verse and he signed off as 'The Patriot Connaught Bard'. He wrote at least two novels: 'Lady Marshall's Bazaar' and 'Carrigaholt: a tale of eighty years ago'. The latter, published in Dublin in 1885, centres on Mr. O'Hara, a 'reckless and hospitable' minor landlord, his two daughters Mary and Eileen, their suitors Owen Fitzmaurice and Charlie O'Byrne, and an array of neighbours and acquaintances, all of whom encounter each other at hunts, soirees and race meetings. No doubt it reflects the lifestyle familiar to the writer from his youth. Dr. Michael F. Waldron said of the novel: "Whatever be its merits or defects as a literary work, it is... strong proof of the cultured mind and ambitious outlook of Mr. John Burke. Peace to his spirit!" John Burke Jnr. died at Holywell House, 5th Sept. 1902 aged 83.



John Burke (Jnr.), 1843.
Courtesy of Cork City and County Archives.

Elizabeth Burke (c.1826-98) was the only daughter. All that's known about her comes from her brother Edmund's obituary where it is said that she and her younger brother Gerald, "were universally beloved for their courtesy, kindness and generosity to all." She was executrix of her brother Henry's will in 1890 and was the beneficial owner of the estate in 1892 when most of it was sold by the banks to Dr. Charles E. Crean for £4,086, allowing she and her surviving brothers John and Edmund right of residency until their deaths. When she died in Holywell, 22nd July 1898 aged 72, her funeral was said to be, 'one of the largest ever witnessed in Ballyhaunis'. Her death was not registered until 1911 and the informant named as Bridget Tormey, Holywell.

The fourth son, **Gerald Burke** (c.1828-94) was a farmer, like his older brother Hugh. In addition to his interest in Holywell, Gerald had a seventy-three acre farm in Carrick townland, near Curraghboy, Co. Roscommon. A report of the October Fair in Ballinasloe

in 1869 notes that he sold thirty heifers there at £11 each. His letters to the national papers reveal a scientific and practical approach to farming. In 1891 he wrote to the *Irish Times* on the natural immunity some potatoes had developed against blight, quoting prominent scientists and criticising the government for neglecting to address the issue of disease control over the previous forty-five years. It was probably Gerald who grew the "...several fine specimens of the tobacco plant growing there under glass", that Michael F. Waldron once saw in Holywell. Waldron also recalled that "The youngsters of their day were alive to the fact that they had a splendid and well-cared for orchard" – so much so that it was frequently raided by youngsters from far and near. When Gerald died in Holywell, 29th June 1894 aged 66, it was said that, "...when work could not be found elsewhere for his tenants he willingly provided it for them; and their keen appreciation of his good actions to them through life was manifested in the deep and sincere regret with which they heard the announcement of his death." It was

remembered that locals worked for the Burkes for about one shilling a day.

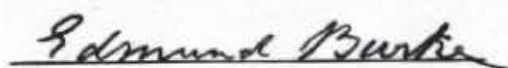


Gerald Burke, 1889.

The youngest of the family was **Edmund Burke** (1830-1911). All that is known of his early life is that he and his older brother John (see above) went to Australia in search of gold. John (32) and Edmd. Burke (23) are listed as passengers on the ship 'Sunshine' which left Liverpool on 5th Nov. 1856 and arrived in Melbourne twelve weeks later, on 28th Jan. 1857. The writer of his obituary in 1911 wrote that they, "... emigrated to Australia at the period of the gold rush to Ballarat in the Fifties, returning in 1879. Their reminiscences of their journey (it was necessary to drive to Athlone to catch a train), and of the stirring times during which they laboured under the Southern Cross, handed down from an older to a younger generation of neighbours, are not likely to be forgotten about Holywell." Known affectionately as 'Mister Eddie', he was the last of the family in Holywell. Shortly after his brother John's death in 1902, Charles O'Connor Kelly and family, moved into Holywell house and lived there till before moving to Dublin around 1905. Originally from Churchfield House, Knock, he was clerk of works for the Congested Districts Board which would have been active in the area at that time. For a short period, probably in the same decade, Kelly's uncle, Francis Richard O'Grady also lived here on his retirement as medical officer of Swinford Workhouse.

Neither census of 1901 or 1911 mention live-in servants or staff in Holywell House, though it is remembered locally that the cook, known now only by

her first name - 'Nan' - lived in a little house nearby. She was most probably the Nannie McGovern 'who found the body' of Edmund Burke when he died, 27th May 1911 aged 80. She later registered the death. He left £287.4s.7d in his will with Charles E. Crean M.D. as executor.



Edmund Burke, 1901.

Remembered

None of the second generation of Holywell Burkes married. On their deaths, all were interred in the family vault beneath the high altar in the Friary church, not marked by any memorial. The only close relative known to have attended their funerals was Mrs. Susan Kerin whose husband, District-inspector Edward J. Kerin RIC, was based in Dunmore, Co. Galway through the 1890s. She was formerly Kelly and her paternal grandmother was a Burke.

Edmund's obituarist wrote in 1911: "The traditions of the two parishes [Annagh and Began] teem with anecdotes of the Burkes, father and sons, who peacefully pursued the even tenor of their ways in the easeful life of country gentlemen." Sixteen years later Dr. Michael F. Waldron summed them up: "The Burke family are still remembered in the neighbourhood for their many amiable qualities and virtues. They were fine types of what was best and most commendable in the old Irish gentry. Exemplary Catholics, generous, charitable and cultured, they manifested all the distinguishing characteristics of true and thorough ladies and gentlemen."

Some furniture and fittings of Holywell House survived down to the middle of the twentieth century. Several items inherited by the Crean family were lent for the 'Teasbantas' organised by Ballyhaunis Gaelic League in July 1939, including 'a smoking cap of Miss Burke, late of Holywell; rose bowl and vases of Burkes of Holywell; old silver soup ladles bearing crests of Burkes of Began, Burkes of Holywell, the Ó Maille Burke crest and Crean crest.' Their present whereabouts are unknown. Possibly the last remaining tangible link with Holywell House from the Burkes' time is the magnificently carved oak armchair with dark red velvet upholstery still to be seen in the sacristy of the Parish Church, reserved for use by the Archbishop or other visiting dignitaries.

The sale of the Holywell estate to the Congested Districts Board for £6,650 was completed in 1911. It was divided into smallholdings and eight houses built for new occupiers drawn from congested districts locally and further afield. The 'new' Holywell House farm, at thirty-six acres, was bigger than the others to compensate for maintenance costs and the much higher rates it attracted. Patrick Healy from Sallyhernan,

Knock, the new owner, was first listed as a rate-payer here in 1916. Moving with his wife Anne and young family from a cosy three-roomed house to a large, draughty mansion must have been a challenge, but the place was made liveable and the occupied portion served as the family home for nearly sixty years. Patrick Healy, described by a local newspaper correspondent in the 1920s as, "one of the most progressive and enlightened tenant proprietors in the district", was a judge in the Sinn Féin Court in 1921/22, later being appointed Peace Commissioner.

The arrival of the Healy family ushered-in a new chapter in the history of Holywell House that lasted down to the 1970s, and which is covered in Patrick Healy's article which follows.

Dedicated to the memory of Eamon Healy whose interest in the history of Holywell House initiated this research.

Sources

Due to space constraints, references have been kept to a minimum. Sources used are outlined below. Anyone wishing for more comprehensive references may contact the author at paulfxwaldron@gmail.com.

Repositories: Registry of Deeds, National Library of Ireland, National Archives of Ireland, Valuation Office, Cork City and County Archives. **Primary Sources:** Ahascragh Church of Ireland parish registers, St. Mary's (Pro-Cathedral) Dublin sacramental registers; Dublin almanacs and directories; Tithe Applotment Books, Ahascragh and Annagh parishes; Index of Diocesan and Prerogative Wills and Administrations in Ireland; Calendars of Wills and Administrations; Valuation Office records; King's Inns Admission Papers. Civil registers of deaths, District of Ballyhaunis; Landed Estates Court Rentals; Victoria, Australia, assisted and unassisted passenger lists, 1839-1923 (www.ancestry.com); Photocopies of letters originally in the archives of St. Mary's Abbey, Ballyhaunis (present location of originals not known). **Newspapers:** Connaught Telegraph, Mayo Examiner, Mayo News, Western People, Tuam Herald, Irish Times. **Published works:** John Burke, Carrigaholt: a Tale of Eighty Years Ago (Dublin 1885); G.D. Burtchaell and T.U. Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinensis* (London 1924); Michael Kelly, *Struggle and Strife on a Mayo Estate 1833-1903* (Dublin 2014); **Government Reports:** General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland: Valuation of the Several Tenements in the Union of Claremorris (Dublin 1856); Return of Owners in Ireland, presented to Parliament by the Local Government Board, Ireland, 20th Apr. 1876. **Articles in back-issues of Annagh:** Austin Biesty, 'Holywell' (1990); Ned Judge: 'Patterns and Plane Crashes' (2008); Pat Joe Lyons: 'Glimpses of Holywell Past' (2013); Paul Waldron, 'Townlands of Annagh and Began Parishes, 1842: From the Valuation Office Tenure Books' (2015); Fr. Kieran Waldron, 'Ballyhaunis in 1919/1920: The Centenary of the Irish Revolution' (2019).

The Daisy

by John Burke (Holywell)

The Daisy has a crown as bright
As any king or queen can show,
And petals of a shiny white,
The colour of the snow.

By rain it sorely is distressed,
Its pleasure all is in the light
It folds and droops when in the west
The sun leaves for the night.

But it is patient when ill-used
By careless men or angry skies;
And though it be crushed down and bruised
It soon will meekly rise

No need has it to seek for room
With flowers that in the garden grow,
Full soon to lose their youthful bloom
And all their gaudy show.

This little flower can shine instead,
With lambs upon the mountain's side,
Or in green fields can lift its head
Or in the vale abide.

And when the groves resound with song,
And fork-tailed swallows twinkling fly,
The daisies then in blossom throng
Because the summer's nigh.

For in the summer will be found
Few spots where it will not appear;
And, save when hard frosts bind the ground,
It's with us all the year.

And as the daisy all may find
So are the poor in every land;
This flower of them doth me remind,
And makes me understand.

It shows what ills the poor must know;
For, like the daisy, they must bend,
And wait full long whilst harsh winds blow,
And whilst the floods descend.

And so this lithe but hardy flower
A proper emblem seems to be
Of those who seldom see an hour
From toil and troubles free.



This poem was published in John Burke's novel 'Carrigaholt: a tale of eighty years ago' (1885) and reprinted in the *Western People*, 16th Nov. 1918.

The National Built Heritage Service database contains a detailed description and appraisal of the structure and architecture of Holywell House and can be accessed at

<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/31310301/holywell-house-holywell-lower-county-mayo>

HOLYWELL HOUSE THE HEALY CONNECTION

Patrick Healy

I am sure that anyone who read Paul Waldron's article in Annagh 2023 will have been impressed by the detail of his account and the meticulous research into the history of Holywell House and its occupants. Readers of earlier issues of Annagh will be familiar with references to the house and the part it played as a safe house in the aftermath of the Holywell Ambush in 1921. This, the 2024 issue of Annagh, will include part 2 of that history and I have been asked to give a perspective on the house from my time living there in my youth, and from what my late father told me.

The 1911 census shows that, at that time, my grandparents, Pat and Ann Healy, were living in Sallyhernan, near Knock. Following on from The Land Purchase (Ireland) Act 1903, The Congested Districts Board for Ireland, which was established in 1891 to alleviate poverty and congested living conditions in the west of Ireland, was authorised to obtain extra land from large estates to create or enlarge small holdings for tenants by means of compulsory purchase. As the existing owner of a smallholding, my grandfather was offered a move to Holywell House and, in 1918/19, he and my grandmother along with their five children moved from Sallyhernan to Holywell. The house came with thirty-five acres of good land which, at that time, was a decent size holding. I believe that some people were reluctant to take on such a huge house, hence the more generous portion of land. Nevertheless, moving to such a large house must have seemed a daunting task at the time.

Pat Healy died in 1951 and Ann Healy died in 1953. At this point the farm and house had been signed over to my father, Jim Healy. Having spent a number of years in England he had returned to take on the farming duties when his father became too old to manage it on his own. My grandfather died in February 1951, shortly before my father married Mary Finn from Hazelhill. I was born in June 1952 and they had three more children: Eamonn, Kevin and John, thus extending the Healy association with the house to the next generation.

Holywell House

Holywell House consisted of three storeys: a basement and two storeys above. In total, there were fourteen rooms and two large landings/hallways. The basement consisted of a large kitchen area, a dairy, hallway and two other rooms. It was floored with limestone flags laid directly onto the earth. It had metal racks and hooks suspended from the ceiling which, I believe, were used to hang meat, and game, and they possibly had other uses. Originally, the basement was accessed from a single back door, but another door was created at the gable end towards the front of the house in the late 1950s by my father. No mean task as he had to hammer out a wall several feet thick consisting of large blocks of limestone. This was the living area during the time the Healys resided in the house.

An enclosed staircase led to the first (ground) floor which consisted of a large landing leading to three large bedrooms and a large sitting room. All the rooms had large open fires with ornate, cast iron mantelpieces. This floor was accessed from outside via a stepped front entrance, then through a large double door into the entrance hallway. This entrance was rarely used except when family visited on holiday.

The top floor was not used for any purposes, other than storage, during the time the Healys resided in the house. A feature of that floor was a winding staircase with carved bannisters accessing it, and a large picture window affording excellent light to the upper floor. The rooms were large with extremely high ceilings, large, panelled sash windows with wooden shutters.

The house had no running water until 1970 and no electricity. Water was sourced from a deep well close to the house with the use of a suction pump. The only source of light would have been oil lamps suspended from the ceilings. When electricity finally came to the West of Ireland in the late 1940s/early 50s, my grandfather declined to have it installed. Apparently, the cost of installation was based on the ground rent of the holding. The cost of supplying electricity to a large house like Holywell House with its more extensive acreage, in contrast to surrounding dwellings, was deemed to be prohibitive. It was not until 1976, when a new house was built, that electricity was obtained on the property.

It is not known where the material for the building of the house was sourced. There was evidence of a couple of sandpits on the land which my father thought could have been used in its construction. There was also a large lime kiln which, I believe, may have supplied the lime for the mortar which was widely used in those days, although its distance from the house may have precluded it from having been used for that purpose. Long before the Healy family's arrival, it had been filled-in but evidence of its existence still remains today.



The Healy family with relatives, on the front steps, early 1960s.
Back, L-R: Patrick Healy, Kevin Healy, Jim Healy, Eamonn Healy, John Patrick Jordan (Derrymore) a Healy family cousin.
Front, L-R: Mary Healy, Mary Quinlen (cousin), John Healy, Rosanne Quinlen, née Jordan (a cousin visiting from America).

Trees

The road leading to the house was always referred to as 'the avenue' and the main entrance had iron gates between two large pillars. One of the unique features of Holywell House would have been the variety of trees. They were planted strategically in groups around the house. The list included Elm, Beech, Lime, Copper Beech, Spruce, Larch, Oak, Horse Chestnut, Weeping Willow and Drooping Ash. Drooping Ash was largely only found in large estates. There was also an extensive orchard of apples and pear trees, but most of it had disappeared by the time I was born in 1952.

What was left of the trees was obliterated by Hurricane Debbie, which hit Ireland on the morning of Saturday, 16th September 1961. Winds of up to 110 miles per hour caused widespread devastation to trees and property. A large number of the old trees in Holywell were blown down. Luckily, despite some being in close proximity to the house, none fell on the house or outbuildings. However, a large portion of the roof on the house was stripped of its slates. I can clearly recall my father's despair at the damage caused and the prospect of repairing the roof of such a large property. A lot of the lime rendering on the outside of the house sustained considerable damage too, and quite a bit of damage was caused to the interior of the house from subsequent heavy rain. It was difficult to get builders

who were willing to take on repairs of such a large house, and while the damage was eventually repaired, the house was never the same.

Memories

My memories of growing up in the house along with my three brothers were, by and large, of happy times. We were not in any way concerned about not having electricity. Relying on oil lamps which had to be moved around to different rooms was not ideal. The one thing we never had to worry about was power cuts! As a child, I recall a certain fear of going to bed in the dark. It always had an eerie feeling about it as there always seemed to be noises of some kind, particularly on windy nights.

Running and trying to maintain such a large house

was not easy for my parents. It was a struggle at times trying to keep and maintain such a large house which was of such a different era and, in many ways, was unmanageable. However, I never heard them grumbling too much. It was a great relief to them when, in 1976, they moved into the newly built bungalow and the old house was left to the elements.

The house and farm passed on to my brother Eamonn after my father died in 1981. In 2005 the house had become pretty dilapidated and he decided to do some restoration work to preserve it for posterity. Sadly, he died in 2008 and the project was never completed. It is now in the ownership of his wife Helen. Who knows what the future holds? But the memories of being brought up there will remain with all of us.



Taken in the front garden of Holywell House in the late 1960s.
L-R: Kevin Healy, Deirdre Finn (first cousin) Jim Healy, Mary Healy, Eamonn Healy, Pat Healy.
Front: John Healy.



The rear of the house in the 1980s, showing the picture window in the centre which lit the main stairway.



Taken during renovations.



Rita and John Morris, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, on 22nd Aug. 2024, are pictured here with their family. **Back, L-R:** Sean Morris, Fiona Morris, Siobhan Morris, Oisin Sweeney, Darragh Morris, Cathal Morris, Mary Sweeney, Andrew Sweeney. **Centre, L-R:** Ava Sweeney, Daithi Morris, Paudi Morris. **Front, L-R:** Ruairi Morris, Rita and John Morris, Iarlaith Morris and Declan Morris.



John Morris (Cuillatinny, Knock) and Rita Waldron (Cave), on their Wedding Day, 22nd Aug. 1974.



Left: Michaela Kavanagh played on the Mayo under-12 soccer team who won the National title against Kerry in May 2024 in Kilkenny from which she brought home an All-Ireland medal. She was goalkeeper for the season and has been selected to play for Mayo under-13s for 2024/2025 season. Michaela is daughter of Michael Kavanagh and Lorraine Barrett, Devlis, Ballyhaunis, and granddaughter of the late Seán and Helena Barrett.



This is Matthew, aged two, son of Rachel Healy. Matthew likes pretending to drive Grandad Joe's tractor.

Dr. Mark McCafferty (left) and Dr. Fintan Byrne (both Doctor's Road) finished their first full marathon in Westport on 13th April 2024.



BALLYHAUNIS AND DISTRICT GUN CLUB

Gareth Delaney (P.R.O.)

As 2024 draws to a close we reflect with pride on some great milestones in our club. At our grounds in Cave we have hosted our ever-popular, monthly clay pigeon shoot. We've had male and female competitors of all ages from the four corners of Ireland pitting their wits against tricky targets.

This summer saw the launch of our new, state-of-the-art indoor clay pigeon stand which will keep shooters dry in the most inclement weather. This initiative will weather-proof us against potentially having to cancel shoots due to bad weather.

Our club had six members out of the twelve-man team who represented Mayo at this year's NARGC All Ireland Shoot held in The National Shooting Ground in Esker, Co. Galway. David Bowens, Enda Conboy, Alan Flynn, Seán Flynn, Mark Kelly and Ciarán Waldron, together with their team-mates, did their county proud finishing second in Division 3 and gaining promotion to Division 2. Our Annual 'Top Shot' was held in August with Mark Kelly once again coming out on top as he mastered the mixture of clay pigeon shooting, horseshoe throwing, pool and darts.

Away from the clays, we can confirm that Curlew numbers remain strong in the area, helped by predator control by our members.

The National Association of Regional Game Councils ran a Wildlife Art Competition for the pupils of Scoil Íosa, Ballyhaunis, which was won by Cara Walsh in sixth class. On the 5th of November our Long Tail Competition took place with judging held in The Clock

Bar. This year's winner was David Herr. At our AGM in July we accepted more young members. Following a members vote, our Chairman, Jack Lannon, was awarded the Tom Waldron Perpetual Trophy for his great work throughout the year. Well deserved, Jack.

With that we leave our Annual Report only to say that vermin control is ongoing with many challenges. We would like to thank all the farmers and landowners and please don't hesitate to ask any of our members if you have any conservation issues.

We thank all our members, sponsors and visitors to our grounds for their continued support.

Safe Shooting.



Cara Walsh (left) receiving her Art Prize from Mayo RGC PRO, Irma Cunnane.



Mayo NARGC Clay Pigeon Shooting Team 2024. *Back, L-R:* David Bowens, Mark Kelly, Seán Flynn, Padraic Traynor, Steve Kelly, James Ewing, Damien O'Hora. *Front, L-R:* David Flannelly (referee), Darren O'Brien, Steve Rushworth, Enda Conboy, Ciarán Waldron, Allan Flynn. Missing from photo: Padraic O'Boyle.



Cara's prize-winning depiction of a Woodcock.

BALLYHAUNIS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Every year Ballyhaunis Community School produces a School Yearbook: a chronicle of the people and events that characterised that academic year. All articles are written by the students themselves and the school takes great pride in the standard of the work produced by them, year after year. Below is a selection of some of the articles contained in the most recent yearbook. – David McDonagh (Principal)

High School Musical

The atmosphere was being set on a still autumn night in October. The anticipation was building as the stars of our musical were getting ready for night one. Ms. Phelan and Ms. O'Donnell had the stage set for what would be a night to remember. The crowd gathered in the gym, ready to witness the performance of a lifetime. The show was opened by Shauna Finn and Kevin Heelan letting the audience know what was in store for them, the sheer thrill that was 'High School Musical.'

Hazel (the director/choreographer) had done everything she could to prepare the cast for this night. She had taught them everything they needed to know, everything that would lead to an Oscar-worthy performance. Now, it was all down to the cast themselves. Could they deliver, under pressure? Could they perform, when the lights shined brightest?

After more than five years without an official school

musical being hosted due to Covid, every student was eager to audition and take part while the masses were anticipating the performance of the BCS Senior Students' rendition of 'High School Musical'. Auditions were held in front of Ms. Glavey, Ms. Henry and Hazel McLynn Lloyd in the May previous. Everyone came fully enthusiastic and full of passion as the fight for a lead role was tough, but after a long discussion considering everybody's talents, the final cast had been chosen.

Preparations for the musical were always something to look forward to during the week. It was an intense eight-week block once school resumed in September. Some of the leading cast members had been in over the summer months to get a head-start on line-learning and song prep. Getting past the awkward stage of unprepared dancing and cringy lines was tough but was worth it in the end. Once the cast had every move perfected, every line drilled into their brains, and had finally learned to shed the accents of Irish secondary school students for those of American high schoolers, that was when they knew they were ready to deliver.

As the cast delivered their performances, the audience were left stunned by the quality of the acting and singing on display. Jacob Flanagan made you think we had travelled back in time, found young Zac Efron, and convinced him to do this, and Isobel Coggins delivered a Vanessa Hudgens-esque performance. The audience



High School Musical: a spectacular performance.

was wowed by the performances of all the main cast, from the humorous quips of Ethan Henry to Sinéad O'Neill's performance reminiscent of a stereotypical popular girl in high school. And Adam Walsh. Give him the Oscar. That is all that needs to be said.

As the performance concluded, the audience had no choice but to give a standing ovation for what they had just witnessed. The mind-blowing acting and singing left them no choice. As the audience departed from the gym, discussing with each other how spectacular the show was, the performers looked back on their performances. All the classes missed, all the time spent rehearsing lines and choreography, ended up being more than worth it.

All that was left was to do it two more times.

Alex Fitzmaurice, Ethan Henry, and Jason Kelly.



BCS includes forty-four different cultures amongst its student population.

Intercultural Day

On Thursday, 2nd May 2024, we had our annual Intercultural Day which is the highlight of Diversity week. BCS is privileged to have forty-four different cultures in our student community. The gym was transformed into a carnival of colour as students representing their cultures shared stories, food, history and music with the whole school community. Transition Year students ensured the day ran smoothly as they organised classes and acted as tour guides throughout the day. Traditional dress and national jerseys replaced uniforms and students from every culture danced and celebrated their unique traditions with pride. This special day in our school calendar really captures the ethos of our school and embraces our school motto: 'Unity in Diversity'.

BCS Writing Club

This year marked a significant milestone in BCS with the establishment of the first ever 'Writing Group'. Led by Ms. Mulroy, Ms. Hegarty and Ms. Coyne, this initiative saw the participation of twenty students spanning from first to sixth year. Through a series of workshops, the students analysed short stories, explored the magic of words and exchanged invaluable feedback on each other's work. Liam Horan, a seasoned creative writer and published author, played a pivotal role in this process. Liam gave his time willingly, sharing his expertise with students and instilling in them a profound belief in the power of their words.

During these workshops the quality of the students' work became apparent and left no doubt in our minds that it needed to be shared with a wider audience. Thus,



The gym was transformed into a carnival of colour for Intercultural Day.



BCS Writing Club

Back, L-R: Emma O'Brien, Logan Davis, Aqeel Amjad, Sam Tynan, Adam Walsh, Ethan Henry, Ava Brennan, Ava Padfield.

Centre, L-R: Orla Macken, Patrick McGarry, Aaron Reidy, Ellena Coffey, Sara Brennan, Rebecca Clancy, Rachel Lawless, Éala Grealley, Sinéad Mannion, Lucy Flanagan, Alex Fitzmaurice, David McDonagh (Principal).

Front, L-R: Hazel Nolan, Liam Horan, Danielle Coyne, Sharon Mulroy, Aoife Hegarty, Professor Eoin Devereux, Eva Boyle.

'Ink and Imagination' was borne. Each story, poem and song within the collection are a testament to the students' unique perspectives, experiences and voices, painting a vivid portrait of the diverse tapestry of our school community.

To celebrate this huge achievement, a launch took place in the school. Emceed by our ever-charismatic Adam Walsh, the book was unveiled to the world by Professor Eoin Devereux from the distinguished 'Creative Writers in the Community' module at the University of Limerick. He spoke of how, in the ten years of running the programme at UL, this is the first book to be published. We are immensely proud of our students for this achievement.

The atmosphere at the launch was nothing short of magical. You could hear a pin drop as the students read their work. From heartfelt odes to beloved grandmothers to poignant reflections on the erosion of the Irish language, each piece resonated deeply with the audience.

The event came to a close with a stirring performance by Ethan Henry, accompanied on the piano by Alex Fitzmaurice. Ethan sang a song he composed on a topic very close to his heart. It had a profound effect on us all and there wasn't a dry eye in the audience.

The students in the writing group ended the year on a high. Their exceptional work earned them an invitation from the University of Limerick to showcase their talents before renowned authors Donal Ryan, Sarah Moore Fitzgerald and Fiona Scarlet. Every student exuded confidence and poise as they took to the stage, receiving awestruck commendations from the prestigious authors in the department and a heartfelt letter from the President himself, underscoring the invaluable contribution they had made to the arts. It was a real validation of what the students have achieved this year and their huge smiles on the bus home were a testament to how much it meant to them.

Let's hope this is only the beginning of a long writing career for our wonderful students.



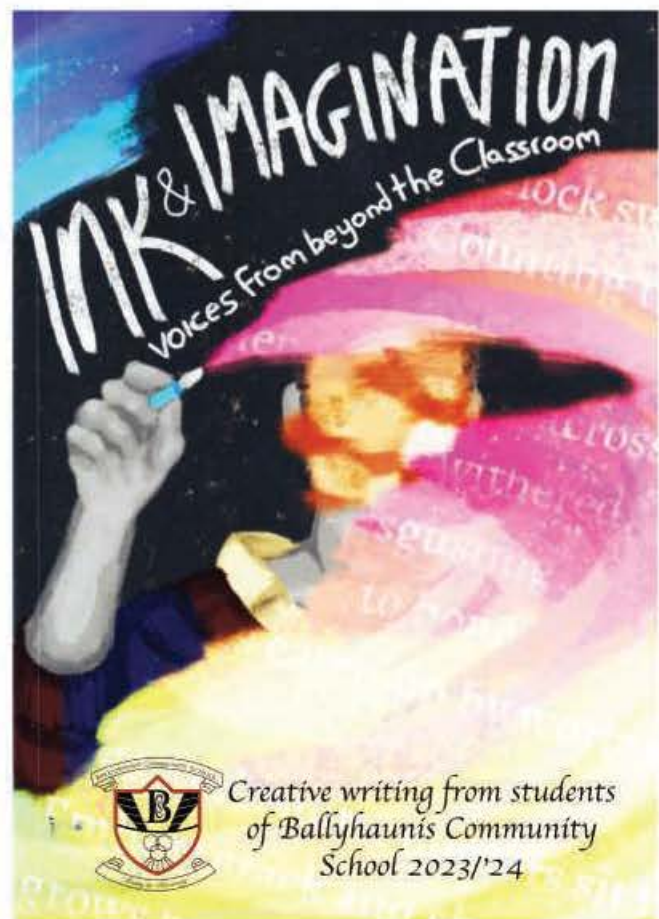
INK AND IMAGINATION

Ink & Imagination – Voices from beyond the Classroom is an inspirational and entertaining collection of poems and short stories from the students of Ballyhaunis Community School Creative Writers' Group 2023/2024. It reflects the styles and strengths of the twenty contributors drawn from every year in the school: Aaron Reidy, Adam Walsh, Aqeel Amjad, Ava Brennan, Ciara Gill, Éala Greally, Ellena Coffey, Emma O'Brien, Ethan Henry, Eva Boyle, Hazel Nolan, Logan Davis, Lucy Flanagan, Rachel Lawless, Rebecca Clancy, Sam Tynan, Sara Brennan, Shane Flanagan, Sinéad Mannion, Siofra Forde.

This beautifully produced book was brought together under the experienced editorial eye of Liam Horan, assisted by members of Ballyhaunis Community School's English faculty: Ms. Sharon Mulroy, Ms. Aoife Hegarty, Ms. Danielle Coyne. Its striking cover was designed by student Ava Padfield.

"I hope that you, the reader, will find in 'Ink and Imagination' something that truly captures the creativity that lurks within – and now flies beyond – the walls of Ballyhaunis Community School". (Liam Horan, Editor)

"The ability to master words opens up the world to us all" (David McDonagh, Principal, BCS)



LOST IN SPACE

Ethan Henry

My name is Ethan Henry and I am currently in sixth year in Ballyhaunis Community School. I wanted to share the story of how I wrote my song 'Lost in Space' and how the support from the Ballyhaunis community was second to none. I myself, like many others, have had the experience of seeing someone you love being affected by dementia. It is something that can be extremely difficult to come to terms with. I decided to write 'Lost in Space' so that I could tell people that they aren't alone and that it's okay not to feel okay. I was asked to perform the song

on the night of the launch of 'Ink and Imagination' in Ballyhaunis C.S. The support I received after that night was out of this world and I truly feel like the song resonated with people. In the last minute I decided to enter the song in the 'Night and Day' song competition, and it won the School-going category. I couldn't quite comprehend the support the song was receiving and I am so thankful for everyone who did support it.

After that success I decided it was time to form a band, and somehow I managed to team up with two of the best in the business. Ludmilla Burcovschi is a very prominent figure in our community and I have the pleasure of saying that I joined her two daughters, Victoria and Elizabeth, to form 'MacHenry and The Dog Roses'. We got the song professionally recorded and our aim is to share it with anyone that it might help. It goes without saying that none of this would have been possible without the people of Ballyhaunis and for that I am forever thankful.





Congratulations to Ella Morley from Began who won the All-Scotland Championship and 'Champion of Champions' in Irish Dancing in October 2024. Ella is daughter of John and Claire Morley (Began) and granddaughter of Dom and Eithne Morley (Began) and of Bernard and Jean Gallagher, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis. She is a sixth-year student at Ballyhaunis Community School.



Four Generations. Olive Webb McLeod, formerly of Devlis, is pictured with her mother Rita, daughter Fiona McLeod McMurray, grandson Teddy McMurray and his baby sister Isla. The photograph was taken at baby Isla's christening in Randalstown, Co. Antrim in August 2024. L-R: Fiona, Rita, Olive and children Teddy and Isla.



Three generations on the summit of Croagh Patrick, July 2024: Ruth Murphy, Maya Murphy and Bernie Gill, Clare Street.

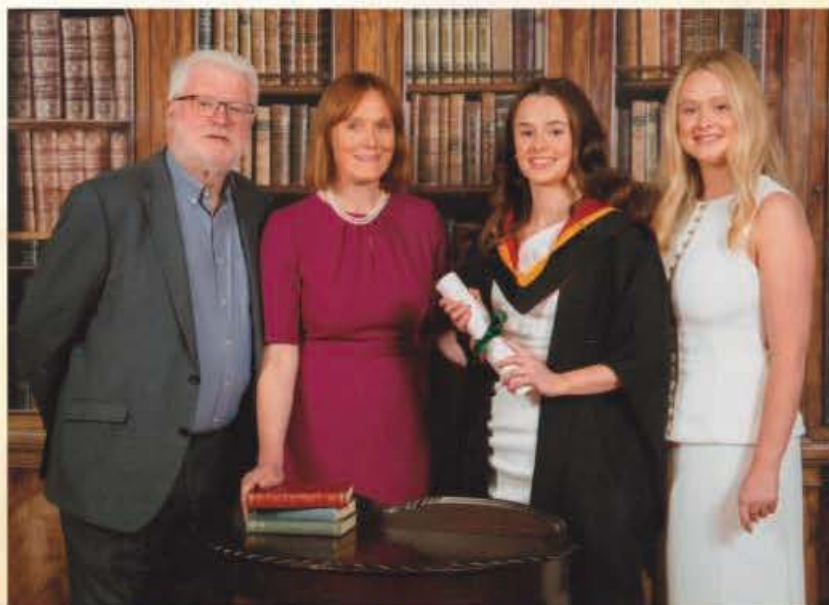


Former classmates (L-R) Martin Fitzmaurice, Tommie Joyce, Cathal Phillips, Enda Moran and John Finnegan met up in the Corner Bar in August 2024.

A customer eyes up the display. A view from inside Seamie Webb's butcher shop in the 1970s. Courtesy of Cathal Carroll.



Who's the mystery horseman on Main Street? Taken in the 1970s. Courtesy of Cathal Carroll.



Dr. Ciara Hunt, Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery, Lowpark, Charlestown, pictured with her parents Gerry and Joanna (Webb) and her sister Cliodhna following her graduation at University of Limerick, 11th June 2024.



Jason Fahy (Holywell) having completed the Bondi to Manly Ultra Marathon (80km), Australia, earlier this year, 2024.



Left:
Corrinne Flatley of Clare Street pictured with her granddaughter Marie at St. Brendan's Park, Birr, Co Offaly.

Marie (daughter of Padraic and Audrey) was a member of the Roscommon Minor Camogie team which won the All-Ireland B Championship, 2023.



Jason and Joey Fahy (Holywell) after being presented with their medals for the Iron Man 70.3 Western Sydney event in Australia, 23rd Sept. 2024. Pictured, L-R: Claire, Jason and Joey Fahy (Holywell), Amy Campbell (Dublin)

Right: Congratulations to Neil Grogan (left) who was a member of the Dulwich Harps Gaelic Football team which defeated Kingdom Kerry Gaels 1-11 to 1-10, in the London GAA Div. 2 League Final at McGovern Park, Ruislip in August 2024. They created history by winning the Division 2 League final and securing Division 1 football for the club's senior team for the first time in their history. Neil is the son of Clar Grogan (formerly of Clare Street) and his wife Valerie, and is pictured left with team-mate J.P. Pugh.



Right:
Joey Fahy (Holywell) during the cycle part of the Iron Man 70.3 Western Sydney event in Australia, 23rd Sept. 2024.



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Caroline and Kevin Kirrane of APP Kirrane Auctioneering celebrated twenty years in business with an all-day party in their office on Main St., Ballyhaunis. They were joined by family, friends, clients, the President and CEO of IPAV and MidWest Radio. A great day of celebrations was had by all.



Kevin and Caroline Kirrane.



Amy Heneghan and Connie Kirrane.



David and Marion Hester.



Lisa McConn, Carlos Kirrane,
Una Kirrane
and Majella Heneghan.



Ann Cunnane (Ballyhaunis Chamber),
Kevin Kirrane, Tom Forde (President
of Ballyhaunis Chamber).



Lisa Morley (auctioneer),
Olivia Gu (trainee auctioneer).



Gerry Glennon (MWR), Kevin and Caroline Kirrane, Paul Claffey (MWR).

THE BLUE VAN

CUNNINGHAM'S TRAVELLING SHOP

Oliver Ruane in conversation with Jim Landon and Seamus Mulrennan

The courier vans of today are the travelling shops of old. In the modern world of shopping, we are used to shopping centres, online shopping and multinational discount stores. It's hard to imagine an era when travelling shops crisscrossed rural Ireland bringing their goods and wares to remote houses and villages. They provided contact for many people with the local town. Recently, on a very pleasant visit to their home, Oliver Ruane, his wife Alice and their daughter Alison sat down with Seamus Mulrennan and Jim Landon of the Annagh Magazine Society and gave a wonderful insight into the travelling shop that was part of the business of what is now Cunningham's Londis in Abbey Street.

Oliver Ruane began working on the travelling shop in the late 1950s. The driver was Johnny Regan and Oliver helped out. They sold tea, sugar, unwrapped bread, Rinso, Surf, washing soda and bluestone for potato blight prevention, and paraffin oil as there was no electric light in most country houses at the time.



Group taken with Cunningham's travelling shop at Connor's house, Carrickacat, Logboy, in the 1930s. L-R: John Connor, Kate Tully, Bernie Connor, Bridget Connor, Jimmy Connor (in van) an employee of Cunningham's, Tom Connor, Jack Shevlin (driver of van).

Customers brought five-naggin bottles for oil for their lamps. Candles were also big sellers at the time, as were carbolic and Lifebuoy soap. Oliver remembers collecting Cuticura soap in Curley's chemist shop for a woman home from America. Back then, Friday was a 'fast' day so no meat was eaten. Herrings were sold on Fridays.

Oliver recalls a story about a sow eating the herrings in a house where the herrings were left in the wrong place!

To pay for the groceries, a system of barter was in operation. Hen eggs were collected and washed and exchanged for the purchases. The eggs were then passed on to Val Byrne, egg merchant. At Christmas time, many of the loyal customers received a token of appreciation in the form of a 'Christmas Box'. Oliver often got a half-crown from his grateful customers at Christmas. When they returned to town at the end of each day's run, Mrs. Cunningham always had a lovely meal prepared.

Cunningham's travelling shop operated Monday to Saturday. When the van was stocked, they set off around 10.30



Oliver on his last trip in Cunningham's travelling shop, 3rd Dec. 1996. Taken in Ballykilleen.

in the morning and were back at about 5.00 in the evening. The service was much more than just a shop. Stamps from the post office were sold, prescriptions were collected from the chemists and delivered, letters were posted and messages - both written and oral - were passed on from house to house. In some cases, the travelling shop was the only point of contact that people living on their own had with town.

Oliver has fond memories of Mrs. Cunningham, Annie Kennedy and Mary Sloyan (Geraghty) who worked in the shop. Oliver reminds us that there was a bar at the back of Cunningham's. In addition to the locals, workers on the railway would call in for a drink.

Each day they would bring a float of cash with them in the van. There were a lot of coins in use in those days as the pound was worth 240 old pence. They always had a house on each route where they would be invited in for a cup of tea.

The Daily Routes

Monday/Tuesday: Lecarrow, Curries, Redford, Johnstown, Gurrane, Lavallyroe, Ballinastoka, Caramack, Logboy, Lisduff, Drimbane.

Wednesday: Knockbrack, Scregg, Kiltaboe, Coolnafarna, Clooncrim, Clooncan, Cloonlough.

Thursday: Lecarrow, Curries, Bargarriff, Derrintogher, Tullaghaun, Ballybeg, Grange, Lisnagroob, Barrinagh.

Friday: Drimbane, Agloragh, Lisduff, Knockanarra, Moate, Ballykilleen.

Saturday: Lecarrow, Bargarriff, Derrintogher, Grange, Corraslustia, Cloonkeehan, Carrick.

Manchester

Around 1963 or 1964 Oliver decided to leave home and go to family members in Manchester. On the boat over he travelled with John Lyons of Lecarrow. He started working on the buildings and stayed at that for a year or so before becoming a machinery driver for Austin Garvey Builders. Austin was a Galway man and Oliver worked with him on the Manchester ring road and on the motorways. Oliver remembers meeting Austin Waldron of Derrymore doing tarmac work on a housing estate in Preston. On another occasion he recalls meeting Michael and Tommie Webb of Tooraree on a job on the Warrington bypass. Life was hard going for many Irish workers back then: early starts, long hours, dangerous work and no helmets or safety gear. Social life was centred on Irish pubs such as The Carousel and St. Brendan's Irish Centre or other Irish Clubs. The Irish showbands came over during Lent as there was no



Oliver driving a track machine for Garvey's Construction on the Kingsway Bypass, 1960s.

dancing at home in the weeks before Easter. Oliver also worked with Johnny Loughrey, the singer who wrote *The Black Sheep* which was recorded by Foster and Allen. When he first arrived in England Oliver worked with Martin Ruane, father of the famous wrestler Giant Haystacks. He often went to Belview to see Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy in action.

On a visit home on holidays, Oliver along with John Kelly, Sean Ruane and Murt Hunt decided to go to Salthill for the day. It was there that he again met a former customer and his future wife, Alice (Lyons) who was working in the Eglinton Hotel. Shortly afterwards, Alice moved to Manchester and in June 1969, Oliver and Alice were married in Logboy Church and returned to Manchester where they continued to live until 1983. The call of home came and Alice and Oliver answered. After returning to Ireland, Oliver worked with John Joe Lilly for a while and built a new home which was started in the month of April and completed by October.

On the Road Again

It was Pado Cunningham who asked Oliver to go back on the travelling shop again after a lapse of eighteen



Oliver and Alice Ruane on their wedding day, 21st June 1969.

years. By then, the van was equipped with a fridge which meant that all perishable items available in the shop could be carried. It was a different Ireland that Oliver returned to. Many of the old customers had passed on, some houses were empty or had changed hands. However, the social connection was still the same, with friendly mugs of tea on every route. He loved to see children coming up to buy sweets, much like the ice cream vans of today. The van had been transformed into a walk-through vehicle. Oliver was now travelling on his own and, once again, meeting the best and kindest of people on his daily run; and at the end of his day a lovely meal was waiting for him.

Oliver has great memories of the many wonderful staff that worked in Pado and Nora Cunningham's shop. He recalls Maureen Towey, Collette Rattigan, Martina Kedian (Finn), Bernie Conroy, Gerry O'Connell, Collette Waldron, Justine Hester, Eamonn Gannon, Fiona McNamara, Patricia Waldron, Ann O'Connell, Kathy Mannion, Margaret Hannon and many others.

End of an Era

But time nor tide wait for no man and shopping habits changed. It was decided in 1996 that the travelling shop would be retired. This marked the end of a wonderful service in rural Ireland where co-operation, friendliness and sociability were the order of the day.

Annagh Magazine is grateful to Oliver for giving his unique insight into the Ireland of the past. Thanks also to Oliver's wife Alice and daughter Alison who provided additional information and photographs for this article.

'Ni bheidh a leitheidí ann arís' can be truly attributed to the travelling shops. Gone, but not forgotten.



Tommy and Jim Ruane, Curries.



Tommy and Mickey Ruane, Curries, taken in Manchester, 1960s.



Haymaking in Curries, circa 1950s. Jim and Sean Ruane.



Jim Ruane cutting turf in Curries.



Alice and Oliver outside their home in Manchester, 1970s.

Oliver Ruane.



Oliver and Alice's wedding, 21st June 1969, Knock.
From left: Frank Glynn (Clare St.), Eileen Gilmore (Bridge St.),
the bride Alice Ruane (Lyons) and Jimmy Gilmore (Bridge St.).



Mick Kelly and son Johnny with their dog Rosco, pictured sitting at a stook of oats in Island, harvest time, 1976.



Clockwise from front left: Jarlath, Ursula, Oliver and Columba Jordan in the yard at the rear of Jordan's shop, Upper Main Street, photographed by Patsy Cunningham.
Courtesy of Attracta Jordan, Upper Main St.



Pat Waldron (Doctor's Rd.), Attracta Jordan (Upper Main St.) and Cáit Freeley (Ballindrehid), photographed in Upper Main St.
Courtesy of Attracta Jordan, Upper Main St.

BALLYHAUNIS GOLF CLUB

Kevin Garvey (Hon. Secretary)

In comparison with the previous two years 2024 was relatively quiet for Ballyhaunis Golf Club. 2022 was especially memorable for our members when they became proud owners of the club. Our new practice facility was completed in 2023 and a sprinkler system installed on all our greens.

The projects for 2024 were the restoration of the men's locker room and the reconstruction of our course bunkers. The club could not afford to carry out any of these projects without the help of a very energetic, hardworking volunteer group who combined their different skills to complete them to a high standard. We appreciate the giving of their time, and thank them for all works done.

Catherine Johnston as Lady Captain, Barry Freeman as Men's Captain and Michael Lyons as President provided the club with outstanding leadership throughout the year.

In line with a new constitution, adopted at the 2023 annual general meeting, Margaret Dyer was elected as the first Chairperson of the Management Committee, a position previously held by the captain of the club. Margaret brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to the role which resulted in a very successful year for the club from an administrative perspective.

Catherine worked closely with lady captains in other neighbouring clubs, and together they formed a rota of hi-low format golf competitions, which proved very successful throughout the summer. Barry led the way in



Patrick Waldron (left) accepting his prize from Michael Lyons (President). *Glynn's Photography.*

a very successful fundraising am-am held in September with over forty teams participating. All three officers were actively involved in all aspects to the club.

The biggest success story of Ballyhaunis Golf Club in recent years must be the development of our underage programme under the guidance of Shane Freeman and Kevin Henry. Below is a report from Junior Conveyor, Kevin Henry, on the 2024 season.

Junior Golf

Our junior golf section continues to grow and thrive. This year we have close to one hundred under-age members, a mixture of Junior (primary school age) and Juvenile (secondary school age) boys and girls. Unlike some golf clubs, we allow our juniors full use of our facilities – locker rooms, putting green, chipping practice area, practice grounds, driving net, and the course itself. We feel this contributes to developing a love of the game and of the club, which we hope will improve our youth both as golfers and as people. They are the future of our club, so it is in everyone's interest to encourage, support and help them.

During school holidays at Easter time and during the Summer, we ran coaching and playing sessions for our younger juniors on Wednesday mornings, and our juveniles on Sunday evenings. These were in addition to all the time they themselves spent at the game.

For the past three years we were part of a pilot programme being run in different parts of the country to promote Golf Sixes, a modified version of golf where players played in pairs in scramble format (both players get to hit every shot, and they count the best one). We



Barry Freeman (Captain) presenting his prize to Liam Cunnane (right). *Glynn's Photography.*

were in a group with Strokestown, Swinford, Castlereagh and Carrick-on-Shannon. Each club hosted a day of the competition, where teams of six golfers (three pairs) from each club played a six-hole competition. Our team did us proud – they achieved the remarkable feat of a first-place finish at each of the venues, carrying off a clean sweep and emerging as runaway winners of the Mid-West Golf Sixes league. Our ten panellists were: Kate Monaghan, Ruby McDonagh, Cara Walsh, Kevin Heneghan, Darragh Freeman, Oisín Finnegan, Daniel Buckley, Danny Gilmartin, Sean Cassidy and Charlie Finn. They represented the club with great honour – great style, too, in their red polo shirts kindly sponsored by Gilmartin's of Kiltimagh.

Juvenile golf at our club enjoyed a huge surge this year, with scores of teenagers regularly on the course throughout the year, most particularly during the summer holidays. Many of these youths have now got adult (WHS) handicaps and have begun to play in our weekly adult competitions. One noteworthy performance was that of young Kevin Heneghan who, at just thirteen years of age, won first prize in the weekend competition of 22nd September with a fine score of 66 nett.

We entered teams in two Golf Ireland inter-club competitions, at under-16 and under-18 level. The boys who played in these represented the club very impressively and gained valuable experience for future years. Our panel members were: Boys Under-16: Ruairí Freeman, Kevin Heneghan and Conor Gilmartin, who finished in third place from eighteen participating clubs. Kevin Heneghan scored phenomenal 44 points on the day. Boys Under-18: Matthew Salmon, Sean Gilmartin, Fionn Delaney, Ruairí Freeman and Conor Gilmartin, finishing eighth out of nineteen participating clubs.

The achievements of two of our young golfers merit particular mention, bringing, as they did, huge credit to themselves and their families, and also to our club. Ruairí Freeman (aged fourteen) represented the club in three adult inter-club matches this year and won all three of his matches. He was a prominent member of the Connacht under-14 interprovincial team, playing against each of the other three provinces. He placed in the top twenty of the Ulster under-14 boys championship at Newtownstewart Golf Club in July and rounded off a very successful summer by winning the Junior Captain's prize at Enniscrone Golf Club.

At fifteen years of age, John William Burke is nationally recognised as a rare golfing talent. Playing off a handicap of +1.1 at the time of writing, he can look back on a very successful year (but knowing him, it is forwards rather than backwards he will be looking!). He began the year by being selected for the prestigious high-performance panel for 2023/24, and proved worthy of



Michael Lyons (President) presenting Catherine Johnston with her prize. Glynn's Photography.

this selection by achieving second place in the Irish Boys under-16 open championship at Banbridge Golf Club; first place in the Munster Under-16 boys open championship at Shannon Golf Club; first in Leinster Under-16 boys open championship and a fourth place finish at the Ulster Under-16 open in Castlerock Golf Club. An eighth place finish in the Connacht Under-16 open was enough to see him romp home as the runaway winner of the 2024 Order of Merit by a whopping 282 points. On the representative front, John William played for Connacht in the Under-16 inter-pros, where he won all three of his matches comprehensively. Internationally, he was selected to represent Ireland three times, achieving top twenty placings in his first two events: the McGregor trophy and the Italian international championships. The third event is the Ireland v England match to be played at Burnham & Burrow Golf Club in the UK from 4th to 6th October. Not surprising, then, that he has also been selected for the Irish U-16 High Performance panel for 2024/25. All of this success is fully merited. John William is a dedicated, committed young man who spends long hours practising and honing his game to achieve ever-higher standards. He manages to combine a competitive streak and an appetite for improvement with a positive, pleasant personality. He is a credit to his family and to the club, and we are very proud of him, as we are of all the fantastic young people who play golf at our club.

Thanks

Returning to the adult side of the club we must compliment the fine work done by the chairpersons and members of the various committees who all worked very hard throughout the year. Ballyhaunis Golf Club, like all voluntary organisation, is very dependent on people giving their free time, and we are very lucky to have so many willing people to help. Thank you very much one and all.

We would also like to congratulate the winners of our

major competitions: Michael Lyons' President's Cup was won by Packie Waldron and Catherine Johnston; Catherine Johnston's Ladies Captain's prize was won by Ann Hussey and Michael Lyons; Barry Freeman's Men's Captain's prize was won by Liam Cunnane and Fiona Prenty; the Masters was won by Norrie Dillon and Paul Hickey; and the prestigious annual Club Matchplay competition was won by Eugene Lannon. The Timmy Lavin Cup was played over the winter months with over ten teams taking part. The winning team, Mac's Bar, led by Tommy Grogan, won this very popular league.

A very successful summer scramble was run this year by Kevin Garvey over a twelve week period. Many of our new beginners were introduced to the game of golf at this event where they tried out the skills they had learned at the Monday evening classes led by Brian Phillips.

Sadly, we said a final farewell to some of our members again this year and we offer our deepest sympathies to their families and friends. Among those that passed were former Captains and Presidents Dr. Alan Delaney and John Dillon. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha dilse.*

I want to acknowledge the assistance of Kevin Henry and Margaret Dyer in compiling this report.



Catherine Johnston (Lady Captain) presenting Anne Hussey (right) with her prize.
Glynn's Photography.



Ballyhaunis in New York

Ballyhaunis GAA fans were very well represented among the large number of Mayo supporters who made the trip to Gaelic Park in the Bronx, New York in April 2024 for the meeting of Mayo and New York in the opening round of this year's Connacht Football Championship.

Above:

From left: Kevin Kilbride (Doctor's Road), Dara Healy (Doctor's Road), James Lyons (Knockbrack), Sean Gildea (Gurrane).

Bottom right:

From left: Joseph Webb, Pat Phillips, Teddy Webb, Gareth Morrissey, Dermot McGuire, Robbie Herr (seated), Brendan Morrissey, Brian Murray and Tommy Leonard





Ballyhaunis Mayo supporters in Central Park. Tony Moran (Hazelhill) on horse carriage. Standing, from left: John Jordan Jnr. (Johnstown), John Jordan (Johnstown), Nuala, Aoife and Stephen Nolan (Kilmannin), David Jordan (Dublin), Paul Jordan (Johnstown).



Diarmuid Eagney, Darragh Eagney, Vincent Healy (Ballindrehid) and Dermot Eagney at Times Square, New York.



Pado Cunningham (left) and Devils native Sean Moran, a former staff member at Cunningham's, met up after the Mayo versus New York Connacht SFC game in Gaelic Park in April, 2024.



Outside McSorley's, East Village, Manhattan. L-R: Dermot and Joelyn McGuire, P.J. and Sheena Fleming, Sinead Reinhardt, Enya O'Connor, Emma Jane Reinhardt, Kurt Reinhardt, Shane Fagan, Brian Murray, Stephen Nolan, Robbie Herr, James Hunt.

May Day at the Community Hall was the pinnacle of a busy year for Ballyhaunis Community Council. The formal reopening of the hall was performed by Michael Ring TD shortly before announcing his retirement. It provided an opportunity to recognise servants of the community like Tom Finn, longtime caretaker of the hall prior to our assuming responsibility. We acknowledged Tom's many years as the unpaid General Manager, Financial Controller, problem solver and all-round 'go-to' person for anything to do with the hall. We also thanked our long-serving councillor John Cribbin, who was also retiring, and wished him well in the years ahead. The event, celebrated with music, poetry and speeches, brought to an end our five-year journey through the LEADER programme, from the submission of an application for funds and the launch of our refurbishment project on Mayo Day 2019.

Running the hall occupies a great deal of the time of our volunteer team, but the facility allows us to fulfil our goal of providing a space and a platform for community activity. While we host a range of community groups – the Mother and Baby Group on Tuesday, Parent and Toddler Group and the Table Tennis Club on Wednesday, the Language Café on Thursdays, the local Foróige club on Fridays – we also run our own events like Film Nights, our monthly Social Night and a monthly Bike Repair Clinic. Cosy and warm year-round thanks to our heat pump heating system, the hall is also happy to host Tracy Cunnane's twice weekly classes, Alex's Gymnastics, Marese Cregg's Yoga and Rinka Children's Fitness, all of which bring fitness and well-being to the local community.

Through much grant-writing practise we have had success in securing grants not only for works to the hall, but also for activities we organise there. Thus, while we installed our community cinema with funds secured from the Community Centre Investment Fund we also drew from the HSE/National Lottery fund to run our monthly social night: a great place for locals to meet and aspiring musicians to perform.

Southwest Mayo Development Company has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Language Café, while funds from Conradh na Gaeilge and Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education Training Board, respectively, allowed us to run Irish classes as well as needlework and furniture upcycling classes – all very popular. All of this support is the fruit of engagement of our various supporters and

careful reporting of the funds received and their impact.

We are grateful to our hard-working operatives Nadia and Tatiana, who keep the hall spotless as participants in the TÚS employment scheme run through the Mayo Northeast Development Company. Securing workers of their calibre has been a great boon to the Community Council and we hope that after their term ends in 2025 we will be able to keep the ladies engaged in some capacity.

The Future

Looking ahead, we have various works on the building to complete, while also staying on top of debt repayments due on the earlier refurbishment of the building. Even as we pay the €1,300 per month due on borrowings, we are also sourcing funds for the renovation of the hall gallery.

Great news on that front came in early November 2024 in a note from the Department of Rural and Community Development, telling us we'd secured €25,000 from the Community Centres Investment Fund, a fund which last year supported the installation of our community cinema at the hall. Our diligent accounting for state (and other) grants has, we are happy to report, given Ballyhaunis Community Council a good track record and a solid reputation among various agencies to which we turn for support.

The gallery project will require a new glass barrier at the front of the structure to allow a clear view of the stage while the timber flooring will also have to be renewed even as we hope to retain the handsome old seats which have been in situ since the hall's days as a cinema in the 1950s and 60s. Having the gallery back in action, and new lighting on the stage, will allow us to host a wider range of performances and presentations, adding to the cultural life of the community.

Outside the building, a realignment of paths along the southern perimeter of the hall to meet access requirements will be largely funded through the Mayo County Council Community Involvement Scheme fund.

In keeping with our ethos of sustainability, an array of nearly sixty solar panels will be installed this winter on the hall roof, hopefully defraying some of the electricity bills we incur for heating the building with a mains-driven heat pump which has been acclaimed by our users for the warmth and comfort it has brought to the building.

The €43,000 cost of the solar panels will be covered by a grant provided from Mayo County's Climate Action Fund. In seeking this fund, we were happy to point to earlier successful retrofitting of the building when we hosted officials from the Council for events at the hall like the launch of the Ballyhaunis Biodiversity Plan (by Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns) and a Sustainable Energy public meeting organised by Sustainable Ballyhaunis with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. €1,200 from that fund is also being invested in our monthly volunteer-led bike repair clinic which is now into its third year. A six-person team of repairers led by a City and Guilds certified bike repair expert are kept very busy each month by a steady stream of bikes wheeled through the front door of the hall. Donations of bicycles, repaired and resold by the crew, have generated some funds for parts while also reducing waste and facilitating a healthier way of travel.

Having become a popular venue for private family functions – including several weddings and birthdays in the past year – the hall was also, this year, the venue for major public events like the aforementioned Biodiversity Plan launch but also for the parish's First Holy Communion reception and major cultural events of the local Muslim community. A growing local Indian community rents the hall for Christmas and Easter gatherings while a church of the local Roma community has used the hall on Saturday afternoons.

The Community Council is happy to organise and host events marking national events like Heritage Week and Culture Night. A multi-week genealogy programme drew a large participation in early January and we responded to this obvious enthusiasm by hosting the



Run by Ballyhaunis Community Council, the bike repair clinic has become a popular monthly fixture at the hall. Some of our volunteer repair crew: **L-R:** Sajid Chaudry, Teodor Dragomir, Chris Lynskey, Mark Godfrey, Anne Connolly, Mohammed Rizwan Ali. **Background:** Dr. Michael Cleary.

Mayo Genealogy Group's Revolutionary Women of East Mayo exhibition and lecture in late November.

Our building programme will continue through 2025. Our role as a community entity will also see us join the regular meetings of the Abbey Partnership and Abbey Trust on which the Community Council serves as the community pillar. Our representatives also attend the meetings of the Town Centre First initiative, a Mayo County Council initiative to develop a co-ordinated development plan for the area.

Transparency being a key principle of our organisation, our monthly meetings are open to all members of the community and typically happen on the second Wednesday night of the month at the hall. Anyone who'd like to offer advice, ask questions or participate in any of our programmes will be most welcome. The Community Council website has a calendar of events and activities taking place at the Community Hall. Be sure to take a look (www.ballyhaunisccl.ie).

The following committee was elected at our annual general meeting in May 2024: **Chairperson:** Mark Godfrey; **Vice-chair:** J.T. Smyth; **Secretary:** Mary Donnelly; **Treasurer:** Marie Cribbin; **PRO:** Tzyy Wang; **Board:** Alma Gallagher, J.T. Smyth, Ruairi Ó Broin, Marie Cribbin, Mark Godfrey.

Pictured after a July 2024 screening at the Community Cinema in the hall, hosted by Ballyhaunis Community Council: **L-R:** Pauline McGarry, Breege Cleary, Manuel Asensio, Gerry McGarry, Mike Griffin.



The Irish Masters Ladies Basketball team who took part in the European Masters Finals held in Italy earlier this year. Maria Flynn (formerly of Abbeyquarter) was a member of the team and is pictured here wearing the number 7 top.



In March this year, Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P. handed out tree saplings to be planted in all station areas in the parish. Pictured are (from left) Vincent Higgins, Anne Lyons and John Joe Lyons planting the sapling for the Knockbrack Station Area.



Ballyhaunis friends meet at the Birmingham St. Patrick's Day breakfast at the Council House, Birmingham, 17th March 2024. From left: James Molloy, Martin Grogan (Ballyhaunis and Coventry) and Michelle (Keane) Molloy (Ballyhaunis and Solihull).



Left:
Three generations of Liverpool supporters:
Pictured (L-R) are:
Padraic, Cian and Paddy
Murphy (Bracklaghboy)
supporting their team at
Anfield, March 2024.



Seamus Folliard (right) visited Ballyhaunis from U.S.A. earlier this year and met up with Michael Byrne and Eamonn Murren who were school friends of his dad Kieran Folliard of Upper Main St.

CONNECTIONS TO HOME THROUGH SPORT

Claire Moran (Gurteen)

I'm currently living in Utrecht, the Netherlands, completing my PhD here. Having been here for a few years I started to miss many aspects of home, including playing GAA, so I decided to look for a GAA club to join! Since we Irish are everywhere, it wasn't difficult to find one. I happily found some in Amsterdam, The Hague and Eindhoven. Amsterdam is only thirty minutes away from Utrecht by train, so I went with them. When I joined there was only a football team. However, after many of us expressed a desire to play camogie, we decided to set up a team. There was already a hurling team at the club, so the hurling lads kindly helped us get started. Football training commenced in February, while camogie got going in April.

There is a big group for football and about ten of us in camogie, with girls from all over Ireland, as well as a few non-Irish girls. In particular, there was one Dutch girl who was very dedicated and had been playing for several years for the club after getting inspired by the sport while on Erasmus in Dublin. It has been great playing football and camogie again, and I am very happy to have a little Irish community around me, having made many new friends throughout the season.

Football

From the first training session I knew I had made a good call in coming back to play. I had a great time each week as my skills slowly started coming back to me, and we had great craic each session. In March we had our first tournament which took place in Amsterdam. There were men and women's teams from all over Europe playing – from Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, and France – so it really felt like being at home for that day! I played in midfield for all our games, which was very tiring, but I really enjoyed it. Unfortunately, we didn't make it to the final, but we were very pleased with our performance as it was the first year for most of the team and many of us had not played in years, so we were all very motivated beforehand and determined after! Most importantly, we all had a lot of fun playing, and at the end of the day there was a big night out in an Irish pub in Amsterdam, so we had great celebrations with all the other teams. It was a great first year of football and I'm really looking forward to next year!

Camogie

In the beginning there were only about six of us, but soon enough more girls joined until we were approximately twelve in number. We started casually, mostly just playing for fun since most of us hadn't played in a long time.

In May we had our first tournament which took place in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, this didn't go very well. We lost all our matches, but it was still very early days for the club and we had a blast playing together regardless, so we felt determined to train and do better next time. Over the next few months, as we got more additions to the team and became more used to playing together, we could see the skills were there and we just needed a bit more practise together (and slightly better fitness levels!)



Claire Moran (front, extreme right) with team-mates in Utrecht.

Our next tournament was in Vienna in September. There were ten of us and we were joined by one other German girl from Berlin so that we would have enough players. We were blessed with fine, sunny weather throughout the day, and we were all very excited to get playing. To our delight, this tournament went incredibly well: we came second out of eight teams! We lost the final to the Viking Gaels, who were a formidable team, but we fought until the end and left it all on the pitch and left feeling very satisfied. We were over the moon with our success and had a great night-out in Vienna with the other teams that evening after the game.

As of the end of October, the season has finished and we will return to training early next year. We ended the camogie season on a high and had a fantastic time throughout the year. We are motivated and determined to improve our standings next year and to get more girls joining the club. Personally, I'm really looking forward to next year and feeling very happy that I joined the club. Aside from getting to play camogie again after so long, I have made a lovely group of friends and it's nice to keep the connection to home through our sports.

ANGELA'S OAK TREE - TWENTY YEARS A'GROWING

Thérèse van Schaijk

In 2000 my mother Angela Joyce visited me in Holland. We travelled to Veere in Zeeland, an historic village with a beautiful English rose garden. She spotted an acorn and wondered aloud, "Could this grow into an oak tree?" She put it in her pocket and brought it back to Ballyhaunis. I didn't think any more about it. Little did we know that this simple acorn would become a lasting tribute to her memory.

Three years later, Mum casually mentioned she had something to show me in her organic vegetable garden on Doctor's Road. She had planted the acorn on the edge of the strawberry bed so that she could keep an eye on it. It was about a foot tall. She was going to let it grow before transplanting it.

Angela died peacefully the following year. The family thought that her passionate love of nature would be best remembered by offering the tree to the town's riverside park. It was accepted, and so, on 16th October 2004, Angela's birthday, my brother Gerry and his wife Jenny carefully dug up the tree and brought it by wheelbarrow to the river. We replanted it opposite a bend in the river, with a number of Angela's Bridge Club friends and town committee members present.



Members of the Joyce family. Back, L-R: Martin Joyce, Jenny Joyce, Ger van Schaijk, Gerry Joyce. **Centre, L-R:** Colette Cowlard, Thérèse van Schaijk, Joan Joyce, Justin Joyce. **Front, L-R:** Julia van den Houten (aged 3), Linda van den Houten van Schaijk, Aidan Cowlard Joyce, Sheila van Schaijk.

Twenty years have passed. Angela's centenary was last October. Permission was granted to place a small plaque at the oak tree, now a large and sturdy specimen. It simply says: *Angela Joyce's Oak Tree 2004*.

For the family, the tree also commemorates our father, Dr. Tommie Joyce, who was a dedicated GP for the town and district from 1951 until his untimely death in 1984.



Scout Den Scale Model

Ballyhaunis' former Scout Den provided the inspiration for this 1/87 scale model by Dónal Murray from Lucan, Co. Dublin. Dónal, who has interest in railways, both real and in model form, used to pass by the old Scout Den on the train twice a week back in the 1990s and wanted to recreate it for his own model layout.

Unfortunately, the real building is in a sorry state now, but at least it lives on in model form.

Courtesy of Rachel Greally.

MY ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

Ria Marigliano

I finally qualified as a solicitor in December 2023 and, after eight long years of study, I felt it was time for a well-deserved break! So, in January 2024, I temporarily left my job and my life in Dublin, packed my bags and headed off with two of my friends on a six-month backpacking trip through Southeast Asia and Australia. Overflowing with excitement and anticipation, we immersed ourselves in the unique experiences each country had to offer.

Thailand

Our first stop of the trip was Thailand. We spent a month there, experiencing the sensory overload that is Bangkok, exploring the paradise islands of Koh Samui, Koh Tao and Koh Phangan, immersing ourselves in the stunning beauty of Khao Sok National Park and enjoying the charms of Chiang Mai and Pai.

A highlight of our time in Thailand was our participation in a two-day silent meditation retreat while in Chiang Mai. This involved staying at a meditation centre with a Buddhist monk. Throughout the course of the two days, the monk shared insights about Buddhism and the life of a monk and he taught us various forms of meditation – sitting, standing and walking. At sunrise on the second day, we participated in an Alms Giving Ceremony. The Buddhist Alms Giving Ceremony is a deeply significant tradition that reflects the core Buddhist values of compassion and kindness. Monks rely on the generosity of their communities for sustenance, as they do not work for a living or earn money. At dawn, monks walk barefoot through the streets carrying alms bowls, and lay people line up to offer food. In return, the monks give blessings or prayers for the well-being of the donors. The retreat deepened our understanding of meditation and mindfulness and left us with a long-lasting sense of peace and calm.

Laos

Following Thailand, we travelled to Laos via a slow boat along the Mekong River. Spending two weeks there, we explored the enchanting cities of Luang Prabang, Vang Vieng and Vientiane, trekked through the stunning landscapes around Nong Khiaw, and relaxed on the picturesque, laid-back island of Don Det.

One of the highlights of our time in Laos was our visit to Nong Khiaw, a peaceful riverside village in the northern province of the country. While there, we hiked and camped overnight at the Som Nang Viewpoint which provided stunning panoramic views of the surrounding limestone mountains, the forests and the Nam Ou River. As we reached the viewpoint, cooling off



My two friends and I at the beginning of our trip in Bangkok.
L-R: Orlaith Lynch, Ria Marigliano and Orla Doolin.

after the steep climb and admiring the glorious sunset, we spotted a group of local schoolboys who, after finishing their school day, had also made the hike, laden down with bags full of pots, pans and food. To our amazement, despite being only between the ages of ten and thirteen, these young boys proceeded to light a fire and prepare dinner for the group – a gorgeous feast of meat, vegetables, noodles and rice. We were truly blown away and inspired by their remarkable responsibility and generosity, which reflected the spirit of the Laotian people as a whole. The day after the hike, we ventured upriver to the neighbouring village of Muang Ngoi where we were very fortunate to receive a weaving lesson from a local woman. Although she couldn't speak English, a neighbour kindly joined us to translate, offering yet another example of the warmth and kindness of the Laotian people.

Laos, beneath its beauty and tranquillity, carries the heavy burden of being one of the most bombed nations in history. From 1964 to 1973, the US dropped over two-million tons of ordnance over the country in 580,000 bombing missions – the equivalent of one planeload every eight minutes, twenty-four hours a day, for nine years. This tragic legacy of the Vietnam War continues to scar Laos to this day. Many people live under the



One of the schoolboys who generously prepared our dinner atop the Som Nang Viewpoint in Laos.

constant threat of unexploded ordnance and entire communities face daily risks as these hidden bombs can detonate unexpectedly, causing injuries, deaths and lasting trauma.

While in Vientiane, the capital, we visited the COPE Visitor Centre. Since its creation in 1996, COPE (Co-operative Orthotic & Prosthetic Enterprise) has worked to provide nation-wide physical rehabilitation services through which thousands of people with mobility-related disabilities, including survivors of unexploded ordnance, receive prosthetic and orthotic services free of charge, allowing them to regain mobility and dignity. We also visited the MAG Visitor Centre. MAG (the Mines Advisory Group) is a global humanitarian and advocacy organisation that finds, removes and destroys landmines, cluster munitions and unexploded bombs from places affected by conflict. We felt fortunate to learn about the vital work of organisations like COPE and MAG which are dedicated to providing support and rehabilitation for those affected by the legacy of war in Laos. Ultimately, our journey through Laos left us with a profound appreciation for its beauty, resilience, and the enduring spirit of its people.

Cambodia

Following Laos, we spent two weeks in Cambodia. During this time, we visited the vibrant cities of Siem

Reap and Phnom Penh, relaxed on the golden beaches of islands Koh Rong and Koh Rong Sanloem, and explored the charming town of Battambang.

While in Siem Reap, we visited one of APOPO's (Anti-Personnel Landmines Detection Product Development) Centres, which trains southern giant pouched rats nicknamed "HeroRATs" to detect landmines. These HeroRATs sniff out the chemical compounds of TNT found in landmines and other explosive remnants of war. While there, we were fortunate to witness a demonstration of this. The rat will sniff out the TNT and, once detected, will begin tapping the ground to alert the team of this. The rat is too light to cause the landmine to explode. It was both fascinating and humbling to see these intelligent animals play such a crucial role in making the land safer for local communities.

While in Phnom Penh, we visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum located on the site of a former secondary school which was used as Security Prison 21 by the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 until its fall in 1979. Out of an estimated 20,000 people imprisoned at Tuol Sleng, there were only twelve known survivors: seven adults and five children. The museum stands as a haunting reminder of the atrocities committed during this dark chapter of Cambodia's history, preserving the stories of the victims and honouring the resilience of the few who survived. Following our visit to Tuol Sleng, we travelled to Choeung Ek which was used as a Killing Field by the Khmer Rouge in the perpetration of the Cambodian genocide between 1975 and 1979. An estimated 8,895 victims were executed there before being buried in mass graves. Visiting both Tuol Sleng and the Killing Fields at Choeung Ek was a deeply emotional experience, one that words can scarcely convey. The sheer scale of the atrocities committed, and the unimaginable suffering endured by the victims left us feeling heartbroken and overwhelmed. Yet, despite the sadness, the importance of bearing witness to these sites cannot be overstated. They serve as a powerful reminder of the need to remember, to honour the victims, and to ensure that such horrors are never repeated.

Vietnam

Following Cambodia, we spent a month in Vietnam. We were truly blown away by all that Vietnam had to offer, from its vibrant cities and rich history to its stunning landscapes and incredible cuisine. We visited the bustling cities of Ho Chi Minh, Hoi An and Hanoi, trekked through the scenic landscapes of Sapa, whizzed around the Ha Giang Loop on motorbikes, saw the wondrous Ha Long Bay in all its beauty, and further explored the serene caves and limestone karsts of Ninh Binh.

A highlight of our time in Vietnam was undoubtedly

a tour of the Cu Chi Tunnels while in Ho Chi Minh. The tunnels were dug during the Vietnam War by Viet Cong soldiers as a way to move undetected and launch surprise attacks. Though made six times bigger to accommodate tourists, their exploration is not for the faint hearted. While we were not brave enough to attempt the 100-metre-long tunnel, we did muster the courage to explore the 10-metre-long one! The Cu Chi Tunnels are truly an architectural marvel and stand as a symbol of the endurance, ingenuity and unwavering spirit of the Vietnamese people.

Another highlight was a tour of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) which served as a war-free buffer between North and South Vietnam in the time between 1954–1975. As part of the tour, we visited both Hien Luong Bridge which, located at the 17th Parallel, was bisected by the border between North and South Vietnam and the Vinh Moc tunnels. This tunnel complex, unlike the Cu Chi tunnels, was used not by soldiers but by the villagers of Vinh Moc to escape the US aerial bombardment during the war. The people of Vinh Moc, rather than leave the area, moved their village to a depth of thirty metres. The complex grew to include kitchens, rooms for each family and spaces for healthcare and education. Around sixty families lived in the tunnels and as many as seventeen children were born inside them. The tunnels were a miraculous success, with no villagers losing their lives, and it was truly incredible to witness them first-hand.

One of our favourite experiences not only in Vietnam, but in all of Southeast Asia, was our three day tour of the Ha Giang Loop, a motorcycle loop that winds through the northernmost mountains of Vietnam. It involved a large group, some riding the motorbikes themselves and others (like us) riding on the back of the motorbikes with some of the local tour guides, exploring dizzying roads that wind their way through limestone mountains, and staying in remote villages with local people. During our three days, we experienced the deep warmth and friendliness of the Hmong people, an ethnic minority in Vietnam, sang karaoke until our throats hurt (karaoke is a firm favourite of the Vietnamese people) and drank 'happy water', which is essentially Vietnam's answer to Poitín. It was truly unforgettable.

The Philippines

After Vietnam, we travelled to the Philippines. We spent a month there, exploring Moalboal, Siquijor, Panglao, Bohol, Siargao, El Nido and Coron. The Philippines proved breathtakingly beautiful, offering a unique blend of stunning landscapes, vibrant cultures and rich biodiversity, making it a true tropical paradise.

A truly unique experience was had on the island of Bohol when we visited a Tarsier sanctuary. Tarsiers, an



A Hmong woman working in the fields of northern Vietnam with her baby on her back.

animal we previously knew nothing about, are one of the world's oldest and smallest primates. They have extremely large and mesmerising eyes (they resemble Yoda from Star Wars!) and are, frankly, adorable. They're most active during the night, however, we were very fortunate to witness them awake on the day we visited the sanctuary. Sadly, they are an endangered species due to the threat of forest destruction. Fortunately, the government of Bohol is doing great work in ensuring that the species are protected.

A highlight of our time in the Philippines was a three-day, two-night boat expedition from El Nido to Coron. Our group, made up mostly of fellow Irish backpackers – a very pleasant surprise since we hadn't met many Irish people on the trip until then – shared in the adventure. Throughout the expedition, we were given the chance to swim in crystal-clear waters, snorkel to explore magnificent shipwrecks and immerse ourselves in the stunning natural beauty of the region. Each night, we set up camp on a deserted island where we were treated to the most stunning sunsets imaginable, making the experience truly unforgettable.

Additional highlights from our time in the Philippines included ziplining from one island to another in El Nido and watching the incredible surfers at the world-famous surfing spot, Cloud Nine in Siargao.

Bali

Following the Philippines, we travelled to the Indonesian island of Bali. While it has a reputation for being a party destination, Bali proved to be so much more than that. It offers a magical blend of a colourful culture, friendly people and stunning nature. We spent a total of three weeks there, exploring Uluwatu, Nusa Penida, Canggu and Ubud.

Bali is predominately Hindu due to its historical influences. During our stay, we immersed ourselves in

the island's rich spiritual traditions. While in Uluwatu, we visited the Uluwatu Temple, perched on a spectacular cliff overlooking the Indian Ocean and home to throngs of mischievous monkeys. We witnessed these monkeys playfully stealing people's possessions, from sunglasses to caps, creating an amusing but chaotic scene. Many visitors found themselves bartering with food to retrieve their belongings, tossing bits of fruit or snacks to distract the monkeys long enough to reclaim their stolen items. At the temple, we experienced the famous traditional Kecak Fire Dance. The Kecak Dance, created in 1930, is inspired by the Sanghyang tradition, depicting dancers 'possessed' by spirits who interact with the ancestors or gods. Truly a feast for the senses, it is performed by a group of men seated in a circle who rhythmically chant "cak", all while dancers at the centre of the circle perform several scenes from the story of Ramayana, an avatar of the deity Vishnu. While in Ubud, we visited the Tirta Empul Temple, which is one of the largest and busiest water temples in Indonesia. It is dedicated to Vishnu, the Hindu god of water. At the temple, we partook in a purification ritual known as melukat, which involved dipping your head under numerous waterspouts.

Singapore

Prior to travelling to Australia, we spent a weekend in Singapore. A country I previously knew very little about (I was familiar only with its reputation for extreme wealth), it revealed itself to be an incredibly fascinating place.

Multiculturalism is an important part of Singapore's identity. Chinese, Malay, Indian, Arab and various other ethnicities peacefully coexist in one space. Visits to Chinatown, Little India and Arab Street offered a fascinating glimpse into the city's diversity. While there, we dined at some of the city's hundreds of hawker centres, community dining rooms where the cuisine of the city's diverse ethnicities come together in a delightful fusion. Dating as far back as the 1800s, hawker culture in Singapore originated from the early migrant population selling quick, affordable meals on street pavements, in town squares and parks. Now, the Singapore government has sought to bring hawkers under one roof. While there, you have the choice of a variety of delicious foods from an array

of stalls, at an extremely cheap price. The food is truly exceptional, with some hawkers centres hosting some of the world's most affordable Michelin-starred meals.

Singapore beautifully blends its cultural heritage with modern charm, creating a unique and captivating atmosphere. Rich traditions thrive amidst the backdrop of a stunning skyline of contemporary architecture, highlighting the city's evolution from a third world nation to global economic powerhouse.

Australia

Towards the end of my trip, I travelled along Australia's East Coast – from Cairns down to Sydney – visiting incredible places like Magnetic Island, the Whitsundays, Noosa, Brisbane and Byron Bay along the way.

One of the highlights was a tour of Fraser Island or K'gari as it's now known. Renamed to honour the indigenous Butchulla people's ancestral connection to the island, the name K'gari, which means 'paradise' in the Butchulla language, perfectly captures the island and its breathtaking beauty. The island's untamed wildness is truly remarkable, from its pristine freshwater lakes like Lake McKenzie, its lush rainforests, its golden beaches, to its freely roaming dingoes.

As we all know, Australia is famous for its incredible wildlife and, while there, I got up close and personal with crocodiles, wallabies, kangaroos and koalas. However, one of the most unforgettable experiences was undoubtedly whale watching outside Brisbane. I was very fortunate to be visiting the country in June which marks the beginning of the annual whale migration season. I caught incredible views of these majestic creatures as they breached, sights I will treasure forever.

Australia's natural beauty and wildlife left me in awe at every turn, offering experiences I'll never forget. It's a place where adventure and wonder go hand in hand, making it a truly unforgettable destination.

The six months I spent travelling were truly invaluable, and I am incredibly grateful for them. I will cherish the people I met and the memories I created for the rest of my life. It was, without a doubt, an adventure of a lifetime.



Participation in the purification ritual known as melukat at the Tirta Empul Temple in Bali.

Right:

Siobhan Gallagher appeared on the popular Channel 4 TV show 'Countdown' in April 2024. Countdown is a day-time quiz show in which two contestants compete over fifteen rounds of words and numbers. It was the first programme to appear on Channel 4 in 1982 and has been a popular show ever since. Eighteen-year-old Siobhan is granddaughter of Mary and Jim Goulding of Doctor's Road, Ballyhaunis. Well-done, Siobhan!



Left:

Sandra Lyons who received her Post Grad Diploma in Critical Care Nursing from UCD. Sandra, a former pupil of Ballyhaunis Community School, is the daughter of Maura Hunt and Declan Lyons (Ballyhaunis) and granddaughter of Breda and the late John Hunt (Cloonfad) and Celia and the late Paddy Lyons (Gurrane).



Attending the Ryder Cup in Rome, Sept. 2023, from left: James Hunt (Cartron South), Paul Finn (Main St.), Vincent Healy (Doctor's Rd.), Ronan Jennings (Knock Rd.).

Right:

Siofra Ní Ráighne (8), daughter of Ciarán and Frances (née Grogan, Knockbrack), who raised over €1,900 in donations for 'Locks of Love' for the LauraLynn charity after cutting her long braids! Well done Siofra for your generous gesture!



Far right:

Saoirse Caulfield, Ballindrehid (right), pictured with Andrew McCormack of Co. Cork, after they completed the City2Surf Sydney 14km run in August 2024. Since 2008 participants in the event have raised over €55 million for charities in the Australian city.



THE TRAGIC STORY OF EDWARD JOHNSTON

Tommy Caulfield

This letter from Mrs. Mary Johnston is a poignant and heartfelt plea for justice and compensation following the tragic death of her husband, Edward (known locally as Ned) shortly after being brutally assaulted by the Black and Tans. In her letter, Mrs. Johnston vividly recounts the systematic harassment and violence inflicted on her husband by the Black and Tans, the paramilitary force notorious for their vicious cruelty during the Irish War of Independence. This is a compelling account from Mrs. Johnston, highlighting the hardship and persecution her family endured during a turbulent period in our country's history. The narrative centres on her late husband who was a grocer and egg merchant.

Edward Johnston was a dedicated and hardworking man who ran a grocery and egg-dealing business at Upper Main St., Ballyhaunis. He travelled daily to surrounding rural areas, purchasing eggs from farmers and small shops. However, his business and life took a dramatic turn when the Black and Tans arrived and began to terrorise the local population. He became a target of their intimidation and violence, suffering frequent searches, threats and even robbery at the hands of these undisciplined mercenaries. They not only threatened him during his rounds in the countryside but also at his home. In April 1921, another innocent young man from the opposite side of the town, Michael Coen (Lecarrow) was murdered by members of the British Army.

Edward Johnston's situation reflects the broader climate of fear and instability during this period, where ordinary civilians often found themselves targeted. His refusal to fully go into hiding, despite the danger, demonstrates his courage and commitment to providing for his family. The situation escalated to a horrific point on October 16th, 1920, when he was viciously attacked by the Black and Tans on Main Street in the town in broad daylight. They struck him, knocked him down, and brutally kicked him while he lay defenceless on the ground. The physical and psychological toll of this attack was devastating and, despite receiving medical care, he never recovered. He tragically passed away just before Christmas 1920, leaving behind his grieving wife and two young children.

In her letter, Mrs. Johnston conveys her deep sorrow and the immense hardship she faced following her husband's death. She was left to run the family business while caring for her daughters, all the while dealing with her own declining health, which was brought-on by the stress and trauma of her husband's ordeal. She explains that her husband's death was not a natural one; it was the result of a deliberate and sustained campaign of violence and harassment by those who were supposed to uphold the law. She and her daughters were left alone, bereft of the man who was their protector and provider.

This appeal for help is written by a woman with a heart weighed down by grief and an overwhelming sense of injustice.

*Claim of Mrs. Mary Johnston, Upper Main Street,
Ballyhaunis.*

I am the widow of Edward Johnston and reside in Upper Main Street, Ballyhaunis, with our two children whose I strive to continue the business of Grocery and Egg Dealing carried on for several years by my husband prior to his death on the 21st December, 1920. My husband had considerable trade in Eggs and would buy any quantity a dozen, score, or hundred. He devoted all his time and energy to his business, calling at farmers' houses and small shops in the country districts within a radius of six or seven miles, travelling in a light spring cart constructed for the purpose, and taking a different route each week-day. When the Black-and-Tans were let loose on this country it was not long until my husband became the object of their unwelcome attentions. Frequently on his rounds he was stopped and searched by these uniformed blaguard. Later he was abused and threatened and on two or three occasions compelled to hand over his money to the ruffianly scoundrels. In course of time they called at our home when the threats were repeated by the bullies in a vain effort to extract information from my husband. Bravely he endeavoured to carry on throughout and in

Her husband was a man of integrity and a hard worker who was systematically harassed, brutalised, and ultimately murdered by the Black and Tans. The letter is not just a request for financial compensation, it is a powerful testament to the human cost of the unruly behaviour of Crown Forces in Ireland during that tumultuous period in our history. Mrs. Johnston's words convey the profound impact of the conflict on ordinary families and the enduring pain caused by the loss of a loved one in such brutal circumstances. This plea is not just for financial reparation; it is a plea for justice, for the recognition of the wrongs committed against her family and for the acknowledgment of the pain and suffering

that this mother and her two young daughters Gretta (later Mrs. Murren, Upper Main St.) and Bridie (later Mrs. O'Reilly, Woodpark) had been forced to endure.

This remarkable letter remained in the Johnston/Murren home in Upper Main Street for over one hundred years and was given by a grandson of Ned and Mary Johnston, the late Micheál Murren, to his friend Brian Flanagan of Ballindrehid to read. Following the passing of Brian in 2023, it was returned by Phyllis Flanagan to Eamonn Murren who passed it on to Annagh Magazine. Eamonn pointed out that a variation of the spelling of the family name Johnston is used in the letter.

TRANSCRIPT

Claim of Mrs. Mary Johnson, Upper Main Street, Ballyhaunis

I am the widow of Edward Johnson and reside in Upper Main Street, Ballyhaunis, with our two children where I strive to continue the business of grocery and egg dealing carried on for several years by my husband prior to his death on the 21st December, 1920. My husband had considerable trade in eggs and would buy any quantity a dozen, a score or hundred. He devoted all his time and energy to his business, calling at farmers' houses and small shops in the country districts within a radius of six or seven miles, travelling in a light spring cart constructed for the purpose and taking a different route each week-day. When the Black-and-Tans were let loose on this country it wasn't long until my husband became the object of their unwelcome attentions. Frequently on his rounds he was stopped and searched by these uniformed blaguards. Later, he was abused and threatened and on two or three occasions compelled to hand over his money to the ruffianly scoundrels. In course of time they called at our home when the threats were repeated by the bullies in a vain effort to extract information from my husband. Bravely he endeavoured to carry throughout and in spite of it all, and hampered and harassed as he was he succeeded fairly well in the beginning. It became increasingly evident, however, that his life was in great danger, and both his health and business declined at an alarming rate. He no longer deemed it sensible or safe to sleep at home o'nights, yet he did not actually go "on the run" but returned daily and went his usual way as far as health and the peculiar circumstances of the period permitted.

I remember the 16th October, 1920. My husband went down town accompanied by his brother-in-law. In a little over half an hour they returned, my husband walking unsteadily and supported by the other man. When the two entered the house I at once noticed the shocking condition of my husband. Hurriedly I prepared his bed and sent a messenger for the doctor. In the meantime, while waiting for the doctor, I rendered what first-aid I could. Dr. Andrew F. Smyth, Ballyhaunis, called shortly after and took charge of the patient. My husband told me that while walking on the public street Black-and-Tans rushed up to him and without warning struck him and knocked him down and kicked him repeatedly when on the ground. My husband never recovered from this savage attack and he died on the 21st December, 1920 barely two months after. There is no doubt whatever, in my mind that my husband's death was the direct result of the terrifying experiences of that nerve-racking period culminating in the ferocious attack of the 16th October, 1920 when the unfortunate man was, in the broad light of day, battered and kicked almost to death. Bereaved as I was in such sad and sickening circumstances and struggling to support my two orphaned children my own health suffered. Even yet, I am not fully restored to my former health and strength. I accordingly claim £5,000 compensation.

'HAVE YOU EVER BOUGHT BULLS EYES IN SARAH BRENNAN'S?'

Tom Finn

Sarah Brennan owned the first shop as you came into town from Carrowkeel. It was the first house in Waldron's Terrace and she sold bulls eyes and slab toffee by the pennyworth, if you had a penny. That was Ballyhaunis in 1944 when I started school at the age of six. World War Two was on and I was brought that first day by my mother, on the back of her bike, into the Convent of Mercy where I met, for the first time, nuns dressed all in black with big leather belts. To a child as young as I was, they were intimidating with strange sounding names such as Benignus, Borgia and Acquin.

The first foreign people I encountered were three American brothers whose father had been killed in the War. They arrived at the Convent, which must have seemed like another world to those boys at that time. We were in awe of their accents, hair-dos and fancy clothes. They smelled like a parcel from America.

I joined the 'big boys' in the Boys' School in second class, where we were taught by lay teachers for the first time. Everything seemed louder and busier than the Convent, where the nuns were more soft-spoken and gentle. The cane and six-of-the-best were part and parcel of our education, oftentimes being sent outside to select the very stick with which we were beaten. By that time, we were walking to school from Carrowkeel, carrying a schoolbag which normally contained our schoolbooks as well as our lunch and a bottle of cold tea, which was warmed beside the fire in the classroom. An odd bottle exploded now and then, creating excitement and a distraction from lessons. Each pupil had to supply fuel for the school, usually a load of turf, which my Dad would have brought to the school by horse and cart.

Work

At the end of sixth class, there being no free secondary education available, my options were limited. Work with my father on the land, take the boat to England or look for work in town. On the recommendation of the school



Patrick Finn (Lisbaun and Carrowkeel),
circa 1936.



Delia Finn (Lakehill and Carrowkeel), c1935.

principal, Bill Mulligan, I got a job working as a shop assistant in McGarry's. I started my working life on 23rd June 1953. My wages were 12/6 (twelve shillings and sixpence) per week and feed yourself. Ballyhaunis was then a hub of activity with almost fifty shop assistants working in all the various businesses in the town.

Working in McGarry's we had a lot of different responsibilities, which included working in the cinema and dance hall. We were paid separately for this work with the added benefit of free admission to both cinema and dance hall. I was always treated very well by the McGarrys and felt almost like a member of the family. I have fond memories of both Paddy and Teresa. May they Rest in Peace.

Entertainment

Let me take you back to Ballyhaunis of a Saturday night. The Cinema could have a couple of hundred people attending the pictures and The Eclipse Ballroom could have over a thousand people dancing the night away to show bands such as Maurice Mulcahy, Mick Delahunty and, in later years, the Royal Show Band. I worked in the mineral bar in the dance hall and ran the snack bar as well. Young people today would be amazed to learn that no alcohol was served in dance halls at that time. The dance halls also closed during Lent. The Parochial Hall would have a couple of hundred more at the cinema and in the highly popular Billiards

Club, plus over fifty licensed premises in the town at that time. The streets were thronged with people from midnight on, with law and order being kept by Sergeant Nally and his crew.

Of course, I couldn't write anything as a shop assistant without mentioning the Fair Day, which made life a bit more difficult for us as shop assistants. Once all the cattle and all the sheep were gone, we had to come out armed with buckets of water, scrubbing brush, yard brush and shovel, to make the shop front and the street presentable again. There would also be more business done and profit earned on fair days as people had cash

in their pockets, and if anyone owed the shopkeeper a few bob, they always paid their debts on the fair day.

Life goes on as it always does. I got married to Chris, and had a family of five: Laura, Austin, Rob, Trisha and Paul.

After 23 years working in McGarry's, I left in 1975 to open Finn Footwear on Main Street. That was a jump into the unknown for Chris and me, and a story for another day.

Right: Canon Joe Cooney P.P. and Tom Finn, taken on the morning the spire was put in place, 2000. Taken by Henry Madden (RIP).

Top right: Tom Finn at the snack bar in The Eclipse Ballroom, Clare Street.



Confirmation Day. Tom & Jimmy Finn (Carrowkeel).



Above left: Tom and Christina on their wedding day, April 1967 with their parents, Martin and Bridie Boyle (left), Brownsgrrove, Tuam, Co. Galway, and Pat and Delia Finn (right), Carrowkeel.

Above right Tom Finn and his mother Delia outside McGarry's, Main St., early 1960s.

Left: Pat Finn (Carrowkeel), Mick Finn (Leicester and Lakehill), Paul Finn (Main St.), throwing in the turf in Main Street, 1982.

BALLYHAUNIS CENTENARIAN IN COVENTRY

15th October 2024 was a memorable day for the Boyle family as we gathered in Coventry to celebrate the 100th birthday of Austin Boyle - the only surviving member of his generation.

Austin was born on 15th October 1924 in the family home in Ballinphuill, Ballyhaunis, the third youngest of a family of ten born to Austin Boyle and Bridget Brennan (formerly of Drimbane). He left Ballyhaunis at the tender age of twelve years when his sister Josie and her husband Paddy took him to England, where he attended school in Preston, Manchester for a couple of years.

He moved about between Ireland and England during the war years and eventually settled in Coventry in 1955. He worked in a few engineering companies – among them Renold Chains Ltd. (a small company then but now a worldwide business in twenty-three countries) and Standard Triumph motor company. From the mid-1960s he started his own property business and continued to work right up to his early nineties – retirement was never an option for him!

He married Audrey Land, a native of Coventry, in 1959 and they raised a family of five children. Sadly two of his daughters passed away at a young age, and his wife Audrey passed away in January 2020.

To celebrate the big birthday Austin was joined by his daughter Sarah and sons John and Martin, grandchildren Siobhán and Gareth, great-grandchildren Evie, Siena and Teddy, John's wife Sandra, Sarah's partner Stewart, and Gareth's wife Roxanne. He was also joined by his niece Mary Donnelly and her husband Jim, his nephew Austin Boyle and his wife Bernie, and his nephew Pat Maher who travelled from Ireland to celebrate the occasion along with his family and friends in Coventry.

Austin is in exceptionally good health and was delighted to achieve 100 years and have so many people celebrating with him. He is already looking forward to his 101st next year!



Left: Austin Boyle (seated) with his daughter Sarah and sons John (left) and Martin (right).

Four generations of the Boyle family: Austin (Snr.), his nephew Austin Boyle (left), grandnephew Fergal Boyle and great-grandnephew Keelan Boyle (right).



BALLYHAUNIS CROCHET GROUP

(FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE)

Tracey McDermott (Project Administrator)

Our Crochet Group was established in 2010. It grew out of an idea from a retired nurse who had just completed a beginner's Computer Course at the FRC and who expressed a desire for a weekly social outing. As she was skilled in the craft of crochet, we decided to set up a Crochet Group.

As there was no tutor involved, there were no additional costs and the women all helped and encouraged each other. Fourteen years later, our group continues to meet every Friday from 10am til noon. The group is open to all in the community. All you have to do is show up with your wool and your crochet hook. Recently we have had a lot of women join who also love to knit.

We are most grateful to the Mayo ETB for the vital funding that our group receives. Over the past fourteen years we have completed many projects including the wonderful piece of craftwork featured on the back cover of this Year's Annagh Magazine. This beautiful, framed example of our handiwork takes pride of place on the wall in the boardroom of the Friary House.

We have also made items for the residents of Brookvale

Nursing Home in Hazelhill where we frequently visit and chat with the residents over tea and coffee. We have also completed crochet blankets which were donated to the Mayo Roscommon Hospice and to the Marion House Respite Facility in Ballindine. Earlier this year we received a very generous donation of wool which was used to create crochet and knitted blankets that were donated to the Ava Nursing Home in Tooreen. We also have made lots of crochet and knitted articles including puppets, dolls, gloves, handbags and other items for Team Hope which helps vulnerable children overseas.

It's not all work, however, with our group. When we re-assembled after the Covid lockdown, we celebrated with a trip to Athlone and a cruise on the Shannon in a Viking longboat, followed by lunch and some retail therapy! The outing was subsidised by funding we received through the FRC. We also celebrated in style at our Christmas Party in The Dalgan Restaurant. In summertime we often go for lunch to foster the friendships and social connections that have been made through this wonderful group.



Ballyhaunis Knitting and Crochet Group. Clockwise, from bottom left: Kathleen Horkan, Eileen Rattigan, Anne Burke, Nadia Fahid, Margaret Allen, Marita Byrne, Denise Breslin, Tracey McDermott (Project co-ordinator), Margaret Fitzgerald, Rita Mooney, Helen Byrne, Mary Horan, Tina Kilduff, Susan Goldring. Photo: Sinead Mallee.

BALLYHAUNIS FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

Established in 2004 and based in the Friary House, the Ballyhaunis Family and Community Resource Centre is one of the 121 Family Resource Centres nationally, funded under the Family Resource Centre Programme. The organisation is a company limited by guarantee and is managed by a voluntary Board of Management.



It is impossible to look back over this 2024 year in the Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre without remembering Stephen Grogan, who passed away suddenly in August. For twenty years, Stephen served as Coordinator of the FCRC, from the beginning in 2004. Along with a talented dedicated voluntary Board of Directors he shepherded the centre's growth from two staff to the current staff level of fourteen. He oversaw the building and staffing of the pre-school, and the Greater Tomorrow Creche and served individuals, families and community groups who sought assistance and were often in need of support.

Vision

The vision of the Ballyhaunis Family and Community Resource Centre is of a strong, resilient, inclusive and empowered community informed by participation, social justice and collective wellbeing. With this in mind, the board underwent an extensive audit from our major funder, TUSLA. The few areas in which improvements were recommended continue to be addressed. In line with our vision and under the leadership of the chairperson of the board of directors, Tzyy Wang, we undertook to evaluate our current practices and policies, overseen by an external consultant and the report offered recommendations which will help guide the FCRC throughout 2025 and beyond.

The Family and Community Resource Centre continues to be a busy place and this year was no different. One of the success stories this year was the Adult Literacy for Life programme under Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB). In partnership with Home School Liaison Officers from Scoil Íosa and Ballyhaunis Community School, the FCRC engaged parents of schoolchildren in conversational English and arts/crafts classes, providing a pathway for adult learners in disadvantaged and isolated sections of the community. The FCRC was awarded an AONTAS Star award for providing adult learning initiatives that support social inclusion.

The FCRC has responsibility for the Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School which is a source of tremendous pride to everyone associated with the FCRC. It operates two different three hours sessions in the morning and afternoon for pre-schoolers from our community. The first steps in the development of a new pre-school building have been undertaken by the board and it's hoped further progress will be made in 2025. The Greater Tomorrow creche, located on the grounds of the Old Convent, is also an essential childcare facility operated by the FCRC.

In the lead-up to the local elections, there was a voter registration drive designed to communicate, in several languages, the importance for members of our international community to participate in casting their vote. Also, the FCRC, in conjunction with the Abbey Partnership, continues to offer a base for local community groups such as the Crochet Club, St. Vincent de Paul and Annagh Magazine, to meet. One such group, Le Cairde, organised this year's successful Cruinniú na nÓg 2024 on 10th June. The FCRC hosted the event for children in activities such as wand making, stone painting and song writing.

The Ballyhaunis FCRC is fortunate in having a dedicated Family Support Worker, Geraldine Glacken, who serves the needs of families in our community. The Common Sense Parenting course organised each year continues to bring a high uptake of parents who wish to improve their parenting skills in an engaging atmosphere. Play therapy and counselling are some of the additional services offered at the FCRC.

We strengthened our collaboration with Mayo Sports Partnership by continuing to host Tracy Cunnane as the Ballyhaunis Sports Hub co-ordinator. Ballyhaunis is one of two sports hubs in Mayo (the other is in Ballina) so we are privileged to have Tracy in town. She works tirelessly organising fitness and wellbeing activities for clubs and groups to ensure as many ages and abilities as possible live a more active lifestyle.

We continue to support groups in the community with their activities. The Men's Shed, Le Cairde, the Community Garden, the Sustainable Energy Community Network and the Abbey Pattern committee to name a few. Community and social services such as MABS, the money advice service, AA, and Mayo Women Support Services are just a handful of groups who anchor their services in the FCRC.

Thanks

Marie Jordan, one of the founding Board members, stepped down this year after twenty years serving on the Board. Marie's dedication, hard-work and professionalism over that time has been a huge inspiration to everyone associated with Ballyhaunis FCRC. We want to wish Marie well in her well-deserved 'retirement'. A huge word of thanks also to Jillian Marelich and Mairéad

Murphy-Damron who stepped down as a board members. We really appreciate the time that they volunteered for the good of the community.

As you can see, 2024 has been a busy, if at times difficult year, for everyone associated with the Family and Community Resource Centre. We will, however, continue to work for the good of the families and our community into the future.



A reunion of the Class of 1993, Ballyhaunis Community School, took place in January, 2024, in MacSiúrtáin's, Main Street.
Back, L-R: John Costello, Mark McCafferty, John Cribben, Shane Mooney, Martin Donohue, Liam Rochford, Michael Cameron, Ruairi Caufield. **Centre, L-R:** Sinead Lundon Scanlon, Sinead Osgood, Dee Hosty, Martin Finnegan, Bernie Flanagan, Anne Lenihan, Maura Birmingham. **Front, L-R:** Kathy Fitzmaurice, Nuala Higgins, Samantha Briody.



John Conway (centre), entertainment manager and former showband member was presented recently with a framed photograph of the Riviera Showband by two loyal fans, Eugene Freeley (left) and Seamus Mulrennan (right).



The most recent of Johnny O'Shaughnessy's murals brightening up The Square.

BALLYHAUNIS BABY GROUP

Lydia Biesty



From left: Paula Orozco and Gabriel McDermott, Sarah-Louise and Jack McDermott, Emma Herr and Gracie Mae Webb, Clare and Cillian Egan, Lydia and Jasmine Grace, Michelle Keane Hora and Áine Hora, Maggie Cruise Gledhill and Marcus Gledhill.

In February 2024, after finishing a course in Baby Massage with Tracy Curley, Michelle Keane Hora and I talked about missing our weekly meet-ups with the other mums.

Although the Parent and Toddler Group is a wonderful way of meeting up, we felt that there was need for a group for parents and babies aged up to twelve months. And this is how 'The Baby Group' was founded. We felt that the first year with your baby is a busy time, whether it's your first or your tenth. It was envisaged that the group would be a place for new and experienced parents to meet and share knowledge and support each other, while having a mug of hot coffee or tea, and treats too!

It became a lovely group of local parents meeting on Tuesdays from 10.45 to 12.45 in the Community Hall. Various people volunteered to come and talk to us including Darren Conlon from the Ballyhaunis Defibrillator Group who spoke about paediatric CPR/choking; Suzanne Carney, women's health physiotherapist; Abigail Warfield, yoga teacher; Clair Larkin, lactational consultant and many more. These speakers covered a wide range of topics and we are grateful to them all for giving their time and sharing their knowledge.

We were very grateful to receive funding from the Mayo Childcare Committee, with support from Samantha Cleary who leads the Parent and Toddler Group. We are so thankful for Samantha's help and

encouragement always. With funding, we were delighted to welcome Abigail Warfield who joined us to teach three weeks of Mother and Baby Yoga. Thanks for a lovely positive and uplifting time with our babies.

We were so delighted with the response and support for the group that we continued until the end of June. We had a summer party for parents and babies with their families. We would like to say a special thank you to David McDermott (CmC Photography) who came and took some beautiful photographs at our summer party. We took a summer break at the beginning of July.

Our group started back on the 24th September and we are lucky to have met some lovely new families.

I want to thank all the parents who supported the group in our first year. We look forward to meeting new parents to continue the Baby Group well into the future. Everyone is welcome to join us.





Emma Herr
and Gracie Mae Webb.



Lydia and
Jasmine Grace.



Cillian Egan.



Patrick Anthony Corrigan.



Aine Hora.



Aine Hora,
Emma Weldon, Jasmine Biesty.





Samantha Cleary

The Ballyhaunis Parent and Toddler Group is a group for parents and carers of children aged up to three years old. We operate on Wednesday mornings from 10-12 in the Community Hall, opposite the Parish Church, during term time. The group provides a safe place for babies, toddlers and their parents, grandparents or carers to play and socialise (tea, coffee and snacks are provided for all). Everyone is very welcome to join us!

The group has been very successful in the past year from September 2023 to June 2024. It has flourished with new families and a new baby group started in February 2024 under the leadership of Lydia Biesty and Michelle O'Hora.

The year started with many new faces and lots of babies joining the group, leading us to extend our baby area to cater for all these little cherubs. At the end of September 2023, we ran a First Aid course through the Irish Red Cross using funding awarded to us by Mayo Childcare Committee. It was attended by eighteen parents/carers from Ballyhaunis and the surrounding area. In December 2023 we were lucky enough to have the big man himself, Santa Claus, come and visit the babies and toddlers, bringing gifts of balls and books for the children and a voucher for a hot drink for the parents/carers from Village Farm in Hopkins' shop.



The new baby group started in February 2024 on the initiative of Lydia and Michelle who recognised the need for a group that catered for small babies and their parents, especially those who are first time

mothers. I want to say thank you and well done to them for taking the initiative and giving their time and energy to set up this group which is clearly needed.

As the year marched-on we made the decision to stay open during the Easter holidays rather than sticking to our term time dates which we usually follow and these sessions were well attended. An informal Easter egg hunt was run in a private garden for the families in the group who don't have access to their own garden. As the end of the school year approached we also had our annual end-of-year party and headed over to Rascal's soft play centre in Kiltimagh where much fun was had by parents and children alike.

Thanks

However, a group like this doesn't run without a lot of people making it happen so I'd just like to say thank you to just a few of them. We were lucky enough to have four transition year students from Ballyhaunis Community School join us throughout the year as part of their Community Care programme. This allowed us to run some simple art and craft activities for the older children and provided parents with an opportunity to catch their breath while someone else entertained their little ones. I'd like to say a big thank you to Violeta, Maria, Aoife and Niamh - it was a pleasure to meet them and work alongside them. Also, many thanks to Caitriona Rafferty in Ballyhaunis Community School who runs the project and arranged for the students to participate.

I also returned to work in September 2023 meaning that I was only available to run the group every other week. In my absence, Aoife Burke, Michelle Donoghue, Aoife McDonagh, Megan Mylie, Emer Tansey, Veronica Tobin, Janette Waldron and Trish Aherne stepped in to help out, and I want to thank them for their commitment to the group and for keeping it running as smoothly as ever.

The group restarted after the summer in September 2024 and as usual our clientele has changed as our older children have moved on to preschool, my youngest included. As a result, I'm now on my own countdown to leaving the group.

Support

This group has meant so much to me over those years, I first attended when my oldest was three weeks old and

I was finding motherhood very overwhelming. Being a newcomer to town, this group provided me with a support network outside my family that I desperately needed. I could meet with other mothers who understood what my life was like now and would hold my baby and tell me it would all be OK. As my children grew, this group provided a wonderful opportunity for them to socialise and be part of a bigger community and I have made wonderful friends with whom I'm still in touch. Parent and Toddler Group has been an important part of my life for over eleven years. My time leading the group will end at Christmas, so we're busy looking for the next generation of people to support the parents, babies and toddlers from our community. So, if you have a few hours to spare on a Wednesday morning and you think you would like to get involved, please do get in touch with us through our Facebook Page: Ballyhaunis Parent and Toddler Group.



James Donohue and Millicent Aherne.



James Donohue,
Shay Waldron, Luna Costello.



Laura Brogan Molyneux.



Páidí Kelly.



Seamie Waldron.



BALLYHAUNIS MEN'S SHED ASSOCIATION

Merrilyn Finn (Ballyhaunis FRC)

The Ballyhaunis Men's Shed continues to meet twice a week at the Friary Grounds, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10.00 to 11.30 am. The Shed is a cosy site for a cuppa and a chat. Jim Goulding is chairperson and he is joined by long term members John Kenny, Seamus Freeman, Con Boyle and Tim Regan. Stephen Grogan served as their secretary. His presence and assistance are sorely grieved. He was instrumental in grant procurement for improvements to the Shed and environs. One needed to bring to fruition, is a replacement for the pot-belly wood stove.

The group generously donated their handmade planters to the Community Council Bargain Hunt last October. These planters now adorn many lawns, bringing joy and beauty as can be seen from photos captured around town. Their makers enjoy remembering how they all came from one wooden pallet salvaged from pre-school renovation. They also donated new designs to the Community Garden under the leadership of Mo Dalton.

The Shed is well equipped and this talented group hopes new members will join them. There are skills to hand down and anyone interested in joining the group would be most welcome. Bring new ideas: it is never too late to learn. Some of the tools (especially hand-powered pottery wheels) need to come out of retirement, so come and join us!



Mo Dalton receiving planters made by group for the Ballyhaunis Community Garden. *From left:* John Kenny, Jim Goulding, Mo Dalton (Community Garden), Seamus Freeman, Con Boyle.



Above: One of the planters donated to Community Council Bargain Hunt in October 2024, which now adorn gardens in the locality.



Left: Cllr. John Cribbin officially opens the Ballyhaunis Mens Shed. *From left:* Seamus Freeman, Jim Goulding, Cllr. John Cribbin, John Kenny, Tracy McDermott (Family Resource Centre), Con Boyle, Stephen Grogan.

BALLYHAUNIS CHRISTMAS TRACTOR RUN

Kieran Jenkinson

The Ballyhaunis Christmas Tractor Run started up in December 2019. It was an idea put together by two transition year students, Shane Gavin and Shane Reidy. It was decided that the proceeds from the Tractor Run would be donated to Cancer Care West.

During the years 2019-23, a total of €5,501 has been raised by the Tractor Run, coming from the entry fees of the participants and the very kind donations from the members of the public who come out to support this very worthy event.

We would all like to extend huge thanks to everyone who took part in the Tractor Runs down the years, and those who helped out on the cold, dark December evenings. A special word of thanks to Santa for leading the Tractor Run through Ballyhaunis town on each occasion. Thanks also to Padraig Murphy and Enda Caulfield for all of their help and time, and to Gerry McLoughlin for organising and overseeing the smooth running of the event every year.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who came out and supported this very worthy event each time and gave so generously.

The 2024 Tractor Run will take place on Sunday, 22nd December with all proceeds this year going to The Mayo Hospice. We look forward to meeting old friends and new once again.

Go raibh míle maith ogaibh go léir.



Ballyhaunis Christmas Tractor Run has raised €5,501 for good causes since 2019.



David Fitzpatrick, Fundraising Manager, Cancer Care West, Galway (left) accepts the proceeds of last year's Christmas Tractor Run from Gerry McLoughlin (centre) and Kieran Jenkinson (right). Missing from the photograph is Shane Gavin.



AA Meetings (Alcoholics Anonymous)

For those affected by alcohol abuse, there are weekly AA and Al-Anon meetings in Ballyhaunis.

AA meetings: Fridays and Sundays at 8.30pm in the Family Resource Centre, Friary Grounds.

Al-Anon meetings, for families and friends of problem drinkers, are held on **Sunday evenings at 8.30pm in Scoil Iosa**. More information on www.al-anon.org.



Brackloon Boys
1963. Back, L-R:
 Jack Murphy, Mick
 Nolan, John
 McDonnell, Billy
 Lyons, John Ganley,
 Vincent Kedian.
 Front, L-R: T.J.
 Murphy, Leo Lyons,
 Paddy McDonagh,
 John Nolan.
*Courtesy of Mick
 Nolan.*

**Ballyhaunis Convent of
 Mercy, Leaving Certificate
 class, 1954.**

From left: Susan Melly (Upper
 Main St.), Una Freeman
 (Ballindrehid), Marie
 O'Connell (Devlis), Una
 Forkan (Tooreen), Margaret
 Neary (Brackloon North).
 These girls belonged to the
 first class of first years
 entering the new school in
 1950.



All from Devlis.

L-R: Deirdre Wall, Marie
 O'Connell, Dettie Kelly,
 Noreen Maleady. Taken
 outside Tooreen Dance Hall,
 1953.

*Photos courtesy of Marie
 Howard (née O'Connell),
 Sligo, whose family lived in
 Devlis from 1936 until 1960
 when her father, Garda Martin
 O'Connell, retired from the
 force and they moved to
 Galway.*





Croagh Patrick 2024.
Above: Classmates at top of The Reek, Oct. 2024. From left: Cormac Cleary (Clare Rd.), Eoin Butler (Doctor's Rd.), Denis Moroney (Abbeyquarter), Simon McCafferty (Doctor's Road) and James McGarry (Devlis).

L-R: Seamus Caulfield and Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P. at the summit of Croagh Patrick on Reek Sunday 2024.



Above: Pictured at a family gathering in August 2024.
Back, L-R: Bridie Ruane (Johnstown), Bridie Griffin (Manchester), Noreen Coggins (Granlahan).
Front, L-R: Sr. Mary Ruane (Castlebar), Mary Robinson (Henley).



Mrs. Katie Johnston (Knox St.), wishing her neighbour Yvonne Byrne (front) and Mayo team-mates well before leaving to play Waterford in the All-Ireland Ladies senior football final in October 1999. Included in photo are: Sinead Costello, Orla Casby and Diane O'Hora.



She then waited, all wrapped up, until three o'clock in the morning to welcome the victorious team back to Ballyhaunis with the Brendan Martin Cup. Mrs. Johnston was then within three weeks of celebrating her one-hundredth birthday, having been born 23rd Oct. 1899. Photographs courtesy of Margaret Johnston.

HAPPY 'ROCK & ROLL' DAYS - BACK IN THE DAY

This is an edited version of a recent comprehensive article by Mark Godfrey that appeared in the Western People. Further local details were supplied by John Conway to John's long-time friends and Riviera fans, Seamus Mulrennan and Eugene Freeley.

In 1971, a tall, gangly bass player called Phil Lynott stepped off a van in Salthill into the winter night. Carrying his bass guitar case, he sizes up the venue that he'll play that night, an aerodrome converted into a ballroom. Waiting for him at the door to The Hangar is John Conway, a twenty-three year-old Ballyhaunis man who, in the space of a few years, had gone from the family business in Bridge Street to running one of Galway's more storied venues. On arrival, Phil handed him his new single, 'Whiskey in the Jar', which was racing up the charts.

Phil Lynott took to the stage of The Hangar on 2nd December 1971 as part of the Thin Lizzy Tour. "The place was mobbed", John recalls. Months later, John was welcoming another big star in out of the wind, whipping in from the Atlantic shoreline. Rory Gallagher was accompanied to the venue by his tour manager, Belfast promoter Jim Aiken, a man arguably as well known in the Irish popular music industry as many of the performers that he promoted.



First fun-night on stage in the Parochial Hall in the mid-1960s. Included in the picture are John Conway (guitar), Michael Cameron (Din Joe), Tony Morley, John Cleary, Eamon Meath, John Cribbin, Pat Halpin. Seamus Mulrennan of Annagh Magazine would like to hear from anyone who can name the others.

How it all started

In the mid-sixties, John and a few local school pals including Pat Halpin, Ned Curley, John Higgins, as teenagers formed a group with no name, so local people called them the Boys Group. It was a fun thing, so they played in the Parochial Hall and got loads of local support. Time moved on and John got an offer to join the newly formed Riviera Showband. The lead singer was Shay Cribben. The Riviera played a selection of pop and country music. They played in all the top ballrooms, marquees and regularly toured the UK. They also recorded a number of hit singles. John was the keyboard player in the band.

Before John finished up with the Riviera, he did some research and saw that there was a gap in the market for good LIVE acts in Galway city. John wanted to move into the promotion side of the business. Having learned something of the business during his years as a keyboard player in the band of young Mayo musicians, he had built up valuable management contacts in Dublin. "There was a big student population that wasn't being served in Galway", he remembers.

The Promoter

John's plan was to become a full-time, professional promoter from day one. This was the only way he could see his new project working effectively. Before he moved to Galway, he organised and promoted some local marquee events. He wanted to be his own man, knowing well it could be a difficult path, and he said, "there were lots of bumps on the road". He drew on his learnings from the Riviera Showband days and the basic business skills learned from working in the family general store and toy shop in Bridge Street (where Apache Pizza is now located).

John went on to manage and run his own shows at several Galway venues, but the best known, most famous, was The Hangar in Salthill, which stood where today stands the Leisureland complex. The structure had housed Royal Airforce aircraft in Oranmore before the local council moved it into a Salthill park. John began promoting in Galway, March 1971. He faced very tough opposition from Seapoint, the leading ballroom in the West at the time. He said people thought he was mad taking on Seapoint, so John saw the potential for a different market, as Seapoint were booking a lot of older style showbands.

John believed the youth of Galway were ready to embrace a new breed of high-quality bands in all genres,

and decided to go for Pop, Irish Folk, Rock and a small few top Country bands. After doing a restoration job on the venue, The Hangar opened with a capacity for one thousand people. The opening night featured Red Hurley, a home-grown popstar with a superb voice, who was taking the limelight from Dickie Rock and whose talent John still rates highly. The Hangar continued to thrive until 1974 when it was demolished to be replaced by Leisureland. The authorities offered Leisureland to John to run, but he saw it as a leisure centre with swimming pool and not a live music venue, so he declined and moved on.

Showbands peaked in the 1970s making way for a new breed of rock groups, some of whom would launch international careers from venues like The Hangar. Thin Lizzy's management called John just after the band released 'Whiskey in the Jar' as a single in 1971. Timing was good as John had opened the venue in Spring 1971. "As time went by, word got out in Dublin and Belfast that I was the go-to guy in the West", said John. The Rory Gallagher appearance at The Hangar was booked by Jim Aiken, a Belfast based promoter, then in his mid-forties. He later brought major international stars like Bruce Springsteen to Ireland in the new era of stadium concerts and open-air extravaganzas on the hills of Slane Castle. Another Belfast manager contacted John to book in Horslips for Galway.

John's focus was on widening his venue range for Irish acts. He started a weekly dance series at Flannery's Hotel on Dublin Road featuring top pop bands like the Memories and building a solid business relationship with owner Frank Flannery, a Roscommon man who owned a few hotels and considerable property in Galway city. The two men hit it off very well. The dance series became very popular and lasted for years. John repeated the same formula in Limerick city with a weekly dance series in Greenhills Hotel. At this stage John was giving the same bands a lot of work so he was able to negotiate better deals.

Traditional music super group Planxty and the Fureys (of *Sweet Sixteen* fame) filled up Teach Furbo, now the Connemara Coast Hotel. John cut a deal and became a close friend of owner Bill Fuller, the Irish/American millionaire who owned a string of venues across America, UK and venues like the Crystal Ballroom off Grafton St., Dublin. Any issue John had trying to get Ireland's three leading bands to play his venues in



The Riviera Showband 1966. L-R: Kevin Maloney (Charlestown), John Conway (Bridge St., Ballyhaunis), Brendan O'Grady (Charlestown), Shay Cribben (Kilkelly), Gerry Foley (Charlestown), Patsy Haugh (Castlerea), Malachy Tiernan (Charlestown).
© Seamus Mallee Photographic Collection.

Galway ceased once he ran it by Fuller. Immediately, the number one singer, Ireland's Elvis i.e. Brendan Bowyer (of *The Hucklebuck* fame) who had been exclusive to Seapoint, agreed to play Teach Furbo for John. Bowyer's management could not say no to Fuller as he was Ireland's biggest showbiz entrepreneur who got Bowyer into Las Vegas. It turned out that Brendan Bowyer, a true gentleman, was one of the most genuine artists John had the pleasure of working with.

In 1978 John opened Galway's first licenced nightclub with bars, disco and live acts, attached to the small hotel he acquired beside Galway Golf Course. He styled it similar to the best clubs in Dublin with a lounge welcome entrance. John got all the necessary licences to operate the business and when his friend Bill Fuller had some problems with his bar's licence and had to close his bars, John was very happy to be able to extend his bar licence to Teach Furbo to keep Fuller's bars open.

After a decade in Galway John's first major expansion into Dublin brought him onto the covers of national newspapers bringing international tenor Josef Locke out of retirement to play the RDS. "One of the Dublin sound companies I knew, kept on to me about getting Locke, as they were convinced he would do the business and indeed they were right." Locke was a brilliant showman and great man to get publicity, so he worked closely planning a strategy with John to achieve a sell-out in RDS Ballsbridge. After John had him on RTÉ's Late Late show, they went on to do shows in Cork, Limerick and Galway.

In 1984 U.S. President Reagan visited Ireland and the government held a banquet in Dublin Castle so they asked John to produce a special Live Irish music event.

New business opened up from that event with leading industrialist Dr. Tony O'Reilly.

Later in 1996, John created and presented a festival of Irish Folk Music in Galway with the Dubliners and Paddy Reilly. The festival also included Liam Clancy in Summer Stage at the Town Hall Theatre Galway during race week in the city. After the show and back at the hotel, Liam asked John down to his Waterford home and recording studio where Liam had retired. Over dinner, hosted by Liam in Lismore, Liam opened up about the Clancy's story and probed John on how he would fit in on the modern Irish circuit. So

John assembled a number of shows for Liam and kept in regular contact. Liam was an incredibly passionate singer, poet and storyteller. There was, and still is, no one to equal Liam when he recited a poem or delivered a song; even Bob Dylan was blown away with him. He simply mesmerised the audience. Later, John set up UK tours for Paddy Reilly (of *Fields of Athenry* fame).

Adding a change of Scene

John's promoting wasn't exclusive to music. Through the 1990s, actor and mimic Dermot Morgan used to walk into John's kitchen in Ranelagh, South Dublin and put on the kettle. John liked to keep everything informal with artists he promoted. Dermot would do his mimic routine of Michael D. and Limerick Minister Noonan (Noono) in the kitchen for a test run! Absolutely hilarious! Those shows were booked just as 'Father Ted' was taking off, but Morgan made his name as the voice of Charles Haughey on the satirical radio show 'Scrap Saturday'. His impersonations of Albert Reynolds and Padraig Flynn as the hilarious 'Flynnstone' have held their value and today are YouTube gold.

Artists promoted over the years

The list of artists promoted by John Conway and his company over the years include: Phil Lynott & Thin Lizzy, Rory Gallagher, Liam Clancy, The Dubliners & Paddy Reilly, Planxty, Horslips, Dermot Morgan, Josef Locke, Niall Tóibín, Brendan Bowyer, Joe Dolan, The Fureys, Liam Reilly (Bagatelle), Red Hurley, Colm Wilkinson, Dolores Keane, Sean Keane, Johnny McEvoy, Christy Dignam & Aslan, Brush Shields, Bob Geldof, Clannad, Brendan Grace, Dickie Rock & Miami, The Memories, Roly Daniels, Billy Brown & The Freshmen,

HUGE CHARITY

FOOTBALL MATCH AND DANCE

(In aid of The St. Vincent De Paul Society and Swimming Pool).

The Jimmy Magee Radio & TV ALL-STARS

v.

The 1951 Mayo All-Ireland CHAMPIONS IN BALLYHAUNIS

ON MONDAY, AUGUST 11th, AT 7-30 P.M.

His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Cunnane, Archbishop
of Tuam, will attend and throw in the ball.

Rob Strong & Plattermen, Don McLean, The Three Tenors and broadcasters Larry Gogan, Mike Murphy and Gerry Ryan.

John organised a charity football match featuring the members of the 1951 All-Ireland winning Mayo team against the Jimmy Magee Radio and TV All Stars from Dublin. The game took place in 1970 on the GAA pitch on Clare Road, Ballyhaunis, now an industrial site. It came about after John approached Sean Flanagan, the 1951 Mayo winning captain who by then was a Government minister. "I knew Sean, who was from Tooreen, and ran the idea by him and he was happy to get the victorious

1951 team together". The match and dance afterwards were in aid of local charities.

After the dance, John invited the All-Stars and players, and many other people, back to his family home on Bridge Street, where his wonderful mother had a party arranged with food and refreshments for everyone. Jimmy Magee and RTÉ's Mike Murphy set up a Sports Quiz in the house and provided all the entertainment for the large crowd late into the night.

John remembers around that time late sixties, Ballyhaunis was a thriving business town with the lovely family run Central Hotel where all participants from the All-Stars and 1951 Mayo team assembled. John recalls how all business owners in the town always kept their shop premises immaculate.

Remembering Ballyhaunis reminds John how he found his promotional flair here at home before moving to Galway, where he promoted so many acts both here and abroad - back in the day!



John Conway (left) with President Michael D. Higgins.

KNOCKBRACK CRUSADES AND OTHER JOURNEYS

Noel Lyons

The memories grew out of the ground, like the barley on Vinegar Hill immortalised by Seamus Heaney, as I stood upon the Road Field in Knockbrack. I stood upon the history of my clan. Their pictures pouring through a crack of nostalgia like an old penny imprisoned between floorboards released to shine in their rebirth. The roots beneath my feet exclaimed their heritage and mine. The generations who wrote their signatures with ancient stones upon walls or beneath the soil in dolmen drains spoke to me. My grandfather Beartlaí Lyons was born in 1867, a year of rebellion against the British Oligarchy rather than their people. The rebellion was a failure in the conventional sense, yet it was a spiritual success in its proclamation of 'liberty for the serf', serving ambrosia and nectar to future Gods. Michael Davitt's failure at Chester Castle did not end his war against oppression, and my own people would benefit in time with regard to land ownership due to his efforts. My grandfathers' siblings would disappear into the tide of emigration upon the ocean of pain and separation, as they sailed the Atlantic storms in search of the bitcoin of a bygone age. There, they learned to feed the empty hands of home and fund future departures of their generation and the next. My research unfolds that some £600,000 was sent home by the Irish diaspora in the year 1860 alone, no doubt to feed the hungry and fend off hungrier landlords. Beartlaí spoke the ancient tongue of Inis Fáil and was, no doubt, one of the three-hundred pupils of the local 'murder machine' which churned its demise. Family folklore indicates that he did not speak the golden vernacular to his children much, but rather decided to prepare them for the boat of survival. Sister Dolores, the much-loved gaeilgeoir and múinteoir of my 1970s class, went in search of surviving language that was in local usage by our parents and grandparents. Alas, my only contribution to her crusade was a phrase my father used to unco-operative animals. *Marbhfháisc Ort*. I certainly understood it was not a blessing from the language of prayer and priesthood, but I didn't grasp its meaning fully. Through her laughter she refused to translate in front of the class as I explained, somewhat, its origin, but informed me privately that I knew both halves of its unkind combination. *Marbh* meaning dead and the *fáisc*, the rather unpleasant bind used to close the mouths of corpses.

School days

My father Bill Beartlaí was born in 1910, a year of fame for Lillian Bland who built and flew her biplane

into history. While my Dad temporarily dabbled with the joys of emigration, he returned home to hold the fort for future generations in turbulent and tough decades of economic and world wars, of both the hot and cold varieties. His crusade, perhaps the noblest one of all, in raising a family on a diet of De Valera and Catholicism. When I surfaced in 1962 there seemed a generation gap between the family generations as another proclamation of a new future was heralded. One day in the hayfield we called *Sean Garraí*, we were helping our Dad build these enormous cocks of hay when he stopped for a rest, we thought, as he gazed wistfully and knowledgeably at the approaching skies. He reached towards the earth and took a grip of the hay and started twisting a sugán rope which grew as it gyrated, taking on a snakelike vitality while seemingly attached to the Knockbrack earth. He then roped it over the cock to the southern side, affixing it to its twin to secure the embryonic creation to the ground against the tug-of-war storm that was about to visit. It seemed to epitomise his intrinsic connection to the land and his refusal, like so many previous generations, to surrender to the storms which could deprive them of home. Such attachment dances in my imagination on every return.

The Ballyhaunis of my youth was not as deprived of oxygen as former generations when the EEC pumped a transfusion of vigour and hope into our local economy. I recall my first years in the Convent National School under the tender care of three beautiful, gentle nuns: Sr. Carmel, Sr. Gabrielle and Sr. Rosario, and there are many golden recollections as they prepared us for the University of Emigration beside the graveyard, otherwise known as the Boys' School. My experience of music with Sr. Rosario was joyful as she used the Kodaly method, and we sang while she waved her magic wand in the Mayo colours for stop and go. She did accidentally knock over my bottle of cold, sugared tea in a corridor one lunchtime and showed the utmost consideration in sending me up to the Convent house for a replacement. It was a rather strange experience for me - like entering a flying saucer high on the hill, as a kindly nun refilled my bottle with a disconcerting, sour-tasting tea that looked the same but was devoid of sugar. I remember being rescued by George Delaney Senr. from the unkind attentions of an older pupil on my way home. He brought me into the shop and gave me penny sweets to salve my teardom. Such a lovely man who had played in an All-Ireland final with Mayo in 1916.

The Boys' School was a different delight of many other journeys of *bóthar agus bata*. I somehow survived the experiences in a silent, introverted bubble to reach St. Patrick's College which had the far more enlightened philosophy of 'thrive' rather than 'survive'. I was privileged to be a student of the Community School which introduced us to musicals, debates in Irish and English, and the publication of an annual school magazine. A holistic approach from very talented and creative teachers who possessed a sense of humour and the approach of a new age.

Teacher training

The Knockbrack sky witnessed eighteen circles of the sun by the time I hit the rocky road to the Dublin College of Education in Drumcondra. I had to complete interviews in Irish and English as well as a music competency exam prior to entry. I knew I would have to tackle a surprise question *as Gaeilge* in the midst of the English interview, but never expected it would come from a Kiltimagh source, *An tOllamh Uaitear MacGearailt*, who asked about Ballyhaunis folk. "*Is as Béal Átha hAmhnais tú?*" (You are from Ballyhaunis?). I answered in the affirmative easily. He then followed with his real question, no doubt based on his teenage travels to our sacred sod, perhaps on a visit to our GAA pitch. "*An bhfuil siad chomh fíáin 's mar a bhíodh siad?*" (Are they as wild as they used to be?). I struggled for a diplomatic response like a fish on a hook, unaware at the time of his delightfully provocative lecturing style. I responded knowledgeably while attempting to disassociate myself from the source of his displeasure with "*Cuid acu*" (some of them) at which he cackled with glee.

My three years in St. Patrick's College had a huge variety of wonderful occurrences and adventures. I made full use of opportunities in many areas such as sport, theatre, student politics and charity events. I performed onstage and offstage with Dublin Musical Society and other groups who hired the marvellous auditorium and involved students with such notables as Tony Kenny, Colm Wilkinson and Luke Kelly playing the lead roles. I also worked on the national finals of *Féile Scoil Drámaíochta* where schools from all over the country competed in a variety of plays and musicals numbering over forty productions *as Gaeilge* over a week in the annual finals. Our jobs as students involved lighting, make-up and set building from our vast resources inhouse. I recall two Mayo schools who received many accolades and punched above their weight against larger schools. These amazing teachers were *Séamus Ó Dubhthaigh as Achadh Mór* and *Seosamh MacGabhann as Chill Mobhí*. On one occasion, Séamus requested a meeting with our stylized make-up artist which we would have

immediately provided if we knew what it was. Several phone calls to the drama professor Peter O'Toole provided us with the necessary information and Séamus supervised our application. Our talented neighbours went on to win the All-Ireland title with an inventive production. Our most difficult set assignment was a request from Kilmaley N.S., Co. Clare, for a number of real evergreen trees which we acquired from the back of the football field as President Hillery kept all the staff busy during the opening ceremony. They too were winners with a very realistic looking set highly commended.

The world of Ballymun in the early 1980s was a far different cry from my teenage garden in Ballyhaunis, so there was little preparation for the realities of the high towers built in the 1960s to replace the infamous tenements of the inner-city slums. They were built without community infrastructure such as schools, shops etc., and created new problems where crime, poverty, drug abuse and chaos reigned. My initial task with the St. Vincent de Paul involved visitation and social work support for struggling families. I later became president and administrator for our college chapter. It showed me how privileged we were in Ballyhaunis, even on the small farms that fed and heated our homes, along with the opportunities to advance into education and work, which did not exist in Ballymun. Our volunteers could be assailed by cigarette butts and other objects thrown from the heights and, on one occasion, a dog was dropped from above. The lifts never worked and there could be fifteen flights of stairs to the uppermost apartments of the towers, each named after our heroes of 1916.

Treasury Department

I was elected to the Student Union executive in 1982 and became one of the eight students responsible for financing over forty clubs and societies including St. Vincent de Paul and GAA. We were also the political voice of our students and met with authorities inside and outside the campus on many issues. Nobody wanted the boring treasurer's position and I had it thrust upon me, not realising that it was the most important and powerful position with an annual budget of over £100,000 in this small college. Needless to say, the GAA and St. Vincent de Paul had never been better funded. I learned too of the games of government and opposition and how they could simply switch roles upon an election. I had the pleasure of confronting the then Taoiseach, Garret Fitzgerald, at a private meeting about student issues and, after the usual promises, we received no return communication. I am sure he had greater matters to attend to. His security guard scowled repeatedly at the two of us for asking obvious, cheeky questions as if we were children playing political

power brokers, which we probably thought we were. His own party members from amongst student and staff gave him a far more torrid time at a public meeting on campus. I also had a private meeting with the infamous leader of the opposition, Charles Haughey, who oozed charisma and, for whatever misgivings history may portray, had the gift of making whoever he spoke to feel important. He asked where I hailed from and he spoke of Ballyhaunis as if he had lived here. He inquired about locals such as the Minister Waldron, John O'Dwyer, Joe Grogan, Joe Hosty and several others from his vast memory bank, and later followed up in detail about trivial yet important student issues such as medical cards, college grants and qualification advancements.

The treasury department of the SU had to take over the running of the entertainment section due to the illness of another executive member and the importance of the income. I had to organise discos, concerts and dances like the Rag Ball and Graduation Ball. I dealt with Andy Creighton from Claremorris in hiring such acts as Brush Shields and The Memories for events. Other talents who performed for us included Jimmy Crowley and Luka Bloom. The only act which almost lost us money had a Ballyhaunis connection. Christy Moore was a big star on the Dublin scene and growing nationally. I fixed an exorbitant price with his management and hoped for a huge crowd on a Thursday night. We didn't achieve our expectations but his show was excellent. We chatted afterwards and when he heard of the Ballyhaunis connection he more than accommodated our loss. We laughed at the repeated interruptions of the not most rhythmical hand clapping which disturbed his equilibrium and put him off as he requested silence to allow his lyrics to be heard. The guilty party of four, who he advised not to rely on the rhythm method, were all from Ballyhaunis. He had a hearty laugh and spoke of many nights spent performing in the Dolly Morley Music School in Knox Street while he worked in the local bank.

Underage Football

While I was still in student mode, a Ballyhaunis underage Gaelic Football team were making history. The year was 1983 and the team was an under-15 seven-a-side squad who won their first county title in the new *Óg Spórt Gaeil* competition. They thus became the first Ballyhaunis team to represent their county in an All-Ireland competition. They were managed by Micheál Murren and Gerry Lyons and won the right to spend a week in Gormanston College playing in the final rounds of the national competition. Gerry was, at the time, working as an engineer in a very progressive international company and was

quietly making waves of his own with new advancements developing inroads into the United States and European markets with their Irish designed and manufactured paint tinting and mixer machines, challenging the best in the world. He was unable to travel with the under-15 squad to the finals and brought me on board in his stead. We stayed in dorm facilities where sleep could sometimes be a difficult achievement as our comedians seemed to find energy for jokes and laughter, when under the covers, that would rival 'Live at the Apollo'. Haughey would say, "C'mon now lads, ye need some sleep for tomorrow", or some other wasted epithet, yet his duvet would be rolling in waves of laughter as, when silence would just begin, Ray Sloyan or Brian Murray would again start up, "Did you hear the one about the Kerryman..." It takes a very special team to win any county title and this team oozed class. Paddy Phillips in goals epitomised this, as did Vincent McNamara, Ray Sloyan, Gerry Winston, Neil Cruise, Val Byrne, Joe Keane, Joe Joe Webb, Brian Murray, John Gale, Ja Henry and Noel 'Doc' Phillips. The week of competition saw the All-Stars visit and play an exhibition match, so we got to meet many of the great Dublin, Kerry, Offaly and Mayo stars up close like Jack O'Shea, Matt Connors, Willie Joe Padden, Pat Spillane and Brian Mullins. The overall coach who was the man in charge was Mickey Whelan, the Dublin GAA force of many decades, and he brought the mentors in for the Whelan Coaching treatment every evening. He was not just the greatest coach but also teacher that I ever met. I used many lessons learned here to bring several county titles home in later years. Whelan was and still is an amazing force in sporting terms, and influenced many more recognisable managers including Heffo, O'Dwyer and Eugene McGee. He is still actively promoting the modern game in Dublin circles and has influenced many aspects of coaching in use today. I remember him playing in Gormanston, and he stood out amongst All Stars too. He was a huge muscular guy who had all the appearances of a gym and weights frequenter. He commented on Ray Sloyan's physique while attending him for an on-field injury as referee saying, "You have strong muscles for a fifteen year-old". Sloyan responded with a Brackloon weights technique comment, "You would have muscles too if you were forking silage morning and evening."

Drama

The first play I witnessed was in the Boys School where Mike 'Ho chi' Byrne stole the show and, I guess, sowed a seed of future dabblement for me. I also remember a production of 'Professor Tim' in the Scouts Den where Jim Higgins played the title role in

outstanding fashion. Seamus Durkan produced many plays in the Den. He had fabulous settings as he tackled masterpieces such as 'Knocknagow' by Charles Kickham with a huge cast and challenging set demands. He picked his cast geographically with a sure audience of neighbours, relatives and friends guaranteed, if only to see the unscripted shenanigans as the cast played mischievous games on one another onstage. Noel Dalton was drafted after Mass one Sunday to play an auctioneer that night in 'The Field' by John B. Keane, and was assured that simple unrehearsed script issues would be solved with the page on the lectern in front of him which he only had to read. Plain sailing... and what could possibly go wrong? So, he accepted the role. It was there on the night, but an eager set painter had upgraded the lectern during the day and the wet paint had soaked through the pages, leaving Noel to sail the uncharted waters of ad-lib. It wasn't as though the job was impossible, I guess, as long as he sold the field to the Bull McCabe, otherwise the plot would have to take an unusual twist. Joe Greene was another talented thespian who was never too worried about the banal script of the original author and planted a script in a dresser drawer on the stage for reference during the performance. It worked for him until the final night where he opened the drawer to find a note in place of the script stating simply, "You are on your own tonight." On another occasion, Jack Greene awaited the cue prompt of a cannon shot that didn't arrive on time. He asked his Uncle Joe, as he used to call his namesake Giuseppe Verdi, and to alert the wingmen to their tardiness, "Did you hear a cannon?" Giuseppe replied, "No, I didn't hear a cannon", so he was not exactly helpful in covering the faux pas. Jack was not giving up easily and responded, "I was sure I heard a cannon." Joe was enjoying himself too much to let him off the hook that easily and again replied in the negative. The cannon boom finally arrived and Jack nonchalantly replied to it with, "I knew I heard a cannon."

Going on-stage

I found out that going onstage with your friends was like going to war. You were in the trenches together and the call would come to go over the top and that was it. Whether prepared or not, there was no choice. I tread the boards on the Community School stage first in a Walter Mitty type sketch under the directorial watch of Fr. Des Walsh, playing the role of a gestapo officer. Sam Glynn, a thespian of note both on and offstage, was my first critic when he reflected that he didn't know if I could act, but I had a great pair of lungs as I possibly could be heard downtown. This did not deter me as I auditioned for a role in 'Calamity Jane', the first musical on the new stage. The pretty

and the musical students took the leads and I was cast as Rattlesnake the stagecoach driver. Now, I had driven an ass-cart, a horse-cart and even went joyriding on a Raleigh bike where I overtook a Massey Ferguson down Cruise's hill in youthful exuberance, but never in my life had I driven a stagecoach. Fr. McMyler was not impressed by my driving or rather braking skills as I bled every meaning out of every syllable such as "Whoa-ah". He responded with his usual humour: "Say 'WOE', you wretch, there is no 'Ah' at the end". I politely informed him there was an 'A' at the end of whoa on the script but he wasn't for turning. Eamonn Murray and Joan Connell carried the show into history with amazing singing and acting performances. The following year I played the role of the lecherous Lord Brockhurst Snr. in 'The Boyfriend' where "I boop-a-dooed" with the gorgeous and talented Finola Morley. I later would play my own son in the same production with Ballyhaunis Musical Society where I was, at times, lost for words with laryngitis and John Aldridge filled in vocally. My first violent accident happened in 'The Year of the Hiker' under the baton of Pat Doyle. The Hiker, played by acting genius Tony Carney, switched my hands for a mild strike in a fight scene near the end for dramatic effect, and boy did we get it as onstage he forgot the turn and direction of its approach. His nose met my palm in a head-on collision, to pardon the pun, and the blood started pouring profusely and wouldn't stop. The wags at the back of the Parochial Hall thought it was new-style Hollywood magical blood packs. Kit Keane would later inform me, with comments she heard such as, "Wouldn't you swear it was real."

1994 Was the year of an intercounty production of the Mayo/Galway/Sligo Drama League of Ireland with the leaving cert play 'The Playboy of the Western World' directed by Ray Leonard. The production was a mammoth task from auditions to bookings for the twenty-five performance tour of Connacht /Ulster including venues in Louisburg, Westport, Claremorris, Ballyhaunis and Ballyshannon, with a double in Backstage Longford and five shows in *An Taibhdhearc* in Galway. There were no fewer than four Ballyhaunis actors in the mix. Frankie Ralph O'Malley played the Widow Quinn, Tony Carney was Old Mahon, the crazy, violent father of the Playboy, Christy, whom I played, with Finola Morley Mellotte as Sarah Tansey, one of the delightful temptresses in the plot. Ray Leonard opted for a farcical violent interpretation which involved amazing but challenging stunt work. There were no fewer than fifty-six blows struck on the poor playboy by his insane father in each performance. Now remember the hiker's nose a few years before, but onstage we trust. Apart from the simulated kicks and slaps, including a lifting 'kick' that propelled me

through the air some twenty feet from upstage left to downstage right, Old Mahon's weapon of choice was a stick one metre long, wrapped in insulating tape and painted over. The diameter was well over a half inch. Tony frightened the bejaysus out of front-row spectators including a gaggle of nuns in Louisburg, leaving some in tears. The taping of the stick was not to lessen the blows but to prevent it from breaking onstage. He had four sticks backstage in case of emergency. I saw him on the wings one night taping furiously and foolishly enquired. He stated, through delicious laughter, that he had broken two of them already, but assured me it would be OK because he was taping them together. I often went home black and blue

after rehearsals where my beloved wife was in shock and threatening to lambaste Ray Leonard. I would respond by saying, "talk to your father, he's the one with the stick". There were fifty-six blows in each performance, so with rehearsal counts I estimate he whacked me over two thousand times. My good wife could say today that it wasn't half enough.

The memories and faces still dance like newborn spring flowers but I must return to honour them in word to give them immortality some other time. Ballyhaunis roots, like their abundant local hazel cousins, run deep. Their hold upon the heart and soul an entrenched grip.

The Red and The Green of Mayo

Two brothers met at a crossroads.
They stopped there to talk about life.
One said, "I'm stayin' to fight in this game"
The other went home to his wife
He said, "Why must you feed this obsession
When it's safer to stay than to go?"
"What do you mean 'You must follow this dream'
Of your Red and your Green of Mayo?"
He said, "Our children have sailed broken waters
Some have died in the sighs of their grief
What we teach to our sons and our daughters
Is to rise on the tide of belief."
Our fathers were stretched by the rack-rents
In hunger with nowhere to hide
From the village of Straide a voice it was raised
Michael Davitt was there by their side.
He said, "We will teach them of Boycott
And together will let the world know
That we stand up together like sister and brother
We're The Red and the Green of Mayo."
For our children have sailed broken waters
Some have died in the sighs of their grief.
What we leave to our sons and our daughters
Is to rise on the tide of belief.
And whenever we sail into Croke Park
Or wherever in the world we may go
We stand up together like sister and brother
We're the Red and the Green of Mayo

- Noel Lyons

Nicknames in Ballyhaunis of Old

From Ballyhaunis town of long ago
I remember The Gunner and Din Joe.
Captain Lyons and Dalgan too,
Yank Phillips' pub in shades of blue.
Kojak, Darby and Donegal,
Well-known characters, one and all.
Doc Healy, Toto and his cousin Bo,
Footballers all, I'm sure you know.
Short, Dolly, Baa and Biggie,
The Minister, Ho-Chi, not forgetting Twiggy.
Fitzer, Haulie, and also Prender,
Anymore I can't remember.

- Willie Cribbin, Knockanarra and Navan, Co. Meath



Martin Brennan (Gurteen) pictured beside the townland sign for another Gurteen - on Clare Island, earlier this year. Courtesy of Adrian Mulrennan.

COMMUNICARE CELEBRATES TWENTY YEARS IN BUSINESS

As Summer 2024 drew to a close, employees and friends of the Ballyhaunis-based Kelly family gathered in Cong to mark the twentieth anniversary of their healthcare business, Communicare.

Communicare was founded in Dublin in July 2004 by Ballyhaunis native, Rosaleen Kelly. A psychiatric nurse by training, Rosaleen had spent the previous fifteen years operating a successful alternative health clinic from her home. In 2004, she saw an opportunity to bring together her nursing background and her experience in business to create a healthcare agency supplying qualified nurses and carers to work primarily with older persons in private homes, nursing homes and hospitals in the greater Dublin area.

Rosaleen was assisted in the early years by her daughter Sarah, who worked with Communicare on and off while studying to be a solicitor, and later by her son Mark, who followed his mother into nursing, and both of his parents into self-employment. She has enjoyed consistent support and invaluable input throughout from her husband, Michael.

Over the past twenty years, Communicare has expanded into the area of paediatric homecare, providing nursing care to children with complex health needs in their own homes all across the country, and more recently into social care, building and operating a number of HIQA-regulated residential and respite facilities for adults and children living with disabilities. Communicare now employs hundreds of people from Ireland and abroad, and coordinates its services from offices in Claremorris, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Tullamore.



Communicare's three company directors, from left: Sarah, Rosaleen and Mark Kelly.



The Kelly family on stage with MC Gerry Glennon (of MWR fame).
From left: Sarah, Rosaleen, Gerry Glennon, Michael and Mark Kelly.





Communicare management and staff gathered to celebrate their twentieth anniversary.



80TH BIRTHDAY

Above: Joan Biesty from Pattenspark celebrating the occasion of her eightieth birthday in January 2024 with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. **Standing, L-R:** Dorothy Biesty, Aisling Biesty, Shauna, Alisha, Austin, Lana, Alan, Marian Biesty, Diarmuid Byrne, Clodagh Byrne, Matthew O'Reilly, Sinéad Earley, Zoe Earley, Vincent, Catriona, Helen Biesty, Mike Byrne. **Seated, L-R:** Aoife, Joan, Emma Biesty, Helena Byrne and Amelia Earley.

Left: Pictured on her recent visit to Ballyhaunis from Boston was Patsy Teehan, formerly Biesty from Pattenspark (front right) and her daughter Siobhán Joyce. Clockwise from left: Joan Biesty, Marian Biesty, Siobhán Joyce, Helena Byrne, Eileen Lynch, Maura O'Dowd, Patsy Teehan.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

PROMPTED ON PERUSING ANNAGH 2023

James Cribbin

All work can be done the easy way, and I am going to try to write an article the easy way too. No time-consuming research work or anything like that. I am going to thumb through last year's issue of 'Annagh', select photographs that tell stories to me and use the biro to put them down on paper.

Starting with many photographs of the President of the Annagh Magazine Society, Joe Keane, celebrating his one-hundredth birthday, all of which belie his age and he looking like a man just returned from a three decade vacation in *Tir na n-Óg*. My earliest memories of Joe are from an FCA field day in Swinford, and in his workshop, shortening the legs of trousers I had purchased from his near neighbour, Willie Murphy. I was not in the long queue that congratulated him last year, but am making amends by congratulating him reaching another great milestone of one hundred and one years.

Accompanying an excellent article by Riona Hughes entitled 'Our Father Pdraig Hughes' are five photographs of the man I, and many others, knew as Pat. I read it more than once and will now recall my earliest memory of him. Shortly after I finished national school, I became aware of an excursion train to the Spring Show in Dublin. The urge for adventure clicked in. I would go to the Spring Show. It would be my first time on a train, my first time across the Shannon, my first time in Dublin. On the day, arriving at the railway station in Ballyhaunis, I knew nobody on the platform. There was a group of boys my own age there in the company of an adult wearing a hat. Probably noticing that I was out of my depth, he called, "Hi, young fellow, are you going to Dublin? Come with us". From being a loner about to board a train to somewhere strange and new, I became part of a group of students from the Vocational School on an excursion to the Spring Show that had been organised and was guided by the Headmaster, Pat Hughes – the man with the hat. Riona tells us in her article that when he had died, "a light went out in my life". She was not alone, for the Guard of Honour drawn from the Young Farmers Club and the Show Committee that accompanied Pat to his final resting place, lights were also going out. The Young Farmers Club and Show struggled on for a while, but with the guiding light extinguished, they faded away.

For those of us who were involved with Pat during the glory days the great memories we have of him never faded away. I cannot finish without quoting a line from Riona's article: 'Every blade of grass and hazel nut was

ours to discover'. I am sitting again listening enthralled to a lecture on science given by Pat at a meeting of the Young Farmers Club. For the purpose of the lecture he had placed a blade of grass under a microscope and asked each one of us to look and tell what they saw. The answer that impressed Pat the most was, "It looks like brickwork". "That's a very good answer", he replies and goes on to tell that a blade of grass and everything else is made of tiny 'bricks', call them cells or atoms of whatever you like. The blade of grass contains water and the tiniest drop imaginable is itself built with three 'bricks', two of hydrogen and one of oxygen, with water being described in science as H₂O.

Forgery?

Back in 1981, I took a mid-term break and went to Australia. A picture of Brod Boyle recalls me returning and telling him that I had a photograph of myself taken that could have been taken outside his forge in Ballinphuill. He would like to see it. One Sunday, Brod was with the crowd that stood chatting outside the Friary gate after Mass. I handed him the photo. Brod, never a man to miss an opportunity to have the crack, passed the photograph around, asking the question, "Isn't that a good photograph of my place?" Of all those present, just one man, the late Mike Coen of Lecarrow, spotted a discrepancy, "There's no footpath outside Brod Boyle's forge". Brod put the photograph in his inside pocket.

He indicated that we have a drink across the road in Paddy Delaney's. Halfway down our drinks Brod, winking at me, handed the photograph to me asking the same question he asked at the Friary gate. I was loud and lavish with my praise. Having attracted the proprietor's curiosity, Paddy leaned across the counter and took the photograph and, after giving it a good viewing, remarked, "I didn't think you were that bald, Brod".

I should explain that the photograph showed a blacksmith shoeing a horse, with the horse's leg clamped between his thighs, head bent down, hammer in one hand, the other hand placing the shoe on the hoof. I, with my back to the photographer (who was my sister Monica), looking on. I was not seeing something new and strange; I had seen Brod shoe horses scores of times. Indeed, I had seen my father redden a horseshoe in the kitchen fire, rush out to the stable and, with seven horseshoe nails, attach it to the horse's hoof.

Paddy has reached across the counter and, to check the condition of Brod's hair, has raised his hat. Surprise,

surprise the hair style of the two blacksmiths were almost identical. "One further question", pointing me out, "Who is that fellow?". Brod, quick off the mark, "That's Mick Webb's son down in Limerick. Keeps horses. Can't get a man to shoe a horse for love nor money down there". When we met again, we talked about the successful photographic exhibition, even toyed with the idea of holding another one, but the march of time caught up with us. Now, in the words of song, 'Alone I am left to tell the tale and praise them while I can'.

Full Circle

This photograph shows two brothers holidaying in the Blue Mountains in NSW, Australia. For me, it winds the clock back sixty years and I ploughing the field in the company of a flock of nosey cows and noisy seagulls. In the distance, I notice somebody running in my direction. He enters the field where I am working. Continues running, waves a hand at me as he speeds past, runs the length of the field, hops the boundary fence into Paddy Waldron's and disappears from view. (I still call it Paddy Waldron's although Paddy is dead since 1947). His memory lingers on. The runner is up-and-coming athlete Frank Greally on a cross country run, limbering up for a future track and field event.

When Frank hangs up his athlete's shoes, he becomes a journalist, starting a magazine called 'The Irish Runner' which, as far as my knowledge goes, is still running. He also published an autobiography called 'The Full Circle'. Knowing many of the people named, I found it hard to put down once I started reading it, one character in particular attracting my special attention. He just names him Tommy. I knew Tommy as well as Frank did. He was a bully for a while. As time went by, Frank, on account of his dedication to sport and athletics became fit and fearless. As recorded in his book, he meets Tommy on a memorable occasion on the road and Tommy, thinking 'business as usual', impedes Frank's right to pass. Frank makes a stand, as a result of which the bully gave Frank a wide berth for ever after. Another full circle.

I have a postscript to add. I was in 'The Horseshoe' in Abbey St. having a drink with a few friends shortly before the towel was put up for last time. Coming from the end of the counter a customer, who had been alone for some time, approached our group and called me by name. He did not engage with any of the others in the group, nor did anyone appear to know him. Neither did I. Because he knew me, I got to thinking that I should know him. I held a mental identity parade of all the boys in my class at school and in the classes above and below and others from different situations, but I could not place the strange face. When he left to go to the men's room, I made an enquiry if anybody knew who he was.

Just one ventured a surname which switched on a red light. He was a long forgotten old acquaintance who was never called to mind until I read about him in 'The Full Circle'. When he returned, I asked him if he could remember the last time we met. "No, it was a long time ago". I politely reminded him that the last time we met, I was afraid of him, giving a few details to jog his memory. Without confirming or contradicting anything that I said, his only response was, "I am an old man now". The last I saw of him was his back as he walked out and closed the door behind him.

Pilgrimage

There are two people in this photograph: Frank Greally and his brother Tom. If Frank was indirectly involved in closing one door, his brother Tom was directly involved in opening another - a convent door. His mother, on hearing I was going to Australia, handed me his address there and asked me to give him a call.

As I crossed Sydney Harbour to visit him in Manly, the famous bridge was greatly decorated with flags and bunting. The fiftieth anniversary of its official opening was being celebrated at that time. When I was in Tom's apartment, he went to the fridge and handed me a cool bottle of beer. It was more than welcome after a long walk. During the long conversation I had with him I said I had the address of a convent in Manly where a cousin of mine was a nun. When he told me he would drive me there it was as welcome as the bottle of beer. Hiking around a strange city is not for the faint hearted. Asking for directions at every street corner will get you to your destination in the end. Or you may come across somebody as helpful and economical with words as the pedestrian asked by the pilgrim driving through Ballyhaunis, "Do you know the way to Knock?" The pedestrian answered, "I do", and continued walking on. If I had not been driven there, I would have passed the convent by. The entrance not at all like the one in Abbey Street at the time, with its cut stone pillars and ornate wrought iron gates and walls extending on both sides. Near the entrance, a nun was mowing the lawn. Here was an opportunity for directions to be asked. I was within speaking distance when she stopped the lawnmower and called my name. I don't know which of us was the most surprised!

She told me I was the first person from 'the old country' that ever visited her since she arrived here. We talked about the past, the present and she even hinted at the future hoping that I would not lose the faith and that we would meet again. We never did. I was not aware that she had returned to Ireland until I heard that she had spent her final days in a convent in Cork.

PRIVATE BILLY KEDIAN

A HERO'S LEGACY – FROM BALLYHAUNIS TO LEBANON

Sgt. Major Seamus Gannon (Retd.)

Billy Kedian was a man of unwavering bravery, selflessness, and a deep love for his country and his comrades. Born and raised in Moneymore, near the close-knit town of Ballyhaunis, Billy grew up surrounded by family, friends, and a community that held him in high regard. His life was marked by a spirit of service—first to his homeplace and later to his country as he joined the Irish Defence Forces. This decision would ultimately lead to his untimely death in Lebanon on 31st May 1999, but not before his act of heroism saved the lives of fourteen comrades.



Pte. Billy Kedian (1977-1999).

Growing Up in Ballyhaunis

Billy's early life was defined by warmth, camaraderie, and a deep connection to the local community. His friends and family remember him as a lively, compassionate boy who always put others before himself. Billy's kindness and support were constants in the lives of those around him. These qualities would ultimately shape his decision to serve in the Defence Forces.

Answering the Call to Serve

In his late teens, Billy followed his sense of duty and joined the Irish Defence Forces, driven by a desire to serve and protect. His role as a soldier was a natural extension of his personal commitment to helping others. In October 1997, he was deployed on his first overseas mission as part of the Irish peacekeeping force under the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Ireland's involvement in Lebanon, aimed at maintaining peace in the volatile region, offered Billy an opportunity to make a meaningful difference. He was committed to the mission, embracing the challenges and responsibilities that came with it.

Tragedy in Lebanon

On 31st May 1999, while serving on his second tour of duty, Billy was stationed at an Irish outpost in Southern Lebanon, known as call sign 6-42. The post came under intense mortar fire from the Israeli-backed South Lebanese Army (SLA). In the midst of the attack, Billy displayed extraordinary courage, risking his own life to lead his fellow soldiers to safety. His bravery saved the lives of fourteen comrades, but tragically, he lost his own in the process.

The news of Billy's death sent shockwaves through Ballyhaunis and across Ireland. His sacrifice, in the name of peace and duty, left an indelible mark on his family, friends, and community. It also ignited a movement to ensure that his heroism would not be forgotten.

A Campaign for Recognition

Despite Billy's selfless actions and the lives he saved, his bravery has yet to be formally recognised by the Irish Defence Forces. A group of Billy's closest friends and supporters has taken up the cause, pressing for official recognition. They have met with several public representatives and

presented their case to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, advocating for Billy to be posthumously awarded the Military Medal for Bravery, Ireland's highest honour for exceptional courage. This campaign not only seeks to honour Billy's legacy but also underscores the sacrifices made by Irish soldiers on dangerous missions abroad. His friends and supporters believe that his heroism on that fateful day in Lebanon deserves national recognition, and their efforts continue to raise awareness of his brave actions.

Memorial and Air Ambulance Plans

In July of this year, Billy Kedian's memory was honoured with the unveiling of a memorial in his home townland of Moneymore, Ballyhaunis. The memorial, erected by the Friends of Private Billy Kedian, stands as a lasting tribute to his courage and sacrifice. The unveiling brought the entire community together, reflecting their deep respect for Billy and his family. It is a place where future generations can learn about his heroism and the ultimate sacrifice he made for his comrades and his country.

Looking ahead, plans are also underway to build an Air Ambulance Heli-pad in Ballyhaunis, named in Billy's honour. This ambitious project would provide vital emergency services to the region, continuing Billy's legacy of saving lives. However, the construction of the Heli-pad will require significant funding from both the local community and government. The initiative is a fitting tribute to Billy's life - one dedicated to protecting and helping others.

A Hero Remembered

Private Billy Kedian's life may have been tragically cut short, but his legacy lives on. His bravery in Lebanon, his ultimate sacrifice for his comrades, and the deep love of his community ensure that his story will never be forgotten. The memorial in Ballyhaunis and the ongoing campaign to recognise his heroism with the Military Medal for Bravery are powerful reminders of Billy's courage, loyalty, and unwavering dedication to those around him.

As his friends, family, and community continue to press for official recognition of his bravery, Billy's story serves as a potent reminder of the sacrifices made by Irish soldiers in the name of peace. Whether through the campaign for his medal or the construction of the air ambulance base, Billy Kedian's spirit endures in the hearts of those who knew him and in the place he called home.

Billy's life was a testament to the values of service, sacrifice, and heroism, and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations. In remembering Billy, we honour not only his extraordinary courage but also the bravery of all those who serve in the name of peace, ensuring that heroes like him are never forgotten.



Above: Fr. Paul Murphy (Chaplain, An Chéad Chath), blesses the memorial. AK Photography.



Memorial Unveiled

The memorial to Pte. Billy Kedian was unveiled on Saturday, 20th July 2024 in his native townland of Moneymore, where he was born forty-seven years before, to the day.

A large crowd of Billy's army colleagues, friends and neighbours joined the Kedian family for the event. Amongst those in attendance were the Minister of State with responsibility for European Affairs and Defence, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD; members of the Oireachtas; members of Mayo County Council; Brig. Gen. Stephen Ryan, General Officer Commanding 2 brigade; Mr. Jason Kearney, Director of the Dept. of Defence; Head Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces, Fr. Paschal Hanrahan; Lt. Col. Edward McDonagh, Ceannasaí, An Chéad Chathlán Coisithe; Fr. Paul Murphy, Chaplain to An Chéad Chath; members of the 85th Infantry Battalion UNIFIL (Billy's last overseas unit); retired members of the Defence Forces associations; and former and serving members of the Defence Forces.

Master of Ceremonies was Sgt. Major Seamus Gannon (Retd.) and he introduced the following speakers: Minister Carroll MacNeill TD; Sgt. Larry Carty (Retd.), a close friend and colleague of Billy's who gave an emotional account of the events of that fateful night in Lebanon; Dr. Tony Margiotta, Medical Officer, 85th Batt., who attended Billy at the scene on that night; Gerry O'Boyle, a driving force behind the memorial; Cathaoirleach of Mayo County Council, John O'Hara; and newly elected County Councillor Alma Gallagher, a class-mate of Billy's, on her first official engagement.

The speeches were followed by the ceremonial aspect of the event. The National Colours were lowered to half-mast and the memorial officially unveiled by Minister Carroll MacNeill assisted by Larry Carty. Fr. Paul Murphy, Chaplain to An Chéad Chath, Renmore, Galway, led prayers and blessed the memorial, after which a lament was played on the pipes by Pte. Richard Waldron (Retd.). There then followed a minutes silence. The Last Post was sounded and the Colours lowered. The National Flag was then hoisted to full mast and Reveille sounded. The National Anthem was sung by Gerry Carney accompanied by Connie Gildea and Richard Waldron. Gerry Carney then sang his own composition, 'Bringing Billy Home' and this brought the official proceedings to an end.

Left: Minister of State Dara Calleary TD, Alma Gallagher MCC, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, Minister for European Affairs and Defence, Gerry O'Boyle (Friends of Private Billy Kedian), Minister of State Alan Dillon TD. AK Photography.



Pte. Billy Kedian's sisters Anne and Mary with his colleagues from 6th Platoon, C Coy., 85th Inf. Batt. UNIFIL
L-R: Sgt. Larry Carty (Retd.), Sgt. Darren Clarke, Lt. Col. Stephen Morgan, Coy. Sgt. Tony Geasley (Retd.), Sgt. Stephen Spellman (Retd.), Anne Lenihen, Pte. Ronnie Rushe (Retd.), Mary Fitzmaurice, Pte. Margaret Walsh (Retd.), CQMS Michael Merrigan (Retd.), Coy. Sgt. Paul Duffy, Pte. Oisín Concannon (Retd.). *AK Photography.*

'Bringing Billy Home'

I was approached by Gerry O'Boyle to write a song in commemoration of the unveiling of a memorial to Private Billy Kedian. I was of course familiar with the tragic event that led to Billy's passing, and like many, recalled the iconic picture of his funeral cortege coming down main street on the day of his burial.

In telling the story in a song, it was very important to factually cover the event as well as his life story to that point. I thought about it for some time and before long the first four lines of verse one came to me with the melody. Soon after that I completed the song "Bringing Billy Home".

It was a journey of emotion in its creation. Soon after that I recorded the song and it was decided that we would submit it to radio. It was very well received and was most requested on Mid West Radio for many weeks after its release.

I'm very proud to be part of the remembrance of Private Billy Kedian, our local Hero.

– Gerry Carney



The crowd assembling for the unveiling of the Pte. Billy Kedian memorial, 20th July 2024. *AK Photography.*



Pictured at the launch of The Private Billy Kedian Air Ambulance Base fundraising drive. L-R: Alma Gallagher MCC, Sen. Lisa Chambers, Sgt. Major Seamus Gannon (Retd.), Gerry O'Boyle, Gerry Carney, Patsy O'Brien MCC, Sgt. Larry Carty (Retd.), Alan Dillon TD, Richard Finn MCC, Dara Calleary TD.

MY CROLLY DOLL

Patricia Plunkett

This Christmas, 2024, marks the 61st birthday of my beautiful Crollly Doll.

I often reminisce on Christmases past and how we used to be so excited for Santa to arrive with our presents. We were very lucky to get three items each: a toy, an annual and a selection box. There were six of us children, so to get all that we were very blessed. I remember asking for a doll when I was five years old. I was so excited when I saw her in a big box – or so it looked when I was five – but in reality probably not much bigger than a shoe box. But my little hands thought it was enormous. I immediately took her out and hugged her as if she was a baby. It was, of course, my Crollly Doll, beautifully dressed in a red and white chiffon dress with white shoes and socks. I knew straight away, she was my 'forever' friend. I enjoyed many childhood years with my doll whom I named Nora and, although I had other dolls over the years, Nora was my favourite and took priority over the rest.

As I grew older and moved on in life, I still kept Nora on my dressing table and looked after her from time to time, washing her hair and clothes. Needless to say, when I married and moved to Ballyhaunis, it was 'on condition' that Nora comes with me! Gerard never objected to having Nora in the house!

It wasn't until two years ago, when I read an article in *Ireland's Own* on the origin of the Crollly Dolls in Donegal, that I decided to go and pay a visit to Crollly.



Gerard and I hit off and we actually stayed in a house right next-door to the original Crollly Doll factory which is now a whiskey distillery. The distillery has a Visitors' Centre with tours of the building and the original doll factory. I had brought Nora along and we went inside and explained that the doll I was holding was almost 60 years old. To say that the lads in the distillery were shocked is an understatement. They all took turns holding her and got photographs taken with her. They called the Manager who came down and gave us a personal guided tour and, to my absolute delight, showed me the actual original mould from which she would have been made. The Manager then

brought me around to show me other dolls from the past – though not quite as old as my Nora – which were on display in cabinets. They were all very grateful and appreciative of me coming to Donegal and bringing Nora along. Lots of photos were taken for their Facebook page.

I was absolutely thrilled with the whole experience in Co. Donegal. Who would have guessed that sixty years after getting a beautiful doll from Santa, I would have found her place of origin and her actual mould? Nora still has her pride of place on the dressing table in our home and, yes, of course I am tempted from time to time, to pick her up and cuddle her (and hope no one catches me!). I will always treasure my Crollly Doll.

BALLYHAUNIS BRIDGE CLUB

Leona Connery

Ballyhaunis Bridge Club meet in the Clare Court Centre every Thursday evening with the game commencing at 7.30pm. We welcomed new members this year. Our AGM was held in April 2024 and the following officers were elected:

President: Breege Halpin; Vice President: Nell Rochford; Hon. Secretary: Leona Connery; Asst. Secretary: Olive Lyons; Treasurer: Rita Lundon; Asst. Treasurer: Myra Walshe. Committee: Mary Murphy,

Mary Walshe, Noreen Walshe, Marita Ryan, Gerry McLoughlin. Handicap Committee: Breege Halpin, Leona Connery, Olive Lyons.

Michael Gallagher and Leona Connery represented the Intermediate 'A' Players in competition at the Falls Hotel, Ennistymon.

New members are most welcome. If you need a bridge partner, please contact Leona Connery at 086-8732923.

TOM RATTIGAN REMEMBERS...

In conversation with Tommy Caulfield

In early October I spent a truly memorable couple of hours in the company of Tom and Eileen Rattigan and enjoyed the warmth of their traditional Irish hospitality in the home they share with their son Michael at Lecarrow. Tom's ability to vividly recount the past is fascinating, offering a personal journey through the past ninety years, with all its social, economic and cultural shifts. His outlook on life, full of gratitude and contentment, is inspiring, especially as he cherishes the blessings of a wonderful family, robust health, great friends and kind neighbours. It is clear that the rich experiences he's had with people around him have shaped his remarkable character.

Tom Rattigan was born in Lecarrow on the 30th of August 1933, just a stone's throw from the house in which he now lives. He was the elder of two sons born to Michael and Mary Rattigan (Mulrennan). His younger brother Joe was born fourteen months later. Tom's mother Mary died in 1982 at the age of eighty-two, while his father died just short of his 100th birthday in 1994. Tom's brother Joe spent most of his life in Birmingham where he lived with his wife Josie (Freeley) of Knockbrack and their family. Joe passed away in Birmingham in 2013.

At the age of five Tom commenced his education at the Convent of Mercy in Ballyhaunis. He describes the experience as 'intimidating', never having seen a nun before then and never before having been to the town of Ballyhaunis, about a mile from his home. Tom left the convent and moved to the local boys' school. The tough regime at the boys' school was 'not for the faint-hearted' and when Tom left school and 'was put behind the plough' he recalls that he was the 'happiest man in Ireland'.

The Emergency

Tom was born into 1930s Ireland at the start of The Economic War, where times were hard and things were not much different to the Ireland of one hundred years earlier. Work on the farm was backbreaking and everything was done by hand. The land was tilled to help the people survive. Oats and barley were grown and not many cattle were kept. During the Emergency most items were in scarce supply and compulsory tillage was introduced to combat the scarcity of flour. Goods were rationed and he remembers the choice between two loaves or a couple of pounds of flour. Tom's wife Eileen grew up in nearby Johnstown in a house of seven children and three adults. The children were not great tea drinkers so there was a grain of tea to spare which was shared with the neighbours.

Tom clearly remembers the blizzard of 1947 which began with a big fall of snow in early February and lasted until April. He remembers the difficulty of life for people during these very tough two months. It was particularly testing on the town's folk who depended on the shops and food delivered by road. For country people with their own supply of potatoes and vegetables life was a little easier. As a young teenager during the blizzard, Tom recalls attending a funeral with this father and assisting the undertaker Johnny Gilmore and Archdeacon Prendergast P.P. with the burial. In the Cleary household in Johnstown, Eileen recalls that they couldn't open the front door for the duration of the whiteout and spent their time digging paths to get around outside. Her father refused to drink tea from melted snow and he made his way each day to the river for his supply of fresh water.

1950s

Our story moves on to the 1950s which brought some changes. The arrival of the small grey Ferguson 20 tractor made life a little easier for the farmer. Tom remembers three tractors out his road. A grant became available for the building of new houses and there was some badly needed work available in construction. Tom, himself, worked with two local builders – Joe Eagney of Curries and John Byrne of Gurrane (and Devlis). Rural Electrification also arrived in the fifties and things continued to improve. Eileen remembers the evening the electric light arrived in Johnstown. The following morning her schoolmaster Johnny Higgins at Derrylea National School wondered why there was no homework completed. "We stayed up late watching the light", came the child's innocent reply.

Entertainment

"For entertainment, we made our own fun a lot of the time". The Fair Day was a big day in town and Tom can still rhyme off all the dates of the big fair days in Ballyhaunis which brought all the farmers to town to buy and sell cattle, sheep, pigs and horses. In the 1960s, Tom explains, the 'country opened up'. Television arrived and the building of dance halls led to the start of the showbands. There were dances on Friday and Sunday nights if you had a few bob. The clergy didn't allow dancing on Saturday night on account of Mass on Sunday morning. *The Royal Showband*, *The Premier Aces* and *Brose Walsh* were among the more popular bands on the go at the time. In Ballyhaunis Paddy McGarry was a very far-seeing man and he brought life into town. Fr. Horan also ran a successful dancehall in Tooreen, and

Byrne's Dancehall in Began was another popular venue. Cycling long distances to a dance was not a problem.

The dancehall scene and the showbands lasted for a good ten years, but there was no alcohol available to quench the thirst, and so the dancehalls eventually gave way to the singing pubs. Granlahan led the way locally in the singing pub circuit. There were two venues: McHugh's (Wagon Wheel) and Hebron's. Later Liam Hebron opened the Harp and Shamrock in Main Street. During the month of August, The Wagon Wheel had live music every night of the week with packed houses and lots of visitors with their children home from England. Keane's of Cloonfad was another well-liked venue. *The Singing Cowboy*, *Tony Rattigan*, was a popular local act on the singing pub scene.

Truck Driver

Tom spent fifteen years of his working life driving an articulated truck for John Durkan and Sons Wholesale & Retail Bottlers. Durkan's were licensed to bottle Guinness and Tom delivered to wholesalers and to pubs the length and breadth of Connacht, "from Athlone to Belmullet and from Connemara to Crossmolina."



Tom's wife Eileen (Cleary) attended the local convent secondary school and later trained to be a nurse in Liverpool. They were married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, on 17th Aug. 1964. Their son Michael works locally and runs the family farm under the watchful eye of his dad. Their daughter Collette is married to Tom Ryan in Co. Westmeath and they have two daughters, Aoife and Edel, who are both very much into sport, particularly ladies football and basketball.

For me it was a truly enriching experience to hear stories from someone who has witnessed so much history first hand and whose sharp memory makes those stories even more captivating. I am most grateful to Tom Rattigan for sharing some of his memories with our readers. Annagh Magazine Society congratulates Tom and Eileen on recently celebrating sixty years of married life and we wish them and their family continued good health and happiness for many years to come.



Left: Eileen and Tom Rattigan on their wedding day 1964.

Above: Eileen and Tom celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary in August.

BALLYHAUNIS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Martina Gavin

Ballyhaunis Cemetery Committee would like to thank everyone for their continued financial support to the upkeep and maintenance of Ballyhaunis Cemetery. This continuous support ensures the Cemetery is maintained to a high standard.

There is a detailed map at the back of the Cemetery which can also be viewed online at:

www.irishgraveyards.ie.

There is also a donation link on this website through Paypal, giving anyone an opportunity to donate directly to Ballyhaunis Cemetery. Just click on 'Donate Directly to Ballyhaunis Cemetery'. Donations can also be given through any committee member.

Committee Members: Edward Mulhern, Tom Finn, Walter Cleary, Martin Gavin, Martina Gavin, Enda Caulfield.

THE SMALL POTATO PIT

Murt Hunt

Foraging through the vegetable department in my local supermarket, I was enthralled to see the amount of vegetables being imported from abroad - carrots from France, onions from The Netherlands - and that was only the tip of the iceberg. We have the perfect weather here for growing most of the varieties, so why are so much being imported?

I was fascinated by the display of small 'Baby' potatoes, now a luxury item it seems. One can cook them in the bag which has an air vent to put in microwaves or air fryers and they can be cooked in seven or eight minutes. I had to laugh to myself when I thought back to the days long ago when the spuds were dug in the backend of the year. Some drills were left for us for picking when we had finished school. My father usually had the good potatoes picked after digging, but the small ones were left for us to pick. Our name for them was 'Poreens' and these were of the same dimensions as the modern day 'Baby' potatoes.

My dad usually had two holes dug: one for good spuds for household use and a small one for small spuds,

usually for feeding the pigs over the winter. Bad, spotty potatoes were trampled into the ground as they would only rot the other potatoes if mixed. I hit on an idea, when my dad was not looking, and trampled many good but small ones into the ground as well, saving my back from bending down. I can still hear his instructions ringing through my ears: "Don't forget to put the small ones in the Pigs' Hole". It was a source of amusement at the time but not when a crop of potato stalks emerged from the field - by now in meadow - the following spring.

Did we ever think that those small potatoes would become a luxury item in today's world, or be imported specially from abroad? Not too many potatoes are being sown now in farms and it is no harm as there was so much labour involved with slitting seed potatoes, leaving eyes each side for the stalks to grow, ploughing, rising drills, putting out farmyard manure, and spraying the stalks for blight. Yes, indeed we are living in a changed world and our selection of potatoes is now waiting for us on our supermarket shelves.



Left: Johnny Cribbin (Lecarrow) seen here - second from left - running in the thirteenth annual Kilmovee 10k in aid of Mayo Roscommon Hospice and Kilmovee Shamrocks GAA on 30th Mar. 2024. There was a record turnout in what were good running conditions, with 368 finishers in the 10k and a further 222 in the 5k Mayo Athletic Club's category. Johnny was amongst the prizewinners, 1st M60 in a time of 41:20. Just two days later racing conditions were good for the eighteenth annual Carney 10K race (Sligo) on Easter Monday. Mayo AC's three competitors ran in the 10k and were led home by Johnny Cribbin who crossed the line in a brilliant 40:34, 21st overall and 1st M60.

Right: From left: Seamus Mulrennan (Gurteen), Michael J. Lyons (Lecarrow) and Willie Broderick (Brackloon), pictured at the Friary this summer, 2024.



BALLYHAUNIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Colm Bohan

Ballyhaunis Beekeepers Association is a thriving local club with sixty-five members at present. Our aim is to promote beekeeping in the area and thus improve pollination. The honey bee is the only pollinator which overwinters as a colony and which is available in the large numbers required early in the year.

We meet in Clare Court once a month during the winter. It's an informative gathering with contributors sharing their experiences and expertise. We run a course for beginners each year during spring. This is a two day event where all aspects of beekeeping are discussed and explained.



Our club apiary is located in Began, which is for honey production and also a teaching aid. New beekeepers are welcome to attend the weekly inspections and learn the craft from experienced members.

Club honey is available in many of our local shops and we sell gift packs and wax candles at our stall at the Summer and Christmas markets in the town. Further information can be had by email at ballyhaunisbees@gmail.com or through our Facebook page.



Left: Taken in a photo booth at Heuston Station, 1969, on their way to support Mayo in Croke Park. From left: Michael Keegan (Main St.), Freddie Herr (Knox St.) and Liam Connell (Devlis).
Courtesy of Liam Connell.



Right: With bags packed preparing to jet off to West Essex Golf Club in England to compete as a Golf Ireland International, John William Burke, all set to earn his very first international cap at the West Essex tournament.

Right: Local mothers and babies with Mrs. Sabina Higgins for 'Latching On morning' in Áras an Uachtaráin on 7th Oct. 2024 as part of National Breastfeeding Week. L-R: Aisling and Rua Morley, Carole and Conor Quigley, Mrs. Sabina Higgins, Niamh and Iarlaith Browne



SCOIL ÍOSA

Kenneth Denny (Principal)

Mar is ghnáth, caithfidh me beannachtaí na séasúr a ghabhail chuig chuile duine I mBéal Átha hAmhnais agus thar lear. Chomh maith le sin, ba mhaith liom buíochas ó chroí a thabhairt do mhuintir na scoile, go háirithe an foireann scoile maidir leis an méid tacaíochta a thug said don scoil ar feadh an bhliain seo thart. Go mór mhór maidir leis an easpa spás a bhí again.

As with every recent year, we have experienced another very busy and eventful year at Scoil Íosa. This year has seen an expansion of our special class and an increase in enrolment to the highest level on record in the mainstream. Given the schools DEIS status, the children have benefitted from class sizes well below the national average and a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities which have been fully subscribed.

First Communion

Congratulations to the children from Scoil Íosa who received their First Holy Communion in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis on Saturday, 18th May 2024: Thaemy Larissa Aguilera Rodrigues, Katie Rose Allen, Tjasa Barcanec, Andrew Burke, David Collins, Pietro De Oliveira Prestes, Natalie Dosek, Isaac Francisco Dos

Santos, Ronan Doyle, Chloe May Finn, Kajus Jajanckauskas, Noah Kelly, Alicja Koralewska, Emily Lynch, Candice Maughan, Olivier Mazur, Aaron McNamara, Callum McNamara, Summer McNamara, Nicola Medesan, Santana Mongan, Grace Nolan, Csege Grace Penzes, Klaudia Pikhikova, Joshua Regan Hayes, Heloisa Gabriely Santos Neves, Nicolly Silva Da Cruz, Lorena Simuncic, Luis Filipe Teixeira Da Cruz, Conor Waldron.

The children were well prepared by Ms. Watchorn, Ms. Marigliano and Ms. Ruane, ably assisted by Ms. Freeman.

Sports News

Over the course of the year the school was represented in a variety of sports competitions including Gaelic Football, Hurling, Rugby, Soccer, Athletics and, for the first time, Chess.

Gaelic Football: The boys and girls teams participated in a number of competitions including the Mini-sevens and the Cumann na mBunscoil championship competition. While the boys teams were competitive, this year saw our girls team excelling by



Children from Scoil Íosa Primary School who received their First Holy Communion in St. Patrick's Church, 18th May 2024, with their teachers: Lisa Watchorn, Sharlene Ruane, Diane Marigliano, Thomas Corless and SNA Marian Nally. Courtesy Fr. Stephen Farragher.



Scoil Íosa Girls football team, county semi-finalists.



Scoil Íosa camogie team after winning their first county title.

qualifying for the county semi-final for the first time. Unfortunately, they lost narrowly to a very strong Brackloon team. Thanks to Carole Freeley and Dervla Phillips for mentoring and preparing the team.

Girls Team: Nikita Webb, Isabelle Finn, Olivia Feeney, Katie Conlon, Aibhe Donnellan, Roisin Murphy, Kate Monaghan, Michaela Kavanagh, Anabelle McGowan, Ava Gildea, Cara Henry, Hazel Murphy, Niamh Conlon, Jade Cleary.

Camogie: Our girls took part in various Camogie competitions over the year. This was a somewhat unknown entity for our girls as our ventures into competition in this sport have been rare. The success of the team was nothing short of spectacular, with a number of successful outings over the season. Undoubtedly, overcoming Knock NS in a highly



Scoil Íosa Girls football team, blitz winners in the Centre of Excellence.

competitive game and becoming county champions was the pinnacle of their success. They also won the Vinny Judge competition. Many thanks to the team mentors, Maria Coyne and Labhaoise Cunnane for their work with the team.

Team: Olesia Nikitas, Cara Walsh, Kate Monaghan, Isobel Finn, Ava Gildea, Katie Conlon, Aibhe Donnellan, Olivia Feeney, Roisin Murphy, Lara Lopes dos Passos, Ayla Sawas, Talya Sakkar, Leya Bediwy, Niamh Conlon, Hazel Murphy, Nora Ní Laighin.

Hurling: Scoil Íosa's hurling saw mixed results this year. Once again, the children had three competitions: The Mini-sevens in March, the Thirteen-a-side in May and the Vinny Judge Tournament in June. This year, once again, saw a very strong sixth class contingent including Ben Gallagher, Shane Nolan, Evan Feeney, Charlie Finn, Oisín Finnegan, Cian Murphy, James Ó Laighin and Jamie Doyle, along with a very capable group of girls – Aibhe Donnellan, Katie Conlon, Kate Monaghan, Róisín Murphy and Cara Walsh.

In the Mini-sevens, the boys travelled over to Began to play in what was a very well organised day. In total there were six teams there, divided into two groups. The first game was a very tight affair against our near neighbours Tooreen and in the end, eventual county champions, Tooreen squeezed over the line. This was followed up by a win against Aghamore, but our first loss proved costly on the day. In the Thirteen-a-side, the team made best use of what proved to be an excellent camogie squad in making up the hurling team. There were three teams on the day including Knock NS and

Balla NS. The team had a comfortable victory against Balla in their first game and had to turn things around quickly as they were scheduled to play Knock immediately after. The quick turnaround proved too much for our team and they ran out of steam late in the second half to finish with a loss. Knock finished the day with a victory over Balla to progress in the county stages. Many of the children, both boys and girls, performed admirably on the day and came away with a win and a narrow loss for their efforts. A good result against Balla on the day might have been the undoing of the team as they struggled to get up to pace on the big pitch in their second consecutive match.

The last blitz of the year was the annual Vinny Judge tournament. The boys won their group as they came out undefeated, setting up a final against Tooreen. Tooreen once again came away victorious but the performances of many of the Scoil Íosa boys provided strong hope for the future. The performances of Ben Gallagher at full forward and Charlie Finn were notable on the day.



Michael Regan (right) presenting his prize to Lucas, overall runner-up in the Cloonfad Invitational Chess Tournament.

Chess: Two of our pupils, Lucas and Neo, took part in the Cloonfad Invitational Chess Tournament. This was a new departure for our school, but under the tutelage of Anne Durkan and Emily Worden as part of the after schools activity programme, the children have gone from strength to strength in this discipline. Both boys acquitted themselves very well in the competition with Neo making the semi-final and Lucas finishing as overall runner-up. We look forward to further advances in the sport over

the coming years. Thanks to Mrs. Durkan and Ms. Worden for their work with the children.

Athletics: The school continues to take part in the 'Daily Mile' initiative with the senior pupils leading the way. The pupils in fifth class participated in an athletics activities day in October in the GAA Centre of Excellence under the expert tutelage of Frank Greally in which they got to try out a number of athletics disciplines, while pupils in first and second classes undertook a three-week coaching programme in Claremorris Athletic Club with coach Cheryl Saxby. On the competition front, the pupils took part in the Mayo



Scoil Íosa Sports Quiz winners.

Schools Cross Country competition with Niamh Conlon and Ted Murphy qualifying for the county final along with our Senior Girls team.

Choir

Our school choir has made significant progress under the direction of Sarah Scully and Carole Freeley. This year we have expanded the choir beyond the liturgical choir and have a fully inclusive group. As well as their regular slot in the Parish Church, the group has featured at Ireland West Airport, the annual seasonal concert in the Friary and, coming up, as part of the All Ireland Peace Proms Choir who will perform at a Gala Concert in the University of Limerick in March 2025.

School Development

This year saw the first phase of our school building plan coming to fruition with the completion of a large modular building comprising of four mainstream and two SET classrooms. The next phase involves two further modular classrooms and a full two-story extension. The school has also been lucky enough to receive a €200,000 grant from the Sports Capital Funding towards the development of a new AstroTurf facility. This was achieved in partnership with Ballyhaunis LGFA. We thank all who helped in securing the funding.

Retirement

January brought an end of an era with the retirement of

Aishling Toal after a forty-year career in Ballyhaunis. The staff and Board of Management made a presentation to Aishling to mark her retirement. The school wishes Aishling well as she moves to the next stage of her life.



Aishling Toal receives a presentation from Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P., marking her retirement after a forty-year career teaching in Ballyhaunis.

School Staff 2024 – 2025

Kenneth Dennedy (Principal), Kevin Henry (Vice-Principal), Donall O'Brien (Assistant Principal), Lisa Watchorn (Assistant Principal), Ciara Byrne, Eimear Ryan, Caroline Campbell, Joanne Forde, Karen Nolan, Tara Cusack, Sharlene Ruane, Elaine Burke, Ciara Richardson, Sean Kenny, Labhaoise Cunnane, Emily Worden, Norma Prendergast, Olivia Burke, Annie Kelly, Claire Walshe, Eimear Finn, Hannah Waldron, Sarah Scully, Oisín Henry, Diane Marigliano, Anne Durkan, Catherine Gallagher, Edel Maher, Michelle Nally, Maria Coyne, Una McCabe, Thomas Corless, Carole Freeley, Breda Slattery, Miriam Judge, Monica Shalley, John Higgins, Samantha Cleary, Geraldine Fahey, Niamh Connolly, Sheena Flanagan (HSCL), Marian Nally, Roisín Prendergast, Marina Coyne, James Cullinane, Roseanne Nolan, Matty Cummins, Barbara Murphy, Claire Vahey, Carmel Cassidy, Helena Gill.

School Board of Management 2024-2028

James Reidy (Chairperson), Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P., Kenneth Dennedy, Olivia Burke, Paula Burke, Eamonn Monaghan, Darren Conlon, Marian Feeney.



Margaret and Tim Byrne (Johnstown) celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary with family earlier this year.

Back, L-R: Alex Byrne, Jason Stewart, Ian Byrne, John and Ethna McGeehan, Marita and Megan Finnegan, Michelle and Noel Byrne, Dylan and Adam Mulkeen. **Centre, L-R:** Erica Byrne, Ava Mae McGeehan, Noah Mulkeen, Dolores Byrne, Colette Mulkeen, James Finnegan, Derek Finnegan, Lily Byrne. **Seated:** Margaret and Tim Byrne.

Golden Wedding Anniversary



Congratulations to Tom and Linda Rattigan who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary last year (2023). Tom, who comes originally from Knox Street, has lived in New York for many years. They took their entire family on a cruise to the Caribbean to celebrate the milestone fiftieth anniversary.



The Rattigan family celebrating Tom and Linda's Golden Wedding Anniversary in the Caribbean. L-R: Tom Rattigan Jr., Tom Rattigan Sr., Linda Rattigan, Tara Slackman (née Rattigan), Sean Slackman and granddaughters up front: Sadie and Samantha Slackman.



Above: The Rattigan brothers (Knox St.) having a visit in Australia this year (2024). From left: Brendan, Seamus and Tom Rattigan.

Below: Tara Slackman tells us: "Last year at Christmas time when we gave my Dad (Tom Rattigan, formerly of Knox St.) the 'Annagh' magazine, we realised that he has collected and saved every edition since it started in the 1970's! We made him bring out the entire collection and here's the photo to prove it!" Photos courtesy of Tara Slackman (daughter of Tom and Linda Rattigan).

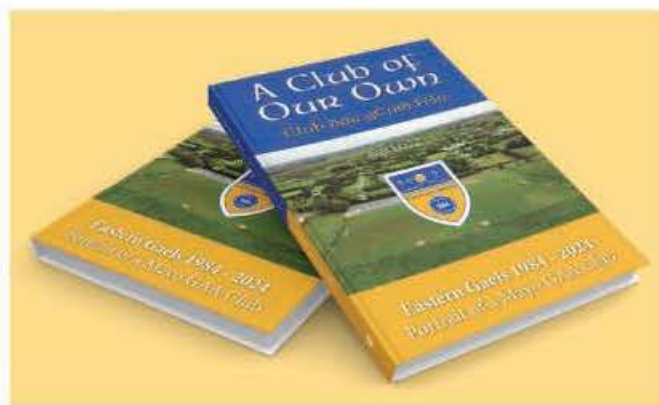


EASTERN GAELS CELEBRATE 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Eastern Gaels GAA club (comprising Began, Brickens and Logboy districts) celebrated their fortieth birthday this year. Formed in 1984, the club has gone from strength to strength, winning divisional and county titles. Several of the players have donned the green and red of Mayo at various grades up to and including junior level. This year the club once again captured the East Mayo Junior title and were also crowned the Abbvie Mayo GAA Senior Football League Division 3 champions. The club has created a robust underage programme and the establishment of St. Jarlath's, in conjunction with Ballyhaunis GAA, has been instrumental in nurturing young talent, providing them with the skills and opportunities to excel in Gaelic games.

Apart from their sporting achievements, Eastern Gaels have developed first-class clubhouse and playing facilities at their Brickens base, with modern changing rooms, an impressive new viewing stand and state-of-the-art electronic scoreboard. There are ambitious plans

for further developments. To mark its fortieth birthday, the club has issued a special souvenir publication, with a congratulatory message from GAA President Jarlath Burns, being on 6th Dec. 2024 in the Connacht GAA's Centre of Excellence in Began. A gala celebratory Dinner Dance is also being organised for 28th December in the McWilliam Hotel, Claremorris.



Ballyhaunis Fireman, Padraic Murphy, while on holidays with his family in U.S.A. this year, represented Mayo Fire Service at the Cleveland, Ohio St. Patrick's Day Parade. He also spent a day as a guest of Fire House 22 Cleveland on active call.

Right: The Murphy family (Bracklaghboy) pictured in Cleveland, USA, following local Fireman Padraic's participation in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in the city. Pictured are Padraic, Patricia (née Mulhern) Cian and Hazel Murphy.

Far right: Pictured at the St. Patrick's Day Parade 2024 in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. are Ballyhaunis fireman Padraic Murphy (centre) with Lieutenant Bob Schwind (left) and Firefighter Ray Wacker.



BALLYHAUNIS BOXING CLUB

Suzanne Mullarney

The Ballyhaunis Boxing Club has enjoyed a roaring success this season! With the club claiming five national Irish titles, it was an all-girl affair when Millie O'Sullivan, Jessica Connolly, Carlagh Peake and the Ward sisters - Bethany and Andrea - were crowned Irish champions at the National Stadium in Dublin.

Carlagh Peake became the first boxer in seventeen years to claim the prestigious U-18 title in January, and subsequently went on to represent Ireland at the European Champion-ships in Porec, Croatia.

The club held the first of its annual outdoor tournaments in the Friary Grounds in June and the heavens blessed us with the weather as we basked in 21°C heat! We had fourteen boxing bouts with Carlagh as the main event versus a Canadian opponent. In excess of 100 people attended the event and it is definitely something we will do every year.

In September Carlagh was nominated and was successful in securing the Mayo Garda Youth Individual Award. She will attend an awards ceremony in the Breaffy House Hotel in October to pick up her award.

Also in September, the club held its AGM and the following officers were elected: **Chairman** - Darran Conlon; **Secretary** - Sue Peake; **Treasurer** - Tomás Murphy; **PRO** - Shannon McShea; **Child Protection Officer** - Louise Ward. Darran is not the first Conlon in the Chair: his father was Chairman in the 80s and early 90s.

The Ballyhaunis Boxing Club is in the process of securing premises in the town that should see a huge uptake in participation of the sport. Should anyone require any information about the club or would like to join, you can call Sue on 085 810 8152.



Cathal Conlon has his hand raised in the Gateway Boxing Club's show.



Carlagh Peake (Gurteen) arrived back to Ballyhaunis to a warm welcome on the 5th November with a Garda escort, having received a silver medal in the World Youth Boxing Championship in Montenegro. Such a wonderful achievement by Carlagh at seventeen years of age.



Above: Andrea Ward wins her contest at the outdoor event in the Friary Grounds.

Right: Millie O'Sullivan and Niamh Conlon celebrate their success after the outdoor tournament in June 2024.



SWIMMING POOL MEMORIES

John Durkan

I grew up in Knox Street in the sixties and seventies. Our summers were spent playing football and swimming in the local rivers at Pollnacrougha and at Annagh bridge and in Annagh Lake. There was great excitement when a number of French students appeared in town in the late sixties and a swimming pool began to take shape at Mac's Hill. The completion of the pool was delayed and the shell of the pool doubled up as our soccer pitch for a couple of years. When the pool was eventually completed, the local youngsters were quick to avail themselves of this great new facility.

As a boarder in St. Jarlath's College, I did a lot of swimming in Tuam. While most of the generations of boarders from Ballyhaunis before me represented St. Jarlath's on the football field, I represented the college in the swimming pool. I also got a qualification as a lifeguard and was appointed as lifeguard at the new swimming pool.

The summers seemed to have more sunshine and dry days when we were youngsters and the pool was packed all summer long. The highlight of the swimming season was the annual Swimming Gala held in August before the return to school. The heats for all of the events took place in the week leading up to the big day. The committee in charge of organising the event included Bertie Curley, John Mooney, Eamonn Dwane and Hugh Campbell.



Races were held for boys and girls catering for all the age groups up to under-16 and competitions held in all the various swimming strokes. I recently came across the names of those who took part in the gala of 1977. Among those competing were: Catherine Morley, Fiona Grogan, Ann Brennan, Sharon Molloy, Margie Phillips, Mary A. Grogan, Noreen Keegan, Pauline Morley, Ann Marrinan, Josephine Cribbin, Orla Phillips, Bridget Griffin, Carol Webb, Grace O'Connor and Joanna Webb. Some of the boys taking part included: Tom Forde, Richard Phillips, George

Delaney, John O'Connor, Paschal Keegan, Brian Loughran, Paul Webb, Declan Phillips, Enda Moran, Vinnie Caulfield, Sean Moran, Martin Timoney, Seamus McGing, Gerry Moran, Brian Phillips, Noel Phillips and Tommie Joyce. Anne Marrinan took home the trophy for Best Female Swimmer and there was a tie between Sean Moran and Vincent Caulfield for Best Male Swimmer of 1977.

It was wonderful to see the pool open this year all summer long and to see so many young people availing themselves of this wonderful facility on our doorstep. Large numbers of children also attended for swimming lessons at Beginner and Intermediate level in early August. To mark the last day of the 2024 season the very successful Annual Ballyhaunis Swimming Gala was held on Sat., 24th August, just before the return to school.

Major Award for Violeta

Ireland's grocery retail industry gathered at Dublin's Royal Marine Hotel on Thursday, 9th July, for the 2024 ShelfLife Grocery Management Awards, recognising individual management excellence in the sector. With 360 guests in attendance, twenty-two awards were presented, honouring the best in the many departments that make up local convenience stores, supermarkets and filling stations.

Congratulations to Violeta Anisova, deli manager at Corrib Oil/Spar, Ballyhaunis, who won the Deli Manager of the Year title at the prestigious ceremony. Originally from Lithuania, Violeta has been eleven years at the Devlis Deli. She paid tribute to her staff of ten, "for delivering excellence and setting industry standards". "Having a well-trained team is key to our deli's success", according to Violeta.

Violeta Anisova of Corrib Oil/Spar in Devlis receives her Delicatessen/Food To Go Manager of the Year Forecourt award from Emmett Keenan, Sales Manager Bunzl Ireland (sponsor).



THE DEVILS BASKETBALL CLUB

Danielle Byrne

'The Devils' Ballyhaunis were first set up in 2019 when a group of ladies from Ballyhaunis and Tooreen with an interest in basketball first got together to start training socially. Early progress was great and our success emerged after the pandemic and has continued to grow since.

After the pandemic the ladies club started playing in local Social League competition set up by our very own club manager, Danielle Byrne. Today, the ladies' team is diverse and, over the years, has become much more than a team - we are a family. With every game we play, we gain invaluable experience and with that are still able to bring some fun into the game. We have played many teams from Mayo and Galway so far. In May 2023 we hosted our second Ladies Blitz, hosted by the Claregalway Ladies team with the help of our club manager, with teams from Mayo and Galway participating and having the support of sponsors Nolan's Supervalu, Ballyhaunis, and The Mayo Partnership. The event was a great success and we plan to have another in 2025 with the same teams, while also competing in challenge games against new social ladies' teams from Co. Galway. The ladies' team is delighted to have a sporting outlet and an opportunity to play with a team and exercise.

Since the success of our ladies' team in 2023, we decided to open the club to local children. The Devils Basketball Club expanded to coach under-12 boys and girls and under-14 boys and girls. We had over eighty children join last year and have joined the Mayo Area Board Basketball League. With thanks to Nolan's Supervalu, Ballyhaunis and First Choice Credit Union, Ballyhaunis, we have no doubt that we will be going for many years. Since the children's club developed, we introduced a new committed committee in 2023 consisting of Chairperson (Tracy Cunnane), secretary (Danielle Byrne) and Treasurer (Patricia Murphy) who have held the fort for two years. Now that the club is growing, so is our committee. For the 2024/25 season we have expanded and amended our committee which now consists of our new Chairperson (Stella O'Neill), Secretary (Danielle Byrne), Treasurer (Patricia Murphy), Assistant Treasurer (Karen Kilbane) and PRO (Tracy Cunnane). The club would like to extend its thanks to them all for their hard work. It is lucky to avail of the Ballyhaunis Community School Gym for all our training sessions and home games. The gym is a tremendous asset for our club and we thank David McDonagh and Gerry Glavey who are always on hand to help out during the season.

In our first year of competing, our under-14 girls team



Under 14 Girls team. Back, L-R: Mairead Murphy (coach), Vilte Zauga, Kate Squires, Isabel Allen, Abigail Dixon, Cara Walsh, Aoife Carroll (coach). **Front, L-R:** Marriane Carroll, Cara Flatley, Katie Conlon, Lily Murphy, Kate Monaghan, Aibhe Donnellan.

managed to make it to the final in division 2. While they put up a big fight, they lost against a strong Charlestown team after an incredible performance. They left holding their heads high. Under-14 girls coaches Mairead Murphy and Aoife Carroll have put in a huge effort with these girls and are very proud of them. In addition, our under-14 boys team, along with their coaches Rachel Jordan, Lorcan Higgins and Eileen Donnellan, got to the semi-final where, unfortunately, they were beaten by Ballinrobe. The match was incredible and our boys came back from a low score and almost beat them.

Our under-12 teams, which played blitzes last year, also had spectacular performances. Our under-12 boys coaches Tracy Cunnane, Brian Flanagan and Greta Flanagan, along with our under-12 girls coaches Danielle Byrne and Patricia Murphy, have committed so much effort and time to prepare their teams for the under-14 leagues this year in the 2024/2025 season.

The club is growing even more in the new 2024/25 season and we have introduced a new under-16 boys team with coaches Michal Gostkowski and Mike Wictor. We anticipate a great season for them. The club has secured sponsorship from Nolan's Supervalu, Ballyhaunis, who have sponsored full kits for them. In this new season many children have joined including many new members who have shown their interest and have lots of potential. Our junior teams show that our club is diverse by welcoming children from all different nationalities and we are all so excited to see what this season will bring.



Under 12 Girls team.

Back, L-R: Patricia Murphy (coach), Sheila Cosgrave, Orla Healy, Reese Keane, Lily Ruane, Ruth Crinigan, Pheobe McNamara, Hazel Murphy, Nora Lyons, Melissa Grealley, Danielle Byrne (coach).

Front, L-R: Roisín Keane, Emma Connery, Lexi Byrne, Millie O'Sullivan, Niamh Conlon, Hannah Waldron, Sophie Cosgrave.

Under 12 Boys team.

Back, L-R: Tracy Cunnane (coach), James McKermitt, Nathan Byrne, Heath McDonagh, Noah Flanagan, Conor Bann, Brian Flanagan (coach).

Front, L-R: Senan Flanagan, Tom Burke, Peter Gallagher, Oisín Higgins, Ryan Cusack, Ruadhán Waldron.



Under 14 Boys team.

Back, L-R: Fionn Harte, Alex Costello, James Costello, Cathal Conlon, Noah Damron).

Front, L-R: Rachel Jordan (coach), Jamie Doyle, Cian Murphy, Karl Rattigan, Bobby Gallagher, Sean Donnellan, Eileen Donnellan (coach) and Lorcan Higgins (coach).

KNOCKBRACK TO KATI KATI

Gabrielle Lyons

On 6th February 2024, John Joe and I started our journey across the world to a little town on the north island of New Zealand: a total journey time of approximately thirty hours. For two infrequent fliers, the adventure had begun. We got through security at Dublin Airport without meeting Bruce Almighty (Bruce Heller of 'Stop Seize Search' fame.) We were blessed. A short stopover of one hour and fifty minutes, hurrying through Dubai airport, and onwards to our destination.

At Auckland airport, our tiredness faded somewhat as we were met by our son William, his wife Daranee and our little granddaughter Lily, whom we were meeting for the first time. We will never forget that moment. It was worth every hour of the journey to meet this precious little girl we had only ever got to know through Facetime. Tears were shed, tissues were needed and cuddles were exchanged. How wonderful that moment was!

Over two hours' drive and we were there. It was cold when we left Knockbrack, but 28°celsius when we arrived in Kati Kati. The beauty of the place where they live is wonderful. You are looking at the Kaimai mountain range to the front and can see the sea from the rear of the house. Many a warm evening was spent out on the deck, having light refreshments, listening to the Chorus Cicadas in the trees, though the noise can be quite deafening at times. Cicadas are insects and the noise is the clapping of their wings against the tree bark. There for a few weeks then silence.

The Kaimais are part of a series of mountain ranges with the Coromandel Range to the north and the Mamaku Range to the south. The Kaimai range separates

Waikato in the west from the Bay of Plenty in the east. The mountain terrain is rough and only two roads pass over it: State Highway 2 (more about this later) and State Highway 29.

The climate in the Bay of Plenty is temperate, as it is surrounded on three sides by mountain ranges, making it one of the sunniest and least windy places in New Zealand. It is ideal for fruit growing and this was evidenced by the produce in William and Daranee's orchard and by the numerous fruit trees growing in their garden. We had the joy of going out in the morning, picking oranges straight from the tree and eating them. They also had lime trees, apple trees, peach trees and some grapes growing along the fence. A feast for the tastebuds, without the air miles!

Lifestyle

Over the next week, and as we settled in, John Joe was happy with this alternative way of farming. Not a cow in sight, but lots of work for him. Learning how to drive a mower with no steering wheel and, more importantly, learning how to stop it. He was kept busy with tractors, mowing and machinery to be moved. I was also busy gardening, working in the orchard and getting the picking bags ready for the start of the harvest. Busy the way we like it, home away from home.

We are so glad they drive on the same side of the road as in Ireland. John Joe drove from the first day: a pickup truck with manual transmission. I had no problem driving this vehicle, but I waited few weeks to drive the car, an automatic. Not the best idea trying to change gears on State Highway 2: stopped dead on the road; no



Gabrielle and John Joe with Daranee, William and Lily in the shade of the Kiwi fruit crop on the day before returning to Ireland.

one in the vicinity. I got away with that one.

We were there just at the start of the kiwi picking season and were given a tour of the packing facility as well as visiting the orchards when they were picked. Thousands of pieces of fruit were picked, moved and stored within a few hours. It was good to see all aspects of the business that Tony (Daranee's stepdad) and William and their families are involved in.

On the weekends we went on excursions and one of these was a trip to Whitianga, Waikato, up the Coromandel coast. On this trip, I learned that New Zealanders really respect the layout of their natural environment, as their roads took the natural curves of the mountain. Think formula one bends, but nearer together and up and down mountains. Not good for the faint hearted or anyone with motion sickness.

In Whitianga, we visited 'The Lost Springs', a facility heated by volcanic water coming from deep into the earth. Drinking cocktails in a naturally heated mineral pool under palm trees is a very nice way to spend an afternoon. While in Whitianga, we also visited Hot Water Beach. Another interesting place. When you dig a hole in the sand, it fills up with hot mineral water, while the surrounding seawater is quite cool. We also went out by ferry to the islands. Such a beautiful area: It's no wonder they have a good work/life balance and each weekend is spent on adventures.

We took a road trip to Rotorua to experience the Giant Redwoods Tree Walk. John Joe was looking forward to this – nothing phases him, especially heights. He has previously worked as a scaffolder and a roofer but, as you can imagine, to someone like me who thinks four steps up a ladder is high enough, this was 'face your fear' time. As Tony said, "Are you going to come here and not try anything?" Challenge accepted. You go up this walkway and get to the first platform. Not too bad. Then, onto the rope bridge, not too bad. Then the others get on and the bridge starts to sway. My thoughts are, "will I ever get off this alive?" As we went from platform to platform it was getting higher and the distance between platforms was getting greater. On each platform was a sign saying, "do not touch the trees". I hugged each of them in turn like a friend I hadn't seen in years! I figured out that if I hurried and got on the bridge first, then

scooted across before anyone else got on, it felt safer and less wobbly. However, it didn't always work out like that as it was very busy that day. I got to the end, onto *Terra Firma* at last. Challenge accepted; challenge completed. Never again. Some people are just better off on ground level.

It seems it was a day for heights, as they had next planned for us to go up in a perspex-bubble cable car. Tony, Shirley, Daranee, William and John Joe even planned where I would sit going up and coming down to make sure I had the best and most terrifying view. John Joe was loving it and I suppose I was getting used to it. The view from the top was class, right out over the city, to the islands and the sea. On another day in Taupo, Rotorua, we went to visit an area where there is a Maori cultural centre. Here we viewed some beautiful Maori carvings on the buildings and Tony's daughter Rochelle explained the historical importance of the area. We also saw boiling

water bubbling in streams from geothermal springs. This is because Rotorua sits in the northern part of the Taupo volcanic zone between Lake Taupo and the Bay of Plenty. Also on this trip, we saw a mist rising from pools in the distance. As we neared them, the sulphur smell was overwhelming. Think rotten eggs; not for the sensitive. It is a natural phenomenon, and some people think the smell of slurry is bad in Ireland. If the present Minister for the Environment visited there, he would never complain about cow's wind again.

All our trips were on the weekends and these are just a brief snapshot of some of the places we visited. On our first day there, as we passed through Tauranga, we saw this beautiful mountain and decided



Gabrielle, John Joe, William and Daranee at the base of Mount Maunganui, Tauranga New Zealand.



Catching up on all the news in Ballyhaunis. Lily Caitlin Lyons, daughter of William Lyons and Daranee Photijan in Kati Kati, New Zealand.

we would love to get to the top. It is called Mount Maunganui and is 232 metres above sea level. The walking track to the top of this extinct volcano provides 360° views spanning the entire length of the Bay of Plenty. That was on our to-do list before returning to Ireland and we got the opportunity to do so. It was well worth the climb, some of it on a stair-like structure and some on pathways. It was a tough climb and at times I faltered. With lots of encouragement from John Joe, William and Tony, however, I got to the top. Our other companion on the journey was the Annagh Magazine 2023 edition. The view from the top was magnificent. And when we come here again, we will challenge ourselves for a second time.

Relaxed

What we really loved about the place is the relaxed atmosphere. It was still summer when we visited and people strolled around the street and into the cafés in their bare feet. From talking to the residents, the place generally feels a lot less regulated than in Ireland. We were so lucky to meet some lovely friends and neighbours of William and Daranee.

During the weekdays we had some wonderful family time. From listening to Lily's squeals of delight as her Irish Papa ran around the living room while she sat on the Magic Mat. And her Nana trying to capture all of this on video. We even had the joy of being there when Lily took her first steps – a milestone that was so special to us, being grandparents living on the other side of the world.

We ate like royalty while we were there, thanks to Daranee's wonderful cooking, with some of the produce from their own garden. John Joe took pictures of the meals to try at home. A pity he didn't get the recipes! Maybe next time. I got such a welcome break from

cooking but plenty of feeding time and playtime with Lily: what could be more special?

This was a most special time in our lives. John Joe and I had a wonderful holiday. We went for four weeks and stayed for six. We enjoyed it so much and, even though some of our family are more than halfway round the world, we still keep them close in our hearts and think of them every day. The evening before we were due to fly back to Ireland, friends arrived at William and Daranee's home. Food and beverages were had - a New Zealand version of the American wake.

We are so grateful to Tony and Shirley for their kindness and good humour. Thank you to William, Daranee and Lily for giving us a 'home away from home' and thank you to our family at home in Ireland for all that you did for us while we were away. Would we go again? Definitely yes. God willing and health permitting.



Nana and Papa with granddaughter Lily.



John Joe, William and Gabrielle with a memento of home, on top of Mount Maunganui, Tauranga, NZ

ON THE PATH TO SAINTHOOD

Fr. Declan O'Toole from Headford, Co. Galway, was brutally murdered in Kotidy, Northern Uganda, on 21st Mar. 2002. He was just five years ordained and only thirty-one years of age, the youngest of the Mill Hill Missionaries serving in Uganda at that time. In 2014, the then Bishop of Kotido, Rev. Dr. Giuseppe Filippi (Comboni Missionaries), took Declan's cause to Rome and, in 2015, Declan was declared 'Servant of God'. This title is used in the Catholic Church for a person whose life is being investigated by the Church for possible sainthood. The late Fr. Declan O'Toole, was a nephew of Kathleen Walsh, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis.



(Left) Fr. Declan O'Toole at his ordination reception with his parents Paul (RIP) and Carmel.
(Right) Fr. Declan O'Toole with Archbishop Michael Neary.

Photos courtesy St. Joseph's Advocate, the Mill Hill Missionaries quarterly publication.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

The St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is Ireland's largest voluntary charitable organisation and has been providing assistance for those in need and for homeless people since 1844. The Ballyhaunis Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society would like to remind readers of Annagh that help is available for individuals and families in our local area by calling 086 264 0969. All communication is treated in the strictest confidence and any assistance is offered by the society in a non-judgemental manner, based on the needs of the family or individual. People may contact our SVP Regional Office in Galway on 091 563233 if they prefer.

We are most grateful to our voluntary committee members who attend our regular meetings and ensure that our important work is carried out. We are especially thankful to people of

Ballyhaunis and surrounding parishes for your unfailing generosity down the years. A big thank you to the Abbey Male Choir, assisted by the Scoil Íosa Children's Choir, who hosted a Carol Service at the Friary in December in aid of St. Vincent de Paul. We thank all who continue to support our efforts. Your donations are always most welcome and appreciated.

We send our very best wishes to all of our friends at home and away for a peaceful and safe Christmas and all the very best for 2025.



**Our confidential
helpline number is
086 264 0969**



A memorial Walk and Family Fun Day took place in Ballyhaunis on 14th September 2024 to raise funds for the Irish Kidney Association. The event was organised by family and friends of the late Bridann Halpin Keane, Clooncrim, Ballinlough, Co. Roscommon and formerly of Main Street, Ballyhaunis, who passed away in September 2018. Bridann was the loving wife of Brian, mother of Diarmaid, daughter of Breege and John Halpin and sister to Siobhán and John Christopher, and wonderful friend to so many. She battled for some time with kidney disease and at the time of her passing she was on the waiting list for a transplant.

The organisers wish to thank everyone who braved the rain to join us in remembering our dear friend Bridann. The fact so many came out to celebrate her memory really is testament to how special a person she was. Thanks also to all the businesses who so kindly sponsored the event which would not have been possible without your generosity. A special thanks to the musicians and entertainers - the atmosphere under the canopy in the Friary Field was absolutely magical.



A view of the Memorial Walk progressing along Abbey Street and into Bridge Street.

Thanks to all who provided the refreshments (tea, coffee, sandwiches and treats) which were very welcome after the 5km walk around the town. We are most grateful to the Abbey Partnership for use of the grounds and to the Irish Kidney Association for their help and guidance. As part of this fundraiser, we also organised a raffle. Many thanks to all who sponsored the many wonderful raffle prizes.

At the time of writing this report, a sum in excess of €24,000 has been raised. Mile buíochas to all the volunteers who helped to make the occasion such a resounding success.



Congratulations to Noel and Eileen Grogan, Reisk, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 23rd March 2024. Eileen Folliard (Cooloughra) and Noel Grogan (Reisk) married in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, 23rd March 1974.

BALLYHAUNIS DEFIBRILLATOR GROUP

Paula Grogan (Secretary)

In the past year, our group's instructor, Darran Conlon, ran some very successful training sessions which included Community First Responder training for local people. We are very grateful to Darren who voluntarily gives of his time for training classes and who is always so positive and encouraging within our group. We have more training sessions earmarked to take place in the coming months with volunteers from Ballyhaunis Golf Club being the first group to be trained.

Our fundraising drive last year was very successful and, having reached our target, we were able to replace the seven defibrillators that needed upgrading, and purchase some new outside storage cabinets. Our group is very grateful to Siobhán Conlon, Alma Gallagher, Lisa McConn and David McConn for offering to run the Dublin Marathon for our fundraiser.



A defibrillator and cabinet has been installed on the side-wall of Forde's Ltd., the Square. It was donated by the Carroll family in memory of Tommie Carroll, Knox St., who died in 2022. Pictured, from left, are: John Jordan, Orla Loftus Moran and Eamonn Carroll.

Local businesses played a huge role in our fundraiser, with Nolan's Supervalu, Communicare Medical Supplies and St. Patrick's Church contributing to the full cost of a defibrillator. Homecare Medical also donated a new defibrillator and a heated storage cabinet which are now both located in the Church grounds behind the statue near the steps.

Other businesses also made large donations of choice towards our cause: Agri-Spread International, Delaney's Hardware, Eddie Murphy Menswear, EPS Pumping and Treatment Systems, Grogan Concrete, Johnston Machinery and Major Equipment International Ltd. We sincerely thank these businesses for their donations. As a result of the very generous donation from the family

of the late Tommie Carroll of Knox Street, who sadly passed away suddenly in October 2022, we upgraded the defibrillator and outside storage cabinet located at Forde's, The Square, where a plaque has been installed in Tommie's memory. We are very grateful to Breege Carroll Gallagher and the members of the Carroll family for their very generous donation in memory of their late brother.

Sincere thanks are also due to Ballyhaunis Vocational (Tech) School Reunion Group, Forde's Shop and Gavin Undertakers for their very welcome donations to our fundraiser. Our group was also successful in obtaining a donation from First Choice Credit Union under their Community Groups Scheme, which we were delighted to receive.

The defibrillator at Tullaghaun is moving to a new location due to weather impact on the outside storage cabinet where it currently stands. The new location will be at the old ball alley at Bargariff / Curries which is a more sheltered place for the new defibrillator and new storage cabinet.

Defibrillator Locations

It is important to know the location of your nearest Defibrillator so ensure you know your nearest one in the event of an emergency. The Eircodes of the various Defibrillators currently available to the public in Ballyhaunis and surrounding areas are:

Annagh	F35 KP78
Brackloon	F35 CF98
Derrynacong	F35 R224
Forde's Shop, The Square	F35 VY58
Ballyhaunis GAA Club	F35 RY97
Ballyhaunis Golf Club	F35 P661
Ballyhaunis Rugby Club	F35 CX24
Johnstown	F35 VK75
Kilmannin	F35 A290
Kiltybo	F35 EA21
Pattenspark	F35 RR71
Scoil Iosa National School	F35 PX94
St. Patrick's Church	F35 ED78
Tullaghaun	F35 TY77

CURLEY'S FAMILY PHARMACY 1934 – 2024

The Curley family



Curley's original Medical Hall pharmacy in the process of being extended into the former offices of Dillon Leetch Solicitors around 1970.

Curley's Family Pharmacy opened on 14th May 1934, a fair day when huge numbers of people would flock to Ballyhaunis to buy and sell cattle, have a drink or two on the traditional 'luck money', and maybe buy an item or two from the 'cheap jack' stalls on the street. This was the Ballyhaunis in which Michael Curley, AKA 'Mickey', put down his professional roots, and where his cousin, Dr. Eamon Waldron, was a prominent GP. Mickey previously worked in Athlone but transferred to Headford, Co. Galway to work for a Mr. Stafford who also owned a shop in Tuam.

While in Headford, Mickey met and fell in love with a local worker called Mary Jane Forde, also called 'Maimie'. They married, moved to Ballyhaunis, built a house in Upper Main Street and reared six children. Three of their children gave their lives to pharmacy: Mary, Michael, and Hugh following in the footsteps of their father.

Pharmacy and dispensing chemists existed in Ireland since late Victorian times, in *Ulysses* ('arguably the greatest novel ever written'), James Joyce writes of his hero Leopold Bloom visiting Sweny's in Dublin and smelling the lemon soap on the counter before buying a bar for his travels across the city. It is unlikely that

Curley's chemists greeted their customers with scented soap because chemist shops were small and functional and did not offer a shopping experience like today. Patented medicine was limited and potions and cures were concocted from large jars with multi-coloured liquids inside, compounded from secret recipes. In the smaller towns the population was serviced by the dispensary system run by the county councils. The councils supplied doctors with products free of charge and in turn doctors supplied their patients who could not afford to pay. A look at the dispensing books of the time will show that rural pharmacies may only have had a total of five prescriptions daily. These were written in Latin, the language of the Church and medicine, and the figures and amounts were in roman numerals.

Patented medicines

Since many pharmacies could not make a living from dispensing alone, it was important that they developed a 'front of shop' or O.T.C (over the counter) trade. As far back as 1902, the *Irish Times* ran an advertisement for 'Doan's Backache Kidney Pills' which claimed to cure 'backache, rheumatism, impure blood, asthma and weak boys'. With a price tag of two shillings a box, a large sum at the time, they would want to be good. Patented

medicines had started to appear in the late 1930s and products such as Bayer Aspirin, Beecham pills and powders, Mrs. Cullen's powders, Sudocrem and Zam Buk ointment were expensive. May Roberts manufactured brands such as Euthynol toothpaste, Brylcream and Vaseline hair tonic. In terms of painkillers, codeine tablets were available. At that time many ancillary items like toothpaste, baby food and toiletries could only be stocked in pharmacies and chemist shops were the only suppliers of cosmetics and perfumes with Coty and Gala dominating the fragrance market.

Ireland's economic position during the second world war was very precarious. The period was called 'The Emergency' when basic food items like tea, flour, butter

and essential items had to be rationed. Only doctors and priests could use petrol. Turf, cut by the army, powered the trains and a lot of small businesses collapsed. Up to 100,000 people emigrated to work in England.

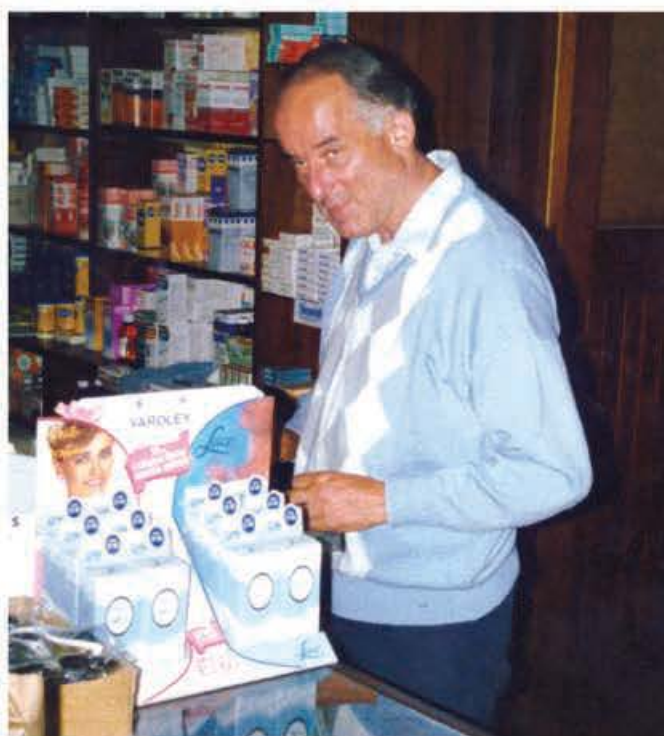
After sixteen years of Fianna Fáil rule, the first inter-party government came to office in 1948 and proposed a medical health scheme. Their leader was John A. Costello of Fine Gael and the Coalition included a new party called Clann na Poblachta whose leader was Sean McBride, son of the 1916 leader Major John McBride and Maud Gonne. On his first day in the Dail a West Galway G.P., Noel Browne of Clann na Poblachta (aged 32) was appointed Minister for Health and he set about trying to eradicate tuberculosis (T.B.).

T.B. was a respiratory disease with a death rate of 4,000 people per year. He set up special hospitals called Sanatoria to quarantine patients, provided 2,000 extra beds, used mobile x-ray units and the newly discovered BCG vaccine. The programme was financed mainly from the Irish hospital sweepstake – a type of lottery – and the death rate came down substantially.

After the success of managing T.B., Browne drew up the Mother and Child Scheme which proposed to give free medical treatment to mothers and children under sixteen with no means test. The Irish medical organisation objected that state involvement in medicine would mean an end to privacy of the doctor-patient relationship. Several Irish Catholic bishops objected stating that the right to provide the health of children belonged to parents and not the state. Browne resigned from government and the scheme was abandoned.

The 1950s was the bleakest decade in the twentieth century with Ireland having one of the lowest standards of living in Western Europe. But all was about to change rapidly. Two programmes for economic expansion encouraged foreign enterprises to set up in Ireland with

the promise of low taxes, coupled with a highly intelligent workforce. Pharma and the newly emerging tech companies flocked here. G.D.P. rose by 80% and 80,000 jobs were created. The 1960s saw a rapid growth in the use of penicillin antibiotics, discovered in 1928 by Fleming. The cost of ampicillin and amoxycillin fell due to competition pressures between manufacturers. Anti-anxiety medication became popular with Valium and Librium and sleeping tablets frequently prescribed. Infamous in this decade was Thalidomide, a product used to treat morning sickness in pregnant



Above: Michael Curley. Below: Hugh Curley.



women, where devastating side-effects in causing birth defects became fully known. The product was withdrawn in 1961.

Despite the obvious business euphoria, tragedy struck the Curley household in January 1963, with the sudden death of Michael Curley aged sixty-two years. After the traditional period of mourning passed, courage and resilience resumed with Mary and Michael reopening and continuing the pharmacy service. This was a difficult time for both but patient welfare and dedication to healthcare prevailed. Mary had qualified as a pharmacist in 1961 and spent two years working with her father. In 1966 she married a Kilkenny pharmacist, Brian McEneaney, whom she had met in college. Their first child, Peter, was born during Mary's time in Ballyhaunis and was reared by his grandmother Maimie and their loyal neighbour and best friend Pat Grogan. With Brian's kind support, Mary stayed on working with Michael in Ballyhaunis until Hugh qualified in 1968.

New era

On Mary's departure to her Kilkenny home, Michael and Hugh, encouraged and assisted by their wives Francie and Rosaleen, set up a limited company. They bought the offices of the Dillon-Leetch law firm next door and expanded the shop to the floor area it now occupies. Because of the ample dispensary and front of shop space, new stands and counter space displayed products ranging from hair products to baby products with cosmetic stands and perfume cabinets dominating. These changes required extra staff, and three excellent dedicated members joined who are still in situ today. More were to follow over the years including Emma, Michael's daughter.

In the 1970s Hugh and Rosaleen bought Brendan Byrne's pharmacy on the Square. Rosaleen developed this as Curley's Jewellery shop, a project she works on passionately to this day. There were now two pharmacies in Ballyhaunis, Curley's Pharmacy and O'Connor's Pharmacy on Main Street. O'Connor's was later purchased by Tom Colleran who moved to Knox Street and later to Bridge Street where it stands today.

The greatest single revolution came in health in 1973 when the General Medical Service was rolled out nationally. The public could now avail of a vast range of medicines for a small fee payment. Most families in the catchment area were eligible and the scheme was later extended to all over the age of seventy. This had an enormous impact on retail pharmacy as it provided the chance to realise a greater proportion of earnings from professional work rather than ancillary sales.

Naturally, the delivery drivers became the faces of both companies and provided a solid dependable service in all weathers. Allied to this were the company

representatives both medical and OTC. Their faces were the link to the companies, and they advised on shortages, price increases and bonuses. Some also became lifelong friends. In essence, the company representatives were the barometer of the medical world as their travels usually covered eight to ten counties in six-to-eight-week cycles and they could advise on sale differences in areas. A fourth Curley family member, Pat, became a representative for Pinewood having previously worked for Cahill May Roberts. Ned, the youngest member of the family, a secondary school teacher in Sligo, worked with his brothers during school holidays and joined the pharmacy full time when he retired from teaching.

Business remained brisk and Ballyhaunis was the envy of similar sized towns in Mayo. Sadly, Michael died suddenly in 2003 aged just sixty-five, about a year after his mother Maimie died at the age of ninety-three. Hugh continued in the shop accompanied by his daughter Róisín. Hugh worked tirelessly throughout the years caring for the community and building the pharmacy from strength to strength. He was always progressive and open to new ideas and advances in medicine and pharmacy. He joined the Pharmasave group of independent pharmacies to pool together with other key pharmacies in the region.

Hugh's son Mark qualified from Bath University and joined his father and sister in the pharmacy in 2007. Hugh died suddenly in October 2010. This ended the Michael and Hugh era. Once again, after a period of mourning, the next generation took over and Mark continued at the helm.

The third generation of the Curley family is alive with pharmacists. The current phase of Curley's Pharmacy is run by Hugh's children Mark and Róisín, both pharmacists. Michael's two sons Michael and Anthony are also pharmacists working in Swinford and Cork, respectively, and Mary's daughters Michelle and Maria are both pharmacists working in Kilkenny.

The Pharmasave group that Hugh joined later became the Totalhealth group of independent pharmacies and, in turn, Mark and Róisín rebranded the business as Curley's Totalhealth Pharmacy. The Totalhealth group has since merged with the Haven group of independent pharmacies to become CommCare pharma.

Recent Changes

Over the years computerisation developed rapidly, recording the medical history of each patient and printing labels with warnings about possible side effects and certain foods to be avoided. The prescription book became obsolete with huge volumes of information now instantly available, allowing pharmacists to handle more items per hour.



Mark and Róisín Curley.



Curley's staff. L-R: Mary Niland, Laura Egan, Mary Gurren, Mark Curley, Rosaleen Curley, Róisín Curley, Ned Curley, Madeline Nolan.

Nursing Homes became more widespread in this era and two substantial facilities served Ballyhaunis and its surrounds: Brookvale Manor in Hazelhill and Ave Maria in Tooreen. These were serviced by blister packing where patients' medicines are individually packed in trays with times and days clearly displayed. Initially, this was time and staff consuming but delays are now overcome by a dispensing robot, operated by a technician under the supervision of the pharmacist. Blister packing is also available to the public on request as a safe means of taking medicine.

The Department of Health has made it compulsory for pharmacies to provide consultation rooms where patients can discuss their prescriptions in privacy and confidentially with their chosen pharmacists. The result has been very positive as patients exit the consultancy relaxed and confident, a satisfactory outcome for both parties. Because of the availability of this space and pharmacists, other essential services became available – the administration of vaccines, blood pressure and cholesterol testing, advice on smoking cessation, obesity, alcohol consumption, emergency contraception and other relevant conditions. These interventions are complementary to the work of the G.P. and not a substitute.

As stated previously, the success of Curley's pharmacy over the decades is thanks to its wonderful, diligent and loyal staff and their contribution to the running of the pharmacy.

It is virtually impossible to predict what the future may hold due to the political volatility of

today. However, some trends are emerging. Thanks to research and development here in Ireland and abroad new drugs are being produced that aim to eliminate some diseases and cure other debilitating ailments in the future. An ageing Irish population with a growing life expectancy will have a significant impact on the country. Advances in computer software, electronics and artificial intelligence have the potential to change the dynamics of health and pharmacy.

Curley's pharmacy will continue to meet the challenges of the future just as we overcame those of the past. It will serve the loyal customers and passing trade of Ballyhaunis with care, courtesy and appreciation and in a few short years will celebrate its centenary of service in the year 2034.



Curley's Pharmacy today.

BALLYHAUNIS AREA COMMUNITY GAMES

Tracy Cunnane (Secretary)

In May of this year (2024) Ballyhaunis held its first Community Games events in a long time. Sports Hub co-ordinator Tracy Cunnane and some parents got a committee together with a view to raising teams to take part. Many of them hold fond memories of Community Games in Ballyhaunis in the past. It was decided to start small and see how we got on.

Early in the year we entered two basketball teams for competitions in St. Gerald's De La Salle College, Castlebar – an under-13s boys' team and an under-13s girls' team. Both teams did very well, considering that a lot of players on both teams were quite young, but they gave it their all and had a great day. The boys were runners up to Westport and delighted to get a county silver medal.

The boys under-12s soccer team took on Ballyheane in the county semi-final held in Ballyhaunis Town F.C. grounds. Unfortunately, they lost in a thrilling penalty shoot-out. This was a great opportunity for boys from different clubs to play together with players from Ballyhaunis, Cloonfad, Claremorris and Lough Harps.



Community Games offers participation in a wide range of sporting disciplines.

Community Games Day and County finals

Ballyhaunis Area held our Athletics Day at the Ballyhaunis Town F.C. grounds on 30th May, running events for boys and girls from under-8s to under-16s. It was great to see all the many different nationalities in Ballyhaunis coming together to take part in the events and big thanks are due to all volunteers on the day for a well-run event. Children who came first and second progressed to the county finals, held on Sunday, 16th June at Claremorris Athletics Ground. In a

well-run event, there was a great atmosphere and it was a wonderful experience for all the children and their families. Well done to all who took part. Each area supplied volunteers on the day, so thanks to committee members Tracy Cunnane, Patricia Murphy and Justin McDonagh who helped out. Fifteen children from Ballyhaunis Area took part with many getting through their heats to the final and finishing well. It was a great achievement to reach the County Finals and a fun day was had all round. First and second placed finishers got through to the next round. Hannah Skeffington and Robin Webb, both in the 100 metres, progressed to the regionals in Athlone on 10th August. Well done on making the Connacht finals. Annabel McGowan received bronze in the girls javelin field events under-13s.

National Finals

Patrick Cuddy (200 metres), Katie Conlon and Daniel Buckley (Long Puck), Hazel Murphy and Heath McDonagh (Long Throw) progressed to the National finals in Carlow on 24th August. It was a great achievement to represent Mayo in an All-Ireland Final. All had an enjoyable experience and did themselves proud in their Mayo vests.

Left: Girls Basketball team with coaches Aoife Carroll (left) and Gierdre Zaugiene.



It was great to get the games going again and hopefully we'll build on our success next year. Community Games consist of many team and individual events ranging from art and singing to all the many athletics disciplines. To learn more, go to communitygames.ie. To get involved locally contact ballyhaunis@community.eu or chat to committee members Tracy Cunnane, Patricia Murphy, Justin



Some of this year's Ballyhaunis Community Games participants at the National Finals in Carlow: Katie Conlon, Daniel Buckley, Hazel Murphy and Heath McDonagh. *Missing from photo: Patrick Cuddy.*

McDonagh, Aoife Carroll or Anne Cunnane.

Thanks to the local churches for allowing church gate collections and to Gierdre Bianca Greta for helping out. This fundraising helped pay running costs. Thanks to Stella O'Neill, a past participant in Community Games, for her guidance and in helping us to get started up again. Thanks also to Ballyhaunis Town FC for the use of their facilities, to Ballyhaunis Chamber and Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre.



Boys Basketball team with their coach, Tracy Cunnane.



Cumann Lúchcleas Gael na mBunscoileanna winners 1990, St. Mary's Primary School, Ballyhaunis. Back, L-R: Micheál Webb (trainer), Steven Glynn, Brian Flanagan, Jim Lundon (Principal), Niall Tighe, Patrick Keane, Pat O'Connor (trainer). Front, L-R: Paul Finn, Ian Webb, Simon Webb, John Burke, P.C. Curley. *Courtesy of Glynn's Photography.*



Steven Glynn (Doctor's Road) with his son Nathan. Steven is now kept busy coaching the under-10 team in Sacramento, California, U.S.A.

INTERIM PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

University of Galway's Governing Authority - Údarás na hOllscoile - has confirmed the appointment of Professor Peter McHugh as Interim President, following Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh's decision to step down as president. Prof. McHugh had been serving as Deputy President and Registrar and took up his new role of Interim President in September 2024.

Prof. McHugh joined the university in 1991 and was appointed as the first Established Professor of Biomedical Engineering in 2007. He has previously served as Dean of College of Engineering and Informatics, Head of School of Engineering and Informatics, and Head of School of Engineering.

An internationally recognised research leader in biomedical engineering, Prof. McHugh's research is focused on fundamental developments and applications of computational and experimental methods in biomechanics, tissue mechanics and medical implants and devices. He has been a pioneer in the development of biomedical engineering in Ireland and internationally, and he was the founding director of the Biomechanics Research Centre (BioMEC) at University of Galway.

He has received numerous awards, including membership of the Royal Irish Academy (2011), the Silver Medal of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland – Section of Bioengineering (2011), the Presidential Nominee Fellowship of Engineers Ireland (2009), Fellowship of the Irish Academy of Engineering (2019), and the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship

(1995). He has also served in officer roles in the Royal Irish Academy, most recently as secretary for policy and international relations, where he was the Irish representative to several international academy organisations, including the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC).

Prof. McHugh has a significant publication record and has supervised to completion thirty-three PhD and twenty-three research master's students. He has generated over €14m in research funding from national, EU and industry sources, and has active research collaborations with international leaders in the field, spanning Europe and the USA. He is deeply committed to undergraduate and postgraduate education and has been instrumental in developing and extending the University's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the biomedical engineering domain.

The chair of the University of Galway Governing Authority, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, commented: "On behalf of the University of Galway Governing Authority, I would like to welcome Professor Peter McHugh's appointment as Interim President and wish him every success in the role".

Peter is the son of the late Eddie and Tess (Kelly) McHugh of Main Street and is wished all the very best from his many friends in Ballyhaunis.

Based on a recent article in 'Cois Coirbe', University of Galway's alumni magazine.



University of Galway graduates and former Ballyhaunis Community School students receiving their degrees in Science and Biomedical Science at the University of Galway, in August 2024, from Prof. Peter McHugh. L-R: Michelle Grogan (Doctor's Rd.), Molly Curran (Cartron South), Prof. Peter McHugh (Interim President), Jack McGoldrick (Abbeyquarter) and Ethan Keane (Knock Rd.).

UP THE OTHER SIDE

MAIN STREET, BALLYHAUNIS, LATE 1950S (PART 2)

Christina Johnston (Erriff)



Main Street, Ballyhaunis in the 1960s.

In last year's edition of Annagh we travelled down Main Street and stopped at Dillon's at The Square. We now cross the road and continue our journey up Main Street – Up the Other Side (the south side)!

Our first stop is The Corner Bar, owned by the Regan family. There were twin daughters, Phyllis and Mary, whom I recall well as they were just a few classes below myself. The premises was more recently run by Billy and Eileen Nestor and family and currently the well-known barman John Morley is keeping the customers happy for the leaseholder. Next, we have McGarry's Ladies and Gents Outfitters, still occupying the same location with attractive window displays and a very colourful, inviting entrance. Cora McGarry runs a very select ladies fashion outlet, stocking upmarket, quality brands for her many customers. Cora also specialises in outfits for special occasions, such as mother of the bride as well as dresses for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Back in the 1950s her father Paddy McGarry was an astute businessman who also ran the local dancehall and the Star Cinema. Paddy had a section within the shop where locals could have their house plans charted and drawn up.

Another thriving business on our upward journey was Gallagher's Hardware. Gallagher's stocked building materials – timber, cement, hardwall – paints, bedding, carpets, linoleum, soft furnishings and all other types of general hardware. John and Mrs. Gallagher had one daughter Bernadette and three sons John, Bernard and Paul. The three boys all worked in the family business. They employed a number of foremen and staff who cut their entrepreneurial teeth in Gallagher's before going on to achieve great success in future endeavours. Some of the names that come to mind include Milo Henry, Jackie Walsh, John Higgins and Joe Rochford. Jackie Walsh of Drimaderry passed away only just earlier this year while the others happily continue to soldier on. The Gallagher family sold the business which is now an international food emporium with Arabic lettering above the door and run today by a gentleman from Syria.

Changes

The next group of businesses along the street have changed beyond all recognition: Thos. O'Boyle's (a great fair day premises), Jack and Josie Eaton's, Jack O'Connor's pharmacy. The Central Hotel, which was an impressive building, was run by Michael Freeley and his

wife and family. I had dealings with Therese and always found her to be a pleasant and competent young lady. It is regrettable that Ballyhaunis does not have a hotel in the town at present.

Paddy and Josie Ryan opened their original VG Supermarket in Main Street in the mid-1960s in a premises previously run by Jimmy and Paddy Flynn. Tilly and Joe McQueeney ran a grocery and sweet shop where you could buy a quarter pound of loose sweets stored behind the counter in gleaming glass jars. McQueeney's sold beautiful boxes of chocolates at Christmas time. Tilly was always very kind to young children and would always give a few sweets over and above what you ordered. Her husband Joe passed away at a very young age leaving a young son Michael.

Paddy Freeley's was another interesting shop with nice gifts and light hardware. As a teenager, I remember being sent in by my parents to fetch half an ounce of lettuce, onion, cabbage, carrot and parsnip seeds for the vegetable garden and packets of Tom Thumb Nasturtiums, primroses and daffodil bulbs for the flower garden. Mr. Freeley was a very courteous and gracious gentleman and his merchandise was of the highest quality.

Padraic Waldron's was another popular shop, renowned for its ice cream topped with raspberry sauce and Cadbury's flakes. Padraic's brother Anthony dealt with slicing their beautiful cooked ham and used a spatula with great skill, dressed in his white shop coat and gloves.

Fitzgerald's was also a haven for ice cream and a great variety of sweets and chocolate boxes and bars. I can recall the Fitzgerald children. Edward drove the lorries with his dad and Tom was a Mayo County footballer. The girls were Mary Frances, Eleanor Margot, Therese and Jenny. Next-door to Fitzgerald's was another popular fashion shop owned by Concannons. Tom and Mrs. Concannon stocked suits, cardigans, shoes, Holy Communion and Confirmation outfits, nylons and underwear. Everyone knew and liked Paddy Connell who worked in Concannon's for many long years until his retirement.

One of the best-known characters on Main Street, Ballyhaunis, was Ms. Lucy Flynn. Lucy and her brother Conor lived in a small shop next to Concannon's. Lucy did a nice trade in lovely sweets, biscuits and bars. She stocked a great assortment of penny toffees, Flash bars and Macaroon bars, liquorice strings, barley sugar and other loose sweets. Lucy always spoke very politely and was always dressed and made-up elegantly. Frances Donoghue ran the premises accommodating the bookie's which catered for local punters who wagered their shilling or half-crown each way on their fancied horses.

Next was Pat and Mrs. O'Brien's auctioneering business and shop with fancy goods. Their son John later took over the business and was quite prominent during the Land Commission era.

Delicious steaks, lamb and all kinds of meat were available at Seamie Webb's fine butcher's shop. Webbs had a long tradition in cattle dealing and butchering and were well known at all the cattle fairs. Lily and Tom Moran were next to Seamie Webb's. Tom sold lorry-loads of Bord na Mona turf in wintertime. The shop today is run by their son Tommy and his wife Marguerite. It is an interesting shop with 'all kinds of everything' including light hardware, gifts, fancy goods, cards and an assortment of sweet products. Marguerite does not stick to the hours of nine to five and, to the delight of the children, is often open until much later.

Nora Healy's pub was a very popular meeting spot with many country folk. I remember her lovely coffee (Irel) and sandwiches on fair days. She was from Annagh and married Sonny Lyons who drove Jordan's blue lorry delivering bag-stuff and other goods around the countryside. Dillon-Leetch Solicitors had their offices next door before moving to their current location further up the street in the early 1970s.

Next, we move to one of the most popular shops in the town: Micky Curley's Chemists shop. His daughter Mary was also a pharmacist and she was greatly missed when she married and moved to live in Kilkenny. Two other sons, Hugh and Michael, also became pharmacists and the other children Pat, Eamon and Anne were also involved in running the business. Today the business is in the capable hands of Micky's grandchildren Mark and Roisín. I remember as a teenager being sent into Micky Sr. for the 'squeezers' for cattle, an errand that embarrassed me greatly as did the collection of bowel tablets for my mother! The Curley family always were and still remain most gracious and obliging to all their customers.

At this point I feel that I have gone on long enough for this instalment. I intend to leave the next block – the 'law and order' block – and the church area along with Greene's and Annie and Trush Freeleys and beyond for the 2025 edition of *Annagh*, God willing.

If you wish to submit an article or photograph for Annagh 2025 – our 48th issue – email: info@annaghmag.ie, or visit our website www.annaghmag.ie.

The deadline is Friday, 10th October, 2025.



An Irish Ale Breweries function in the Manor House Hotel, Ballyhaunis, March 1987

Back, L-R: Tony Gibbons, Sean Biesty, Murt Hunt, Tommy Grogan, Eamonn Burke, Flan Moroney, Eugene Collum, John Stephen Greally.

Third Row, L-R: Michael O'Loughlin, Jimmy Flanagan, Willie Coyne, Pat Byrne, Padraic Morley, Dan Tarpey, John O'Neill.

Second Row, L-R: Mary Burke, Tom Cribbin, Mary Walsh, Mick Hunt, Eddie Wall, Mick Finnegan.

Front Row, L-R: Oliver Cribbin, Joe Burke, Freddie Herr, Tom Sullivan, John Regan. *Courtesy of John Stephen Greally.*



John Greally Jr. (Drimbane), Paddy Egan (Ballinasloe) and Sean Biesty (Carrowkeel), taken at an Irish Ales Breweries function in the 1980s. *Courtesy of John Stephen Greally.*



Congratulations to Frances Maye on celebrating her 90th birthday. What a wonderful milestone for the woman who for many years was the hardworking and loyal sacristan in the Parish Church. Thanks to Irene, the current sacristan, for organising the party. Go mairfidh tú an céad!



Friends meet up in Westport.

L-R: James Mulrennan (Gurteen and Westport), Sean Browne (Cloonfad and Sligo), Brian Mulrennan (Ballyhaunis).

BICENTENARY OF BALLINLOUGH CHURCH OF IRELAND

Martha Cornwall

The bi-centenary of Kiltullagh Parish Church of Ireland (Ballinlough, Co. Roscommon) took place on Sunday, 22nd Sept. 2024. It was a very joyous occasion for the parishioners and community as they celebrated two-hundred years of this historic place of worship. The service was led by Rev. Xanthe Pratt and some visiting clergy took part. Bishop Ferran Glenfield of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, unveiled and dedicated a commemorative plaque erected in the porch to mark 200 years, 1824-2024.

The church was built in 1824 in the most focal point in the village of Ballinlough. It comprises a two-bay nave abutting a three-stage castellated tower with pinnacles to the west and vestry to the south-east. The church has a unique pitched slate roof with rendered and cut stone chimney stacks. It is set within its own grounds with various upright and recumbent grave markers dating from the nineteenth century to the present day.

This church is the oldest building still in use in Ballinlough and has a unique architectural, historic and cultural heritage. Originally, the church was called The

Union Church of Kiltullagh – the union comprising of the parishes of Templetogether (Williamstown), Annagh (Ballyhaunis), Began, Knock, Aghamore and Kiltullagh (Ballinlough). This church was in the Tuam diocese for many years but later became part of the Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh diocese.

Records

Earliest church records date back to July 1823, where it is documented that the parish agreed to receive proposals for the building of a new church. It was built on the site of an older church which was partially destroyed by a storm sometime in or before the year 1821, but there is no written evidence to say when the initial church was built.

Parish records show that a Thomas McDermott took down the old church in 1823 and was paid £5 to do so. Builder and architect, Thomas Cosgrave, was later hired to build the new church at a cost of £755. The same Thomas Cosgrave designed and restructured the town of Ballinlough at the end of the eighteenth/early nineteenth century.

The school-house, located to the south of the church, was built around the same time, using materials that remained from the ruins of the old church. A few years later, in 1829, the gate and wall surrounding the graveyard were built at a cost of £30.

In May 1884, sixty years after the church was built, the font was moved from near the pulpit to its current position at the west door, to make room for additional pews each side of the aisle. At that time there were services both morning and evening on a Sunday.

An interesting fact is that the present baptismal font at the back of the church, which originally came from Holy Trinity church in Castlereagh, was the font used in the baptism of Sir William Wilde, father of Oscar Wilde. It was also used in the baptism of Ireland's first President, Dr. Douglas Hyde.

While it is not verified in parish written records, it has been passed down verbally that the church was originally heated by two fireplaces, which is why there are chimneys on the church. What we do know from the records is that, in March 1894, seventy years after the church was built, the parish considered a new heating system. Interestingly, it was an underground heating system that was installed, which was quite innovative for its time. Turf was used to fuel the stoves, and this was supplied by each household for use in both the church and the school.



The Church of Ireland, Ballinlough.

In 1895, seventy-one years after the church was built, records show that a new bell was installed at a cost of £64. Local historians have said that the bell was initially purchased for the local Roman Catholic church but, for reasons not known, it was not used and so was later purchased by the Church of Ireland parish. That same year, the beautiful window, known as the East window, was installed. In 1896 and 1897 a new ceiling was put in and new side windows with coloured, stained glass were installed. In 1938 the oak pulpit and communion table were donated from Moylough church, Co. Galway.

Jumping ahead to 1994, which brings us up to thirty-years ago, a community employment scheme carried out extensive works around the church and school to improve the grounds and surrounding areas. That same year, major works were carried out on the bell which was in a dangerous condition.

In November 2001 floodlighting was installed around the church, which was an appropriate addition to mark the beginning of the new millennium. These lights have resulted in the church being a prominent and noted landmark, sitting proudly on the hill in the centre of the town.

In addition to what has been said, records show that much maintenance was carried out on the church and grounds over the years, often by parishioners themselves. However, an inspection carried out on the church in 2017 highlighted that there was much more to do. The last number of years have seen major renovations carried out on the church, to the extent that the building was completely gutted and stripped back to the four original stone walls. Everything today is either brand new or refurbished.

The church is open every Sunday for service at 9.30 am. All who visit are most welcome.



Parishioners and clergy pictured at the cutting of a cake marking the Bi-centenary of the Church of Ireland in Ballinlough. *Back, L-R:* Fr. Joe Feeney, Rev. Edward Yendell, Rev. Ed Smyth, Fr. Stephen Farragher, Canon Andrea Wills, Rev. Xanthe Pratt. *Front, L-R:* Jennifer Young (Church Warden), Catherine Cornwall, Bishop Ferran Glenfield, Shane Swanick and Charles Swanick (Church Warden).



Pictured at the unveiling of the Bi-centenary memorial plaque in the Church of Ireland, Ballinlough. *From left:* Martha Cornwall, Rev. Xanthe Pratt, Jennifer Young and Canon Andrea Wills.

Ballyhaunis Connections

Some of the Kiltullagh Church of Ireland parishioners lived across the county boundary in the parish of Annagh (Ballyhaunis), County Mayo. In the townland of Coolnafarna in 1901, eight of the fourteen households belonged to the Church of Ireland: four families of Burns and one each of Boyd, Evans, Mears and Pugh.

Amongst those with a family grave in Ballinlough churchyard is William Insley, who had a hotel on Main Street, Ballyhaunis through the 1860s and 70s. Around 1880 he sold the place to James Lyons - who named it 'The Commercial Hotel' - and returned to his native Castlereagh where he died in 1887.

BALLYHAUNIS RUGBY CLUB

Martin Walsh

It has been another busy year for the club at all levels on the pitch, and plenty happening off it as well.

First of all, I want to thank everybody who supports the club in any way and that's a huge group of people. We have players at all ages, their families, supporters, coaches, club members and a huge community of people in Ballyhaunis and far beyond who support us and help greatly in our fundraising time and time again.

Our senior team had a very successful season with games in the J1B league where they finished mid-table and only for conceding a couple of last-minute scores we could have finished top three. Our seniors also contested the Curley Cup which is a very competitive Connaught junior competition named in honor of our own founding member Hugh Curley. It's a huge ambition to win this. However, despite a great run, we will have to wait another year. The lads rightly decided they deserved a break and took an end of season team-building trip to Alicante for a few days.

Make no mistake, Ballyhaunis has produced some great rugby players over the years and this has never been truer than with the current crop. Following on from the selection of Fintan Crawley and Aidan Healy for the 2023 Connaught Junior team, both were recalled, with the addition of Michael Jordan, for the 2024 selection. They played an inter-provincial competition in early summer with three very competitive games. The Ballyhaunis lads played in all games and, once again, Fintan Crawley stood out and was voted the club's Player

of the Year following last year's Player of the Tournament award. They made such an impression that Fintan and Aidan have been head-hunted by Sligo RFC in their endeavor to win the Energia All Ireland League. Both players have made huge contributions already to Sligo as they battle the top teams across Ireland at the top level. We wish them both well and look forward to their return when they have had their fill of the big time. Players of their ability are certainly missed, but thankfully we have several new players who have moved up from under-age as well as some that have come from other clubs, far and near. One young man from Georgia

is enjoying rugby in Ballyhaunis and another former pro player from South Africa has joined our management team. Both have found this a great way to immerse themselves in their new home.



Involvement

This summer we revived our tag rugby. Tag rugby is a social, non-contact sport played with mixed teams and has become very popular with all who tried it. We might not have had a super summer, but every Thursday evening the rain cleared, the sun came out and thirty to forty people gathered on Doctor's Road to play tag followed by a cool drink in the club house. We certainly intend to organise and expand this next summer, so please come along if you'd like to give it ago.

Friday nights from September to April continue to see huge numbers of children from seven to twelve years joining us for minis rugby. We have fielded teams at all age groups in blitzes and games around the province for years. However, this year was very special for one very lucky group. Our under-10s were drawn to play in the Aviva Mini Rugby Festival on the hallowed grounds of the Aviva Stadium. This was a huge experience for all who took part and something that will live long with the players and parents who were there to see their children parade out of the tunnel at a world class venue.

We fielded youth teams at under-13, under-14, under-16, who train generally on Wednesday nights and again compete in Connaught leagues and blitz. They have competed well against some large clubs and love being able to play with comrades from the greater Ballyhaunis area.

Our girls' team has come on brilliantly and



Girl Power! Evie Watson, Cara Walsh, Katie Shaughnessy, Emma Gorman.

won an under-13 blitz in Ballyhaunis against the might of Castlebar in their last game. This season the numbers have grown substantially and they are in an under-14 Connaught league. It's interesting to see much larger clubs having to combine to form a girl's teams while we stand alone with subs to spare. The girls love rugby for the exact same reasons boys do: the contact, the simplicity of the game, the fact there's a position for every type and ability of player and, most of all, that it's such a team game.

Club House

Of course, all these teams need a lot of support and we are always looking for more help and more volunteers, so if you have any interest, regardless of your level of knowledge of the game, feel free to contact the club.

Following on from the completion of our club-house development, we have been busy hosting events, and I think it's fair to say it has become a great addition to the area's social life. A whole range of fitness classes and groups use the main hall during the week and quite a lot of weekends have hosted discos, parties and social groups enjoying the bar and hall for music and dancing. Obtaining our own club bar license has been a great addition and events can be organised much more easily.



Pity poor number 7! Ballyhaunis club members playing for Connaught Junior against Leinster. L-R: Fintan Crawley, Aidan Healy and Michael Jordan.

Some great nights took place during the festival, especially the céili and several community groups/organisations have had social nights that were also a great success. A huge number of people have been through the building in its first year complete and we have received nothing but very positive feedback from many who have never been in our grounds before and are amazed at the facilities. Again, it has only been possible thanks to the constant support of all in our club and our community.

From all at Ballyhaunis Rugby Club I would like to wish Annagh readers a great Christmas and safe 2025.



Ballyhaunis Junior team, 2023/24 season. *Back, L-R:* James Frayne, David Gorman, Padraig Carney, Scott Finlay, Pat Egan, Jack Deegan, Fintan Crawley, Barry McLoughlin, James Doyle, Michael Jordan, Gabriel Gallagher, Patrick Gallagher. *Front, L-R:* Sean Frayne, Dave Lilly, Kieran McDermott, Declan Murphy, Conor Hunt, Brendan Colleary, John O'Connor, Aidan Healy, Shane Murphy and Sean Lannon.



"Thursday's for Tag". *Back:* Cameron Costello, Mark Connery, Padraig Cribben, Cillian Freeman, Shane Murphy, Anthony White, Bruce Robertson, Liam Rochford, John Forde, Niall Frayne, Colm Bohan, Michael Jordan, Liz Walsh, Kevin Higgins, Michael Lyons, Dearbhla Freeman, Danielle Coyne, Aoife Nolan, Kimberly Moran, Otto, Keith Caulfield, Georgina Dee. *Front:* Adam Connery, Faith Connery, Ruby Caulfield, Sinead Donegan, James Rochford, Rachel Cleary, Colm Gallagher, Fionn Finnegan, Rowan Gouws, Oisín Finnegan, Aoibheann Gallagher, Diane Marigliano, John Caulfield, Mark Caulfield.



Joe and Marcella Keane, Knox Street, pictured on the occasion of Joe's 101st birthday some weeks before he died on 17th Oct. 2024. Master Tailor, sacristan, historian, raconteur, Joe had been President of Annagh Magazine Society since 2003.



Home all the way from Melbourne, Australia to attend their auntie Lisa Kirrane's wedding earlier this year were, from left to right: Gwen, Leon, Mollie and Harry.



Billy Nestor (Doctor's Road) and John Stephen Greally (Drimbane).
Courtesy of James Clarke.

BALLYHAUNIS SPORTS HUB

Tracy Cunnane



Ballyhaunis Community Sports Hub, in collaboration with Mayo Sports Partnership, aims to build a community network to enable people to enjoy a healthier and more active lifestyle. It is a collective of sport and recreation facilities, sports clubs, local organisations and schools that wish to work together to support, promote, encourage and create a culture of sport and physical activity in the local community. The focus of the Sports Hub is to increase sport and physical activity opportunities for people in Ballyhaunis and its surrounding areas. Tracy Cunnane acts as Ballyhaunis Sports Hub Coordinator through Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre. There are just two other Sports Hubs in Mayo: Ballinrobe and Ballina.

Ballyhaunis Sports Hub dearly misses the late Stephen Grogan, who sadly passed away in August. As Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre Co-ordinator, he was very helpful in organising programmes and activities with the Hub.

If you wish to make an appointment, call into the Family Resource Centre (Friary House), or if you have any queries on activities in the area, email ballyhaunis-sportshub@gmail.com, phone 086 061 8126 or find us on Facebook.



Top left:

Children from The Old Convent enjoying Westport Adventure Park. An event supported by Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre, Foroige and the Sports Hub co-ordinator, Tracy.

Bottom left:

Aqua Aerobics class in the Swimming Pool in August 2024.



Indoor Soccer Programme, leading to a Global Cup Competition within the group in November. This is lead by Ballyhaunis Sports Hub, Foroige and Ballyhaunis Town FC.

DARKNESS INTO LIGHT, BALLYHAUNIS 2024

Deirdre Moran (Chairperson)

WOW! – what a wonderful morning we had! It went above and beyond our expectations. It was the most amazing event to take part in and be part of. What started with a spectacular display of the Northern Lights ended with a breathtaking sunrise. The weather certainly was on our side again this year.

Following the massive success of DIL2023 and hosting the event at the Ballyhaunis Community School, we again approached the school and were granted the use of their amazing gymnasium as the start and end point of our fundraising walk. The school is the perfect venue, with parking and facilities, ease of access and of course the huge space to welcome all the walkers before and after the event.

We contacted all of our wonderful volunteers and posters and banners began to appear. Once again we approached the TY co-ordinator, Mr. Caulfield, to see if the students would like to get involved again this year and that was met with a huge YES. They did an amazing job re-purposing old T-shirts into reusable bunting. They decorated the entrance to the school gym and mounted the amazing HOPE sign that last year's students built.

We also invited the teachers and students of Scoil Íosa to get involved again this year. The teachers decided it was their turn and created the most wonderful signage that was placed at various points along the route. Thank you to Mr. Henry for his assistance again this year.

The committee and volunteers rose very early Saturday morning (in all honesty, very little sleep was had anyway – we were all too excited and too nervous) and we began putting out tealights along the route, despite the rain. The Burco boilers were filled and the goodies laid out. Water, fruit and snacks were ready for the walkers.

To say we were amazed at the turn-out is an understatement. We expected around 300 but the number taking part well exceeded 500. It was just so lovely to see the community of Ballyhaunis and further afield coming together with one common goal – to increase awareness of suicide and self-harm and raise money for Pieta House. Members of so many different nationalities joined us this year. It truly was a community event.

We were very blessed this year to have members of the Parish Choir led by the very talented Paula Donnellan to entertain the participants. It was lovely to see so many smiling faces so early in the morning. The chairperson, Deirdre Moran, read a letter from Pieta and recited their manifesto. Fr. Stephen Farragher P.P. blessed the walkers and set everyone on their way.

We are truly blessed in Ballyhaunis that our entire route is well lit, and our stewards kept a watchful eye on the crowds and guided them along the way. You could hear laughter all along the route.

The Reflective Kilometre around the Friary Walk really is something special. Pieta tealights lit this kilometre-long stretch of the route and the walkers were greeted by Tracy Cunnane with her usual fun and lively choice of music.

Upon returning to the school gymnasium the walkers

were provided with refreshments and the odd hug if required. It was truly wonderful to see entire families taking part and the very young were delighted to pick up goodies in the wee hours of the morning. Young and old and all in-between really enjoyed the walk and the meet-up afterwards. Some found it very moving, remembering those gone before us and thinking of those we know who are struggling with their mental health. Everyone took part for their own reason.

After what seemed like a blink of an eye, the last of the walkers headed home and the stewards and volunteers helped with the clean-up. By 6.30am, you would never know that anything had taken place.

Thanks

The committee would sincerely like to thank each and every person who took part in the walk and all those who made donations, sponsored and donated refreshments, hung up signs and took them down, decorated their premises, left lights on in their windows, and wished us well in the lead up. Huge thanks to Ballyhaunis Community School for the use of their premises and to all the volunteers and stewards and parking attendants. Honestly, it's because of all of you that we can host this fantastic community event. It was a widely heard phrase on Saturday morning 'Ballyhaunis is a mighty little town'. And we can't disagree with that.

A special word of thanks to our community ambassador this year – Jack Coyne. Jack is not only a Mayo and Ballyhaunis footballer but also a teacher in the Community School. He really is a remarkable young man and was available when called upon. He opened up the gymnasium for us at 3am and then set about decorating the astro pitch. Nothing was too much to ask of him and all with a smile.

A special word of thanks too to our sponsors of all the refreshments, Nolan's Supervalu, Corrib Oil Ballyhaunis, Communicare Medical, Cunningham's Londis, McHugh's Café. Without these wonderful sponsors we would not have been able to run the event cost-free, enabling us to raise a fantastic sum of €6,803.03.

Preparations are already underway for next year and we are hoping to build on this year's massive success, although looking back we wonder how we can make it any better. If you would like to join our team and volunteer for next year, please let a committee member know. We would be delighted with any assistance we receive or, perhaps, any new ideas on hosting the fundraiser.

Information available on www.darknessintolight.ie or by emailing ballyhaunis@darknessintolight.ie

Ballyhaunis DIL committee members: Deirdre Moran, Elma Kilbride, Anne Cunnane, Aisling Caulfield, Eavan Caulfield, Tina McGoldrick.

Steward Co-ordinator: Tommy Caulfield.

Looking forward to 10th May 2025.





DARKNESS INTO LIGHT 2024

Remember - 'Alone we are one drop;



LE CAIRDE YOUTH GROUP

Cruinniú Na nÓg was formed in 2018 as one of the initiatives of Creative Ireland Programme's Creative Youth Plan. Since then, and in partnership with the local councils, it has run programmes each year around Ireland. This year, one took place around Mayo during the month of June for children ranging in age between five and eighteen years.

Under the direction of Ludmila Burcovschi, a programme was organised in the Friary House for the youth of Ballyhaunis. Part of this included listening to live music, songwriting and a jamming session. From this programme it was felt that there was a lot of musical talent in Ballyhaunis and surrounding areas. Many did lessons on their own but had nowhere to go to play as part of a group. As a result, Le Cairde Youth Group was founded on 15th June 2024. This group is in its early stages of development, with practice sessions every month, learning to play popular and classic songs.

To date, the group has performed as a folk group at Mass in St. Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis, which was

broadcast on Midwest Radio on 11th August 2024. Their next performance will be at Mass on 15th December and this too will be broadcast on Midwest Radio. The group will also perform in the Friary Church on 15th December for the Christmas Charity Fundraiser for St. Vincent de Paul.

It is a great way for the youth to expand their passion for music outside of their home and gain confidence performing in a group and in a public, friendly environment, and also to make new friends. Already the confidence of individuals within the group has grown, which is a delight to see. Some of the members play guitar, drums, violin, keyboard and we also have singers.

These meet-ups are free and we welcome new members anytime. You can contact the group coordinator Ludmila Burcovschi through her Facebook page for further information. Of course, none of this could take place without the support of their parents so a big thank-you to you all.



Members of the Le Cairde Youth Group pictured in the Family Resource Centre, from left: Victoria, Elizabeth, Magda, Nessa, Junis and Noah.

Tidy Towns[®] Ballyhaunis

Laura Dinraths and Mary Donnelly



Launch of the Ballyhaunis Biodiversity Action Plan on March 22, 2024.

Left to right, top row: Amos Oladluwa, Eibhlin Murphy, Peter Mitchell, Shane Melia (First Choice Credit Union), Laura Dixon, Eanna Hyland, Deirdre Cunningham, Fr. Stephen Farragher, Shayla Rasmussen, Mary Tubridy, Mick Hogan, Merrylin Finn, Tzyy Wang, Mary and Jeff Nolan, John Collins. **First row:** Solomon Morgan, Cllr John Cribbin, Kay Curley, Laura Dinraths, Mary Donnelly, Connie Gildea.

2024 was marked by a succession of events: the launch of our Biodiversity Action Plan, our annual Good Friday clean-up, where so many volunteers did such good work gathering and triaging litter in and around Ballyhaunis, our first Biodiversity Community Day, a Circular Economy public consultation, a Heritage Week guided walk, and more. Thanks to the generous support of Dawn Meats, the town was again adorned with beautiful blooms. Similar to the previous year, our entry in the National Tidy Towns competition saw an 8-point increase for 2023. We expect more to come in 2024, to crown all the efforts our volunteers have put in through the year.

Biodiversity Action Plan

Our Biodiversity Action Plan was launched on 22nd Mar. 2024 in the Community Hall to mark Spring and World Water Day. We were delighted to have Dr. Mary Tubridy and her associates join us. The event drew a good crowd from the local community eager to learn more about our environment and how we can protect it. Representatives from Mayo County Council's Climate Action Division and the Local Authority Waters

Programme were also present, sharing information on upcoming plans and initiatives. In the spirit of Tree Week, 100 native trees were generously donated by the Tree Council of Ireland and distributed by the Community Council to residents, to be planted in local gardens and the Friary Park.

Town Centre Map

With the support of First Choice Credit Union, we unveiled a new town centre map this year on the Square. The town map was a collaboration between Kay Curley, Sean Freyne, Eddie Mulhern, Mary Donnelly, Shayla Rasmussen, Tzyy Wang and Jorge who worked on locating feature points, mapping and designing the map. We are proud of the final product and hope it will be very helpful to visitors and residents alike.

Circular Economy Consultation

Thanks to a grant from VOICE Ireland, we started a journey around circular economy. We conducted two facilitation sessions led by a representative from VOICE Ireland to develop a circular economy project. The first session focused on getting to know the town and its

people. The second was an open town hall meeting for the public to come and learn about circular economy and discuss potential projects. At the time of writing, a third and final facilitation session will take place soon to finalise the plan, which will be implemented following its completion.

Biodiversity and Heritage Week

Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns engaged residents regularly this year, marking Biodiversity Week with our first Biodiversity Community Day in May, during which locals and families were invited to take a walk around the park while learning more about the fantastic habitats and species with which we cohabit. For Heritage Week, we invited Dr. Mary Tubridy to guide us through a fascinating walk focussing on the biological, geological and historical features of our town, such as glacial hills (eskers), and kame and kettle landscapes.

River Monitoring and Engagement

Thanks to the Local Authority Waters Programme, especially engagement officer Eanna Hyland and catchment scientist Peter Mitchell, we continued and expanded our quarterly monitoring sessions of the river Dalgan. Our programme is now in its second year, and the water quality results consistently show that the Dalgan is under a lot of pressure. Although the river finds its source a mere 6 km from the town, we can clearly see the influence of agricultural and industrial practices on the quality of – and biodiversity in – the water, where the enrichment coming from excess farm nutrients and plant waters affect the fragile creatures cohabiting with the polluted waters. One of our projects this year was to document this ecosystem through a river awareness video, which we'll share soon.



Biodiversity Community Day at the Friary Park river station. Tzyy Wang and her children, Dareen and Tiarnan, Carol Fitzsimons and her daughters, Maria, Emma and Eimear.



Heritage Week guided walk around our geological landscape.

From Left: Mark Godfrey, Liam Lyons, Marliese Hertfelder, Mohammad Shahadat Hossan, Paul Waldron, Mary Tubridy, Kay Curley, Linford Woods, Shayla Rasmussen, Tarak Tarikul Islam, Merrylin Finn, MD Moniruzzman.

Your help and actions matter!

The decline in biodiversity and water quality impacts us all, and we are all responsible. We'd like to invite you to join our activities and events. We saw a lot more wildflowers in gardens and along roadsides. Come to us to learn more about wildflower meadows, native species and hare's corners - welcoming biodiversity in your own space. We can all take action to increase our ecosystem's resilience for future generations. Follow us on Facebook or check out our website, ballyhaunistidytowns.ie, for a calendar full of exciting events and amazing resources.

Gratitude

Thanks to all who supported us this past year – our sponsors: Dawn Meats, SuperValu, Major Equipment and First Choice Credit Union, Cllr. John Cribbin, Cllr.

Alma Gallagher, Ballyhaunis Summer Festival; our partners at Mayo County Council, Ballyhaunis Community Council, the Abbey Trust & Partnership, LAWPRO, the RSS team, and each and every volunteer who dedicated their time this year – you are the beating heart of Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns.

Committee: Chairperson, Kay Curley. Secretary, Mary Donnelly. Treasurer, Frances Mulhern, PRO, Tzyy Wang. Members: Teresa Grogan, Merrylin Finn, Ann Curley, Laura Dinraths, Sean Freyne, Connie Gildea, Mike Griffin, Gabriel Smith, Shayla Rasmussen, Solomon Morgan, Amos Oladluwa, Tarak Tarikul Islam, Mohammad Shahadat Hossan, Saleha Yeasmin, MD Moniruzzman, Sultana Parvin.

Citizen scientists: Liam Lyons, Pdraig Shannon, Mike Cleary, Pat Higgins.

BALLYHAUNIS FAITH & LIGHT

Julia Kelly



Over the past year the Ballyhaunis Faith and Light Community has hosted a number of Fiestas in Clare Court. We have also enjoyed reconnecting with friends from other Faith and Light communities in Ireland.

December 2023: We'd like to say a big "thank you" to Dunmore's Faith and Light community and to Fr. Fergal Cunnane for inviting us to a Christmas Party. We all wore our Christmas jumpers and enjoyed an afternoon of Christmas craft, dancing, singing songs and singing carols. Everyone helped in creating a crib as Fr. Fergal read the Christmas story to us. There was a visit from Santa and we were all on Santa's "Good List" because everyone received a lovely gift.

February 2024: We had a statue of Saint Valentine on our sacred space; but as his feast day had passed, we focussed on LENT. We discovered LENT is hidden within VaLENTine's name. We created artwork on the **theme** of Giving, Prayer and Fasting.

March 2024: We held our annual church gate

collection. We would like to thank all who supported it. With the proceeds we were able to purchase a blue-tooth speaker with flashing disco lights. It enables us to have a selection of music ready to dance and sing to at our fiestas.

April 2024: The theme of our Fiesta was *The New Life of Easter*. We were entertained by local group Le Cairde who performed music throughout the afternoon. Thank you Le Cairde.

May 2024: We hired a minibus to take us to Mayo Leisure Point in Castlebar, where we had a great afternoon of ten-pin bowling. A lot of talent on display and it was interesting to see the various strategies used to knock all the pins down. When there was a strike, we all cheered and celebrated together.

June 2024: Faith and Light Communities from across Ireland came together for the Annual Pilgrimage to Knock. We enjoyed a cuppa and a catch-up with friends in St. John's Rest and Care, before celebrating Mass with

Fr. Fergal Cunnane, Faith and Light's National Chaplain. It was a beautiful ceremony and the Parish Church was filled with happy, smiling faces. Each community carried their banner in the entrance procession. The Mass included time for action songs, mime and prayers. It was a very special day.

As I write this, we look forward to coming together for our Autumn Fiesta; as well as travelling to Moate in October for the Faith and Light Provincial Day. Some of our members are also looking forward to joining others on a Faith and Light Pilgrimage to Lourdes at Easter.

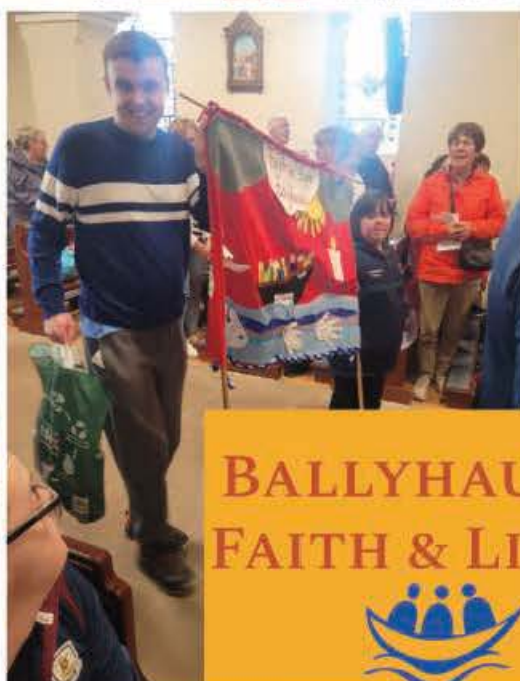
Thanks

We would like to thank our chaplain, Fr. Stephen, for his support throughout the year and for all the beautiful photographs he takes, capturing the essence of our Fiestas. Also, a big thank you to the committee members who come together in friendship and continuously show their dedication towards our Faith and Light Community.

We would like to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for 2025. We are looking forward to 2025 and welcome anyone interested in joining us.

Julia Kelly – Chairperson (086) 0764709;
Anne Lyons – Secretary (087) 6892848;
Geraldine O'Dwyer – Treasurer. Committee
members: Orla Phillips, Christina Concannon,
Mary Stanley.





Centre: Mark and Orla carrying the Ballyhaunis banner before Mass, at the Pilgrimage in Knock.
Above right: In November we remember. A butterfly tree which we displayed in our parish church.
Below left: Le Cairde entertained us at our Easter Fiesta. Below centre: Barry and Rosemary meet Santa;
Below, far right: Lots of special birthdays to celebrate.





Taken in Knock on the opening day of the Pilgrimage Season at Knock Shrine, early 1950s.

Columba Jordan, Upper Main St (second from left) with Kevin Greene, Main St. (with glasses) and Jim Connell, Devils (extreme right). Also pictured are visiting scout leaders. Oliver Jordan explained that the three Ballyhaunis men were members of the Ballyhaunis Choir that sang at Knock Shrine on certain days during the Pilgrimage Season. *Courtesy of Liam Connell.*



Left: Lieutenant Tommy Flatley (Main St.) in uniform during the Civil War. *Courtesy of Liam Connell.*



Above: St. Mary's Abbey Altar Boys 1965. Back Row, L-R: Seamus Connell, Ger Lyons, Jim Ryan, Martin Joyce. **Front Row:** Gerry Joyce, Liam Connell, Justin Joyce and John Griffin. *Courtesy of Liam Connell.*

Right: Joe Webb (left) and Philip Morley with the Sam Maguire Cup pictured outside Greene's house Knox St, 1950. *Courtesy of Tony Morley.*



Right: Myra Ganley and John Morley pictured outside Herr's, Knox St., early 60s. *Courtesy of Mick Nolan, Brackloon.*





Left:
The Green and Red of Mayo. Martin Fitzmaurice and Justin McDonagh celebrating with appropriately coloured cones after completing the Roscommon 10 Mile Run in June 2024.



From left: Mercy Flatley (Main St.), Carmel Waldron (Upper Main St.) and Mary Hannah (Jordan) O'Connor (Upper Main St.) photographed in Upper Main Street in the 1950s.



School friends in the 1960s.
From left: Joan Coyne (Devlis), Rita Forde (Upper Main St.), Rita Lyons (Devlis). *Courtesy of Rita Lyons*



Joe O'Gara (left) and Martin Fitzmaurice completed the Athlone 10 Mile Run on Saturday, 18th May 2024.



1962, Sixth Class, St. Joseph's Primary School.

Back, L-R: Evelyn Caulfield, Dolores Melly, Ann Freeley, Marie Mulrennan.

Middle, L-R: Lily Geraghty, Ann Rushe, Mary Caulfield, Mary Knight, Phyllis Regan, Bernadette McGuire, Mary Kedian, Nellie Barrett, Ursula Lawless, Rita Barry, Sr Mary of the Sacred Heart.

Front, L-R: Mary Herr, Eva Concannon, Mary Regan, Mary Hanna Regan, Joan Coyne, Rita Forde, Rita Lyons.

Courtesy of Rita Lyons.

BALLYHAUNIS TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Anne Marie Reynolds (Chairperson)

Since my appointment as chairperson of Ballyhaunis Town Football Club in January this year, I have been privileged to gain the commitment and dedication of a wonderful committee and this is at the core of what the club is all about. We meet on a monthly basis in the Friary House, a facility for which we are extremely grateful.

Our season started in mid-February and, unfortunately, due to a storm our fence was badly damaged. We set up a go-fund-me page to help with the costs of replacing it. We then went on to arrange a Valentine's hamper fundraiser which was very successful and which allowed us to purchase new goal posts for our junior team.

This year the club offered training from under-8s level right up to senior level and each year we are growing in numbers. Under-8s and under-10s ended their season at a blitz held in Castlebar and a great day was had by all. Under-13s were division 2 league winners and under-14s ended up second in division 2 league. Our under-15s and 16s ended up their season in the middle of the league. Under-17s and under-18s won the division 2 league and we are hoping for the shield. Our senior team won a promotion to the Mayo Super League.

We are privileged to have such commitment and dedication from our coaches and managers who have achieved such progress with all teams. Under their guidance and inspiration, they have combined fun and morale boosting, encouraging and promoting teamwork with a level of fitness through sport. Thanks too for all the support from the parents and volunteers who have supported us throughout the season.

Expanding

We are expanding our underage participation with the many nationalities in our community. All families are always welcome at our grounds in Station Rise, to join us and make friends and, most importantly, feel part of the community. Our club is a great outlet for all children and adults alike. We offer a wonderful facility within the town. Management and coaches ensure that everyone is involved.

A fundraising committee was set up earlier this year to raise money for the club. Thanks to Noelle Burke, Áine Cribbin, Shirley McGowan, Collette Jennings and Jacinta Small for their participation. Special thanks to Noelle who won a voucher for sportswear for our club. As the year went on, we launched a big fundraiser with tickets for the Ireland v. England soccer match plus two other games as prizes. We rely heavily on fundraising to maintain our facilities, to fund games for our players and



cover insurance costs.

In August we hosted the Ballyhaunis Soccer Camp for boys and girls aged six to fourteen which was a huge success and was rated one of the best in the county. Special thanks to Tracy Cunnane for organising this in conjunction with Nigel Naughton, Development Officer, FAI Mayo. We aim to

have this as an annual event.

A defibrillator was installed outside the club-house, which is a huge asset to the club and community alike. Ongoing plans for the club include the launch of our club lotto over the October bank holiday weekend and we welcome your support. This will help us in securing our 'goals' for the future. We are in the process of starting our new fence and installing new netting along our training pitch.

Thank You

I would like to thank Corrib Oil, Super-Valu and Londis for allowing us to fundraise outside their premises and for looking after us so well. It is a great opportunity for us to meet the public and we are extremely grateful for all the support we receive. A big thank you too Adam Kaczmarek (AK Photography) for his wonderful photography at our matches and for all his support throughout the year.

I would like to pay tribute to Jarlath Walsh for all his work and dedication as past chairman of the club. We are very fortunate that he remains on the committee. Our new treasurer, Catherine Moran, replaces Tom Collieran. A big thank you to Tom for all his years as treasurer and we are glad that he continues to help-out.

Finally, I would like to thank our local council representatives for their support and guidance in securing funding for the club. We look forward to ongoing help from Cllr. Alma Gallagher and Mayo County Council to enable our club to grow in the years to come.

If you would like to get involved in any way, do not hesitate to contact me via email mayoannemarie@yahoo.co.uk We would be delighted to welcome you on board.

Committee

Chair: Anne Marie Reynolds; **Vice-chair:** Niall Richardson; **Secretary:** Richie Crinnigan; **Treasurer:** Catherine Moran. **Management Committee for 2024:** Anne Marie Reynolds, Niall Richardson, Tracey Cunnane, Jonathan Powers, Marcin Balik Nowak, Pat McGee and Karl Lyons. **Committee Members:** Jarlath Walsh, Chris Pratt. **Grounds and maintenance:** John Eaton.



Ballyhaunis Town F.C. senior team, newly promoted to Super League

Back, L-R: Wayne Maughan, Lucas Roda, Kevin Byrne, John Burke, Jake Powers, Ljubo Spazek, Richie Crinnigan, Jason Jennings, A.J. Hamze, Daniel McCormack. **Front, L-R:** David Owuso, Tony Basistova, James Reynolds, Mo Alom, Mick Waldron (Capt.), Evan McNamara, Mohammad Abdouli, Sergei Babak. AK Photography.



Ballyhaunis Town F.C. under-18 team that won the Eleanor Quigley Shield in Milebush Park, Castlebar, 13th Oct. 2024

Back, L-R: James Clarke, Nikodem, Josh Maughan, Reliance Arku, Jason Jennings, Adam Kelly, Eamon Monaghan, Eman Fasmani, Kyle Burke, Johnny Powers. **Front, L-R:** Norbert, Ethan Kilbane, Mark Feeney, Jake Powers, Isaac Osuwu, Talah Tayab, Cillian Caulfield.



Man of the Match

Mark Feeney (centre), Ballyhaunis Town F.C., being presented with his Man of the Match award at the Eleanor Quigley Shield final by Seamus Hughes, Mayo Football chairman



(left) and Shane Quigley (right).

Ballyhaunis Town F.C. under-8s under the management of Michael Marigliano.

Under-8s and under-10s

From the start of May 2024, our pitch in Station Rise was filled every Tuesday evening with lots of under-8 and under-10 players who turned up each week to practise their skills and learn the basics of the game. With over thirty players each evening, the enthusiasm and talent developed over the summer months. Many matches were held throughout the season with lots of our neighbouring clubs like Charlestown, Cloonfad, Claremorris and Knock Kiltimagh Utd. These games gave the players the chance to put their hard work at training into practice. In August, many of our players took part in the FAI Summer Camp which they all really enjoyed.

A fund-raising hamper, donated by Super-Valu, was raffled one Saturday afternoon in May. The proceeds from the raffle were used to buy some much need kit and a set of jerseys were also bought for the under-8s. Many thanks to Super-Valu for donating the hamper and Supermac's for the sponsorship of the jerseys.

At the end of September, the under-8s wrapped up their season with a game against Ballyvary under lights; while the under-10s finished their season with a blitz organised by Castlebar Town. A big thanks to all the coaches: Michael Marigliano, Damien McDonnell, Grahame Cleary and Evan McNamara. Also thank you to all the parents who supported both teams throughout the season.

Although the numbers of players all season were very healthy, we are in big need of parents to come on board as coaches. If you are interested in helping, get in touch with any of the committee members or contact the club through our Facebook page. Training will start back again after Easter.

Under-10 players who competed in a blitz in Castlebar Town.



Grahame Cleary

Aaron McNamara, Owen Cleary, Archie Curley, Gerard Fasanmi,



Callum McNamara, Mark Curley.

Jonathan Powers, Luke Marigliano, Kafau Oloso, Tommy Webb, David Collins, Harry Murphy, Conor Waldron.

Best Wishes for the Future

Ballyhaunis Town F.C. sends best wishes for the future to the many children and their families who have left the area in recent times. Ballyhaunis is such a diverse town with many different nationalities and the club becomes a second home to many children. The time comes to move on and many leave Ballyhaunis without saying goodbye as it is hard for them leaving their friends, such as Isabella, who was in Ballyhaunis for eight years, Rahan, Juju, Matvi, Wesley, Shema and more.

Brothers Mario and Bentley Mahlangu, who have been in the club for years, have now moved to Ballina.

This year Mario played under-14s, 15s and 16s with the club, with Mayo since under-12 level, and he went on to play in Connacht. His Ballyhaunis coaches, Marcin and Tracy, ensured he got to training and trials. Bentley lined out for the club's under-10s and 12s. Before they left, their team-mates signed a soccer ball for each boy to remember us by.

We look forward to following all the children's journeys as they have lifelong friends here. All are welcome. More will join us and many more will move on - that is how it is. Best wishes to all from Ballyhaunis Town F.C. See ye on opposite teams!

Pictured right: Mario was presented with football signed by his under-14 team-mates.

Far right:

Heath and Bentley with end of season match balls. Heath scored a hat-trick against Newport in the League, while Bentley did the same versus Ballyheane in the under-12s Shield.

On his departure from Ballyhaunis, Bentley was also presented with a football signed by his under-12 team-mates.



New York 1987 and Mayo Mammies

While today young Irish people are flocking to Australia in their droves, back in the 1980s many of our young men and women headed to the U.S.A. in search of fun and employment. The pictures show the Mayo Mammies at a function in the Manor House Hotel, while their sons were working hard in New York 1987.

Photos Courtesy of Tommy Grogan.

L-R: Breege Moran, Rosemary Dillon Leetch, Mary Hannah O'Connor, Kathleen Caulfield, Patricia Grogan, in Manor House, 1987.



Thomas Moran (Knox St.), John Dillon Leetch (Doctor's Road), Vinnie Caulfield (Upper Main St.), taken in New York 1987.



Seamus Grogan and John O'Connor, both Doctor's Road.



The Kitchen of Rattigan's Pub, Christmas 1970.
From Left: Patsy Keane (Annagh), Tom McCormack (the Square),
Emmett Keane (Annagh), Helena Rattigan (Knox St.), Bernard Keane (Annagh);
John Morley (Knox St.) partly hidden.
Courtesy of Mary Prenty.



Brendan Rattigan with Jimmy Walsh
(Knockbrack) in Rattigan's Bar Knox St., early
1990s. *Courtesy of Mary Prenty.*



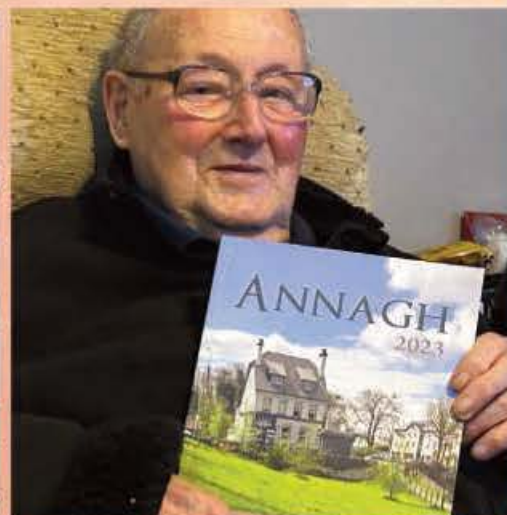
Left:
Brothers
Desmond
and Eddie
Fitzgerald
visiting Tony
Greene's
Butcher Shop
in New York,
late 1960s.
*Courtesy of
Mary Prenty.*



The Singing Cowboy, Tony Rattigan
(Pollnacraogha), in Sadie Rattigan's kitchen,
Knox St., 1975. *Courtesy of Mary Prenty.*

Right:
Tom Grogan (Holywell and The Albert
Pub, Withington, Manchester) who
graduated in pint-pulling after sixty-five
years years a licensee. Pictured here
proudly wearing his Guinness tie.

Far right:
Tom Grogan (Holywell and Manchester)
with Annagh 2023.





Family has reunited four generations on, despite emigration over the years. Pictured are sisters Bridget Heneghan and May Tolan (left) (both née Regan of Knockanarra) and their respective great-great grandsons Luke Marigliano and Killian Fahey (right), together again in Ballyhaunis (grandsons of Christine Lydon Marigliano and Marguerite Moran).



Members of the Ballyhaunis Senior Citizens' Party organising committee (2023), clockwise from front: Maggie Finnegan, Gerry McLoughlin, Elma Kilbride, Tina McGoldrick, Aisling Caulfield.



A very enjoyable Ballyhaunis Senior Citizens Christmas Party took place in the Clare Court Community Centre on 10th Dec. 2023.

The large number in attendance enjoyed a memorable afternoon of great food, music, dancing and Christmas cheer. Many thanks to the organising committee for, once again, arranging this annual pre-Christmas get-together, and to the wonderful musicians who performed on the day. *Photos courtesy of Aisling Caulfield.*



Abbeyquarter girls, 2005.

L-R: Hannah Clarke, Kasey Clarke, Demi Walsh, Kaitlyn Clarke, Aoife Nolan, Emma Nolan.
Courtesy of James Clarke.



Providing the entertainment at the Ballyhaunis Senior Citizens Christmas Party (2023), from left: John McGarry, Paddy Joe Tighe, Michael Nolan.

Baptisms Marriages Deceased

BAPTISMS in the Parish - November 2023 to October 2024

Cáit Frances Jordan, Annagh
 Czenge Grace Penzes, Annagh
 Natalia Dosek, Manor Brook
 Isaac Francisco dos Santes, Hazel Court
 Thomas Gerard Maughan, Cherryfield
 Erin Carney, Salthill
 Mathew Jace Wadiwa Mukazi, Old Convent
 Maria Rose McQueeney, Dunmore
 Shay Eoghan Brown, Queensland, Australia
 Éabha Louise Mulrennan, South Woodford, Essex
 Cillian Joseph Egan, Lavallyroe
 Annie Faye Heaney, Ballyglass
 Benjamin Dzudza, Upper Main St.
 Ninos Terrence Omoruyi-Festus, Old Convent
 Patrick Anthony Corrigan, Bracklaghboy
 Gracie Mae Webb, Annagh
 Deron Kachukwuloarumogu Eze, Old Convent
 Michaela Siváková, Hazel Court
 Katie Siváková, Hazel Court
 Tobias Tolvaj, Hazel Court
 Eliska Ruzek, Hazel Lawns
 Maggie Mae Delaney, Cherryfield
 Ella Mae Cribbin, Cloonfad
 Elena Osahenrunwhen, Sligo
 Jasmine Grace Biesty, Esker Pines
 Dominik Kowalski, Doctor's Road

Milos Cervenak, Kilkelly
 Ales Polhos, Sherwood Avenue
 Doruk Polhos, Sherwood Avenue
 Rhys Michael Fogarty, Killinaugher
 Cody James Murphy, Carrowreagh
 Patrick Joseph Ward, Station Rise

MARRIAGES in the Parish Church

November 2023 to October 2024

- Elaine Carney and Anton Basista
- Charlene Nolan and Daryl Geraghty
- Renan Pereira Alves de Souza and Ana Paula Coutinho de Lima Roriz
- Valdinei Dias de Oliveira and Cristina Caetano de Freitas
- Eduardo da Silva Diogo and Samira Soares Pereira
- Edgar Souza Santos and Valery Neri Goncalves
- Vanderli Antonio Dias de Oliveira and Ana Lucia Guerra
- Lisa Kirrane and Leonard Crowley
- Louise McNamara and Padraig Fitzgerald
- Lisa Jordan and Peter O'Shea



DECEASED of the Parish - November 2023 to October 2024

Joan Kilboyle (née Fannon), Dublin, Four Mile House and Tullaghane
 Tom Devane, Johnstown
 Gerry Lyons, Knockbrack
 Winnie McDonagh, Cardiff, Wales
 Margaret Ann Allen, Tooraree
 Maureen Comer, Killinaugher
 Josephine Feeney (née Fitzmaurice), Dublin, formerly Derrynacong
 Henry Madden, Gurteen
 Christopher Mongan, Tooraree
 Anne O'Dwyer, Abbey Street
 Eugene Morley, St. Gerald's Crescent
 Patrick Kearney, Annagh
 Gabriel Carney, Mountain
 Ann Gallagher, Carrownedan & St. Gerard's Crescent
 Dr. Alan Delaney, Doctor's Road
 Kathleen Regan, Derrynacong



Teotonio Gutteres Monteiro, Upper Main St. and East Timor
 Kathleen Egan, Knockbrack
 Teresa Leonard, Knockbrack and Clare Court
 Noel Sloyan, Tully, Carrowbehy, formerly Brackloon North
 Ellen (Nell) Maughan, Cherryfield
 Anne Kilcourse, Station Rise
 John Dillon, Ballindrehid
 Michael Finn, Devlis Cottages
 Micheál Smyth, Galway, Upper Main St. and Clare St.
 Dolly Fitzmaurice, Spaddagh
 Stephen Grogan, Hazel Lawns, formerly Began
 Bill Comer, Killinaugher
 Catherine Waldron (née Feeney), Holywell
 Paddy Fitzmaurice, Abbeyquarter
 Margaret Lyons, Leow
 Joe Keane, Knox Street

DECEASED of elsewhere, prayed for at Mass - November 2023 to October 2024

Renato Luptak, Devlis and Slovakia
 Martin Warde, Barrack Street U.K.
 Frances Brindley, Manchester, formerly Liscat, Knock
 James King, Ballaghaderreen
 Liam Casserly, Ballinlough
 James Browne, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
 Kevin Prendergast, Carrmack, Tulrahan and Lohan Park, Brickens
 Tom Waldron, Crossard
 John Durkin, Ballyroe, Knock
 Michael Cassidy, Crossbeg and London
 Tom King, Abbey St. and Roundfort
 Mary Carolan, Portsmouth, UK, formerly Abbeyvale
 John Evangelides, Cyprus
 Peter Ferencz, Upper Main Street
 Fr. Pat Ruane, Diocese of Bathurst, Australia, formerly Johnstown
 Mario Comiskey, Clonmany, Co. Donegal
 Maureen Moran, Reading, U.K.
 Jack Salmon, Knock
 John Gavin, Ballinlough, Tooreen, formerly Mayo Abbey
 Luke Hunt, Boherduff, Claremorris
 Gretta Henry (née Fitzmaurice), Charlestown, formerly Lisbane
 Willie O'Toole, Headford
 Bill Elwood, Gorthaganny
 Nell O'Brien (née Mulligan), Galway, formerly Hazelhill
 Martin Tarpey, Cloonlara, Brickens
 Tommy Cunnane, London, formerly Balla
 Tom Flannery, Ballaghaderreen
 Frank Larkin, Enniskillen, formerly Devlis
 Sally Lee (née Fitzmaurice), Thurles, formerly Lisbane
 Mark Reynolds, New York
 Fr. Michael Spelman, Woodfield, Kilkelly
 Gerard Sheedy, Tipperary and Leeds
 Bernie Fahey, Ballyheane
 Tom Greally, Australia, formerly Devlis and Drimbane
 Brendan Forde, Galway and Kiltimagh
 Emily Dempsey (née Clarke), Devlis and U.K.
 Irena Gorska, Poland
 Mary Josephine Wheeler (née Caulfield), London, formerly Upper Main St.
 George Flanagan, Crossard
 Stanislaw Zaborowski, Kiltimagh
 Sheila Clarke, Killala, formerly Kilkelly

John (Jackie) Walsh, Knocklyon, Dublin, formerly Devlis and Drimaderra
 Declan Wallace, Kent, formerly Carrick, Ballinlough and Killinaugher
 Mary Henry (née Regan), Crossard, formerly Killinaugher
 Norma Lyons, Brickens, formerly Dromina, Co. Cork
 Fr. John Walsh, Retired P.P. Aghamore and Lavally, Tuam
 Kathleen Flatley, Dublin, formerly Clooncrim, Ballinlough
 John Murphy, Mallow, Co. Cork, formerly Brackloon
 Thomas Lavin, Knock
 Mary Doyle (née Freeley), Manchester, formerly Gurteen
 John Joe Higgins, Sligo, formerly Mountbellew
 Mary McNaught (née Kearns), Dublin formerly Upper Main St.
 John Connor, Shanbally, Williamstown
 Jimmy Cunningham, Ballinlough
 Theresa Lynskey, Kilmaine
 Mary Callaghan, Kilmovee
 James Moran, Newport
 Carmel Wilson, Tyrrellspass, Co. Westmeath
 Noel Goulding, Ballinlough
 Sean McManamon, Seattle, U.S.A.
 Ado Kenny, Strokestown, formerly Knox Street
 Gertie Kenny, Strokestown
 Myra Healy (née Fitzgerald), Dunmore, formerly Johnstown
 Rita Prendergast, Ballindine
 Michael Nolan, Clooncan, formerly Tooreen
 Patrick Gaffney, Roscommon, formerly Ballinphuill
 Clodagh Meath, Dublin and U.S.A.
 James Daniels, Swinefield, Cloonfad
 Harry Fagan, Lavallyroe
 Kathleen Ruane, Cavan, formerly Holywell
 Fr. William Byrne, Columban Fathers, Navan, formerly Main St.
 Tom Guilfoyle, Greenwood
 Christy Patterson, Ballybane, Ballinlough
 Eddie Lunt, U.K.
 Mary Ganley, Crossard, Tooreen
 Annette Connolly (née O'Connell), Galway, formerly Devlis
 Rita Dalton (née O'Connell), Yorkshire, formerly Devlis
 Eamon O'Connell, Norfolk, formerly Devlis
 Helena Lang (née O'Connell), London and Galway, formerly Devlis

THE BEY PROJECT YOUTH SERVICE – FORÓIGE BALLYHAUNIS

Laura Cox

The BEY Project has been in operation since June 2018. It is funded by the Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education Training



msletlb
Maid O'leannas agus Ollscoil
Mayo, Sligo agus Leitrim
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board



Board and is based in the local Community Hall. Our Youth Service is committed to fostering creativity, inclusion and personal development in young people through a diverse range of activities. By creating a safe and stimulating environment, we help our youth thrive through fun, educational and social programmes designed to develop their skills, build confidence and strengthen community bonds. Here are some of the group activities we have engaged with throughout the year.

Our **Lego Leagues** offer a fun and innovative way for young people to enhance their engineering and problem-solving skills. Teams of young builders compete in exciting challenges, working together to design and construct complex models, fostering collaboration, critical thinking and innovation. This hands-on experience ignites creativity while reinforcing the importance of teamwork.

Through our annual **World Cup Day** and **Sports Day** we bring the joy of sports to life. These events are packed with friendly competitions that range from football to track races. Youths have the opportunity to participate in teams, promoting physical fitness, camaraderie and healthy competition, but above all, building positive friendships for life.

Our trips to the new **Adventure Park** in Westport are always a highlight. Youths experience an exciting mix of outdoor activities, from zip-lining to obstacle courses, giving them a chance to challenge themselves in a fun and adventurous setting. These trips not only offer thrills but also build confidence and resilience.

As technology continues to evolve, we ensure our youth stay ahead with our **Digital Skills** programmes. We offer hands-on workshops in animation, virtual reality (VR) and media production, where young people learn to create their own digital content, tell stories through new media and explore the endless possibilities of the digital world. Our **Media workshops** help develop creative skills in video editing, sound production and photography, opening doors to future careers in media and tech industries. Foróige provides the **Connect Safely Programme** and **Level Up** which have both been a great success in the project. Some of the activities above are also used when taking part in Foróige's **Citizenship and Leadership** programmes.

Our LGBTI+ social groups are designed to create a safe and supportive space for all young people. Foróige

provides the **Real U** programme fostering a sense of belonging and building healthy, happy lives for LGBTI+ youth, offering group discussions, peer support, and social activities that promote self-expression, acceptance and friendship.

Our youth explore their artistic talents through drama, music, art and printing workshops. Whether performing through play in their drama group, producing original music with our **Music Generation Group** or creating unique works of art, these activities provide a powerful outlet for self-expression and cultural exchange.

A big project from 2023–2024 was our collaboration with the **Thamarai Youth Project** in India. The young people worked together to create an International story book. This was launched in the BEY youth space at the start of the year. Our intercultural programmes with India allow young people to connect with peers from other parts of the world, broadening their perspectives and enhancing cultural understanding through collaborative arts.

At the core of our youth service is a strong focus on mental and emotional wellbeing. Foróige provides programmes like **Be Happy Be Healthy**, and our **Wellbeing Programmes** are designed to help young people develop resilience, manage stress and improve their mental health through mindfulness, relaxation techniques and creative writing workshops. These programmes cover important topics such as mental health awareness, equipping youth with knowledge about mental health, helping them recognise signs of stress, anxiety and providing them with tools to cope or seek help. The Project also provides a **Counselling Service** for young people who may need it. We also explore mindfulness and meditation and offer workshops which introduce practices that promote relaxation, focus and a sense of calm. **Healthy Living Workshops** are also run to support young people on the importance of a balanced diet, exercise and sleep, helping them understand how these contribute to mental and physical health.

We make the most of summer with programmes that are full of adventure. Young people learn valuable forest skills, such as navigation, survival techniques and environmental awareness, as well as gardening, where

they gain practical knowledge of sustainable living. These activities promote a connection with nature and teach important life skills in a fun, engaging way.

Our **Residential Programmes** provide a unique opportunity for young people to spend time together in a different environment, away from home. These experiences are designed to promote independence, personal growth and team-building through a variety of outdoor and creative activities. The residentials are always a highlight, fostering friendships, learning new skills and creating unforgettable memories.

Contact

For more information please contact Laura on 0867791878 or by email laura.cox@foroige.ie; Instagram: @thebeyproject; or Facebook: The Foróige Ballyhaunis Youth Service.



Seamus Mulrennan (Gurteen) with his aunt Mrs. Bridie Griffin, Waterford, who celebrated her 103rd Birthday this year.



Cousins meet on Main Street. L-R: Seamus and Mary Mulrennan (Gurteen), Stan and Georgia Miller (U.S.A.).



Brian Mulrennan celebrated his 40th birthday earlier this year with family and friends.

Back, L-R: Mark Gallagher, David Cahill, Orla Cahill, Aoife Mulrennan, Edel Mulrennan, James Mulrennan.

Front, L-R: Brian Gallagher, Brian Mulrennan, J.J. Carroll.



Left: Brian Mulrennan's 40th birthday. L-R: Peter Walsh, Fergal Walsh, Liam Lyons, Niall Richardson, Brian Mulrennan.

Right: Cousins meet at Strokestown House, Co. Roscommon. From left: Katie O'Leary (U.S.A.), Jim Hoban Rickard (U.S.A.), Mary Mulrennan (Gurteen).



BALLYHAUNIS FIANNA Fáil

MICHAEL WALDRON COMHAIRLE CEANNTAIR

Ballyhaunis Fianna Fáil reflects on 2024 as a year in which the organisation ran a very positive Local and European Election campaign. Our Claremorris Electoral Area candidate, Ballyhaunis based businessman Stephen Nolan, enjoyed a very strong campaign with a very strong showing at the first time of asking. The party is extremely proud of Stephen and thank him for his efforts on behalf of Fianna Fáil and on behalf of the Ballyhaunis area. We look forward to continuing to work with Stephen to deliver for the community in the years ahead. Senator Lisa Chamber ran a very positive European Election Campaign, polling very well, and helping Barry Cowen to win a seat for the party in the constituency. We will work with Barry and support him in his efforts in the European Parliament on behalf of the region.

Minister of State Dara Calleary TD continues to represent us with vigour and dedication in Dáil Éireann. Working with Cllr. John Caulfield and Cllr. Adrian Forkan, who were both elected to Mayo County Council, he has continually delivered to Ballyhaunis, Knock, Aghamore, Tooreen, Kilkelly and surrounding areas. Minister Calleary, in his capacity as Minister in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and employment, has provided the funding for the appointment of a Project Manager for the Strategic Development Zone at Knock Airport. The position has been filled and work is underway to capitalise on the unbridled potential of the

airport and to bring investment, jobs and economic growth to the region. Additionally, the airport itself has been allocated record funding under the Regional Airports Scheme – the facility has always had the full support of Fianna Fáil and this will always be the way.

A €5.2million regeneration investment has been secured for Ballyhaunis with the Old Convent to be refurbished and reconfigured into a public library, enterprise hub and public park. Additionally, plans have been made for the provision of an air ambulance base in memory of Private Billy Kedian with Minister Calleary launching the campaign in September. The expansion of Scoil Íosa will provide an additional four classrooms and two Special Education rooms to the already very impressive campus. Additionally, Minister Calleary secured €200,000 for the school, in partnership with Ballyhaunis LGFA, for the development of an astro-facility under the Sports Capital Scheme. Sports Capital Funding was also secured for Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence - €143,173; Tooreen Hurling club - €40,000; and Ballyhaunis Town FC - €13,249.

Minister Calleary's Clare Street Office is attended to on Friday mornings from 10am. For information on appointments please call 096-77613 where a member of his team will be able to assist.



Officers of the Michael Waldron Comhairle Ceanntair, members and supporters, pictured with Minister Dara Calleary TD, Senator Lisa Chambers, Senator Niall Blaney, Area Representative Stephen Nolan and Cllr. Damien Ryan at the Fianna Fáil Convention, 28th Nov. 2023.



Sixth Class, Convent of Mercy NS 1965

Back, L-R: Monica McGrath, Dymrna Devine, Joan Ruane, Helen Fitzgerald, Marian Mulhern, Marian O'Connell, Marian Glynn, Susan Morley, Marian Morley, Della Grealley, Patricia Garvey, Helen O'Dwyer, Sister Angela. **Front, L-R:** Mary Murren, Teresa Regan, Helen Freeley, Nuala Moran, Mary Gilmore, Sarah Herr, Elizabeth Carney, Helen Grogan, Angela Byrne.



Next-door neighbours in Upper Main Street.
From left: John Culliney, Marian O'Connell, Grainne O'Connell, Nuala Moran and Michael O'Connell, 1963.



Upper Main Street neighbours on the day of their First Holy Communion. L-R: Michael O'Connell, Eamonn Murren and Kieran Folliard.



Ballyhaunis Team beaten by Burrishoole in the 1966 County Intermediate Final

Back, L-R: Tommy Darby Lyons, Tony Greene, Noel Morley, Eamonn Meath (partly hidden), Tony Morley, Aiden Kelly, Robert Kelly, Al Madden, Mike Byrne, Pado Moran, John Costelloe, Ollie Lyons.
Front, L-R: Brendan Moran, Tom Fitzgerald, Bertie Dillon, Johnny Biesty, Jim Higgins, John Cleary, Paddy Mullarkey, Pat Curley, Mick Travers. All photographs courtesy of Michael O'Connell Upper Main St. and Co. Kildare.



Bernadette (Berry) Tarpey Conway pictured on the day of her graduation with her cousin, Fr. Enda Lyons.



Eamonn Conway with his aunt Maureen Tarpey on the day of his First Holy Communion in Tuam in 1969.



Bernadette (Berry) Tarpey (right) pictured in 1947 on the day of her graduation (BSc) at University College Galway with her sister Maureen Tarpey.

Maureen Tarpey Photographs

These photographs, from the collection of the late Maureen Tarpey of Knox St., Ballyhaunis, have been submitted by her nephew, Professor Fr. Eamonn Conway. Fr. Conway is a native of Tuam, Co. Galway and son of the late Berry (Bernadette) Tarpey of Knox Street. His aunt Maureen ran a busy drapery and textiles business there up until the 1980s. His mother taught in the Convent of Mercy, Ballyhaunis before being appointed to a teaching position in the Presentation Convent, Tuam and it was there that she met her husband, Edward Conway. Fr. Eamonn is a regular visitor to the home of his mother's first cousin Mary Margaret McBride of Annagh.



Katie McBride of Annagh (Sr. Jarlath) pictured over one hundred years ago at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in New York.

Religious Profession
- at the -
Convent of the Sacred Heart, New York.

On 5th December, at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, 135th St. Amsterdam Ave., New York, Miss Katie McBride made her vow and received the veil. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Dr. Gans, and was followed by a long and impressive discourse on the text, "I have not chosen you, you have chosen Me," the meaning of which he explained in very touching and beautiful language. The altar was exquisitely decorated with flowers furnished by friends of the newly professed religious in New York, many of whom were present at the ceremony. Miss McBride left Ireland in 1898 and is a daughter of Thomas and Margaret McBride, of Annagh, Ballyhaunis.

BALLYHAUNIS GAA CLUB

Chairman's Report

On a sombre and extraordinarily wet New Year's Day, the community of Ballyhaunis came together to bid farewell to our club chairman, Gerry Lyons, who was laid to rest following a short illness.

Gerry's voluntary work in the club touched everyone over many decades of service, and it is with a heavy heart that I write these words as his successor. Gerry's personal touch, work ethic, and passion for the Association was unparalleled. The show of love and respect for Gerry during those dark days in late December have remained with us throughout 2024 and, as a club, we have found comfort in one another's support to continue his legacy of work. On behalf of the Club, I wish to extend our deepest sympathies to his wife Anne, sons Morgan and James and daughter Michelle, brothers Frank, Liam, Micheal, John Joe, Eugene and Noel, sister Mary T, and all his extended family.

In late August, we remembered Gerry with the unveiling of a memorial bench at the club grounds which was kindly donated by his friends and work colleagues at Chameleon. It was wonderful to see all the Lyons families along with a very large attendance of current and past players, coaches, executive committee officers and members, and everyone else who completes our GAA family.

This occasion coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the County 'A' Under-16 Football Champions – a team which was managed by Gerry. Thank you to Joseph Webb for organising this reunion gathering and for so many past players travelling home to be together.



Unique

We are a unique club in County Mayo. Not only have we implemented the 'One Club' model, we have done so with three codes of games and some twenty-two teams across football, hurling and ladies football. It takes an incredible voluntary effort to sustain, maintain, and develop all of our teams; and I thank each and every volunteer from players to supporters, and coaches to club officers. Everyone has a role to play in making our club inclusive, enjoyable and progressive, and we always welcome new members to become involved in any way possible.

I congratulate all the players and coaches who have represented the club so honourably at inter-county level across all codes and I wish well those who are selected to represent us in 2025.

One of the most joyous moments for the club was witnessed in September when our senior footballers defeated Charlestown Sarsfields to claim a first senior group championship victory in thirty years. This milestone win will hopefully lay a foundation of new hope for 2025 and for the next generation of young players joining the senior ranks over the coming years as we bid to fully establish ourselves as a competitive senior football team.

In October, our senior hurlers brought neighbours Tooreen into extra-time in the county final following an epic encounter. Perhaps on this occasion a replay would have been a fairer outcome as our players gave a monumental effort, not only on the day, but throughout the entire year in preparation.

On the very same day as the County Hurling Final, our intermediate ladies football team won the shield final at the Centre of Excellence in Beken with a fantastic victory over Kilmoremoy. I have no doubt that this youthful and passionate team will continue to make forward strides in the years ahead.

We had a wide variety of successes on the field at underage level and it was very encouraging to see under-14 and under-16 hurling teams compete in county finals this year. Our grassroots development of Gaelic Games is going from strength to strength with the establishment of nursery hurling and football for those aged under-6 and under-8. I thank all of the youth coaches in the club who give of their time so freely and create an environment of fun and learning for all. I am also pleased to report that our partnership with Eastern Gaels GAA under the banner of St. Jarlath's for boys football teams from under-13 to under-17 has continued to be beneficial to our players who compete at the highest level



William Nestor (left) and Liam Lyons chatting on 'Gerry's Chair'.

of standard in the county.

My thanks also to those who fundraise for the club through the weekly 50/50 draw and everyone who supports us. Further financial support is received through the renewal of advertising hoardings around the pitch on an annual basis and everyone who supports the club development draw.

In early 2024, we ran a grounds development fundraiser to win a trip to New York which raised much-needed funds towards ongoing works at the grounds. Further to this we are delighted to announce a renewed grounds naming rights sponsorship agreement with Dawn Meats which will enable us to demolish our current spectator stand and rebuild a new stand with seating. This project is hoped to be completed by Spring 2025. Meanwhile, we have added new ball stop nets on our main pitch and will continue to improve our facilities over the next year.

I wish to thank all my fellow officers for their work and support throughout the year. The work that goes on behind the scenes is enormous and without passionate volunteerism our club would not prosper as it has done so in recent times.

Keep up with all the latest news. Download the Ballyhaunis GAA app today; central hub for all club activities, fixtures and results lotto draw and membership.

Thank you once again for your continued support and I look forward to 2025 with hope of more success both on and off the field.

William Nestor (Club Chairman)

Senior Football

The season started in a struggling fashion for our senior footballers as a long injury list and the absence of inter-county committed players made it difficult for new team manager, Peter Warren, to field teams of strength for divisional cup and league games. Wins in the league at home to Breaffy and Charlestown Sarsfields were not sufficient to survive in division 1 football for next year. The league did serve as an opportunity to give game time to younger players and, as the summer progressed, the panel grew stronger in anticipation of championship football.

Our first round fixture welcomed Garrymore to Dawn Meats Ballyhaunis GAA Grounds. Without the services of Jack Coyne and Keith Higgins for this clash, we struggled defensively and lost by three goals. With a full hand to pick from for round two, we arrived in



Charlestown under the radar and claimed a milestone victory - our first senior championship group win in thirty years - with a wonderful team performance from back to front.

This result gave us hope and a live chance of making the quarter-final stage if we were to beat Castlebar Mitchels in the final group game held at the neutral venue of Hollymount. Once again we gave a tremendous effort and led the game on several occasions, but came up short by four points to the county town. Unfortunately, we were without key players Jason Coyne and Eoghan Collins for this match due to injury.

The win over Charlestown ensured us third place in the group and ensured senior status for 2025. Management, players and supporters all hope for a cleaner bill of health next year and an even better run in the championship. Thank you to this year's management team: Peter Warren, Jason McGoldrick, John Prenty, Brian Murray and Connor Freely.

Senior Hurling

This season marked a new chapter for the Ballyhaunis senior hurlers, with the introduction of a fresh management team. Trevor Kelly took the reins as manager, accompanied by Christopher McCrudden as coach, while Kevin Morley and Gary Conway returned to their previous roles. Over the course of the season, the management team expanded, with Jason Swords joining as a selector and Knockmore's Alan Molloy stepping into a coaching role. The result was a season filled with memorable performances, the emergence of young talent, and a heart-wrenching championship run.

The campaign began with a promising win against Westport in the Genfitt League, setting a positive tone for the months ahead. Ballyhaunis continued their momentum, eventually capturing the Genfitt B League title with a victory over Ballina. Their success in the early part of the season built hope, and the team seemed poised for bigger challenges.

In the Cú Chulainn A League, Ballyhaunis progressed to the semi-finals before suffering defeat. However, it was in the Mayo Senior Hurling Championship where the team truly shined. On 24th August, Ballyhaunis began their championship journey with a commanding win over Castlebar, dominating the game with a scoreline of 1-25 to 0-08. Their form carried through to the semi-final, where they dispatched St. Ciarán's with

an impressive 2-26 to 0-11 victory, setting up a final clash with their old rivals, Tooreen.

The championship final was a classic. Both sides traded blows in a thrilling contest that remained level at full time, forcing the game into extra time. Even at half-time of extra time, the score remained tied. However, in the final moments, Tooreen managed to edge ahead, winning by the narrowest of margins, 1-21 to 0-22. Despite the defeat, the Ballyhaunis players left everything on the pitch, their fighting spirit never wavering until the final whistle.

One of the standout features of this year's team was the emergence of young talent. Remarkably, four of the six defenders who started in the final were under the age of twenty-two, offering a glimpse of a bright future for Ballyhaunis hurling. As the season winds down, Ballyhaunis can hold their heads high. While they narrowly missed out on the ultimate prize, the team's efforts and determination have inspired optimism.

Oisín Kelly

Under-6/under-8 and under-10 Hurling

The under-6/under-8 and under-10 hurling teams began training in January this year (2024). We welcomed a number of new players from Eastern Gaels who were a great addition to this hurling group. This year was unique in that we competed not just under-6/under-8 but at under-10. Thanks to all the mums and dads for their support. Special mention to Bernie, Michael, Dave and Seán for their coaching help this year.

Under-12 Hurling

Starting out this year, it was not looking good if we would be able to field at this age level. But thanks to the great work done by Shaun Morley in Began N.S. we were able to get six new hurlers from the Eastern Gaels club. We started in division 2 and played five games winning them all well. Because of the results we asked to play in the 1st division for the finals day in McHale Park. We were put in the A1 final against a strong Westport team. The lads fought hard until the end, but were outclassed on the day. Make no mistake, there was some real talent on show for Ballyhaunis. It was a great ending to the year and the lads were buzzing, getting their chance to climb the steps. Thanks to the parents for all their support throughout the year and to coaches Bernie Warde, Martin Finnegan and Peter Healy.

Under-14 Hurling

Our under-14 hurling team had a remarkable year in 2024, one that we can all take pride in. The season began on a high note with the arrival of our new coach, Fergal Walsh, who brought his expertise to the training field alongside Peter Healy and Jane Buckley. Training

emphasised the importance of hard work, skill development and, most importantly of all, having fun.

We kicked off the year by competing in the Táin League, where we reached the Connacht final in Longford. Some might argue that we were unfortunate to lose, as we had played exceptionally well throughout the match, only to concede a last-minute goal. Although we didn't secure victory that day, the determination and skill our team displayed were truly commendable.

After that tough loss, it was time to regroup and prepare for the championship. We started strong in the opening rounds, but after a loss to Westport, we knew we had to beat Tooreen in the final round. The boys left nothing on the pitch; they gave it their all and secured the win. I've never seen a group of kids so proud of themselves - their hard work truly paid off.

We advanced to the final to face Tooreen again after they defeated Westport in a playoff. Unfortunately, it wasn't our day on 20th September; things just didn't go our way. However, the management team, parents, the club, and the town could not have been prouder of this under-14 team and how they played and conducted themselves. They have been a pleasure to coach week after week, and they've formed incredible friendships along the way. Here's to an exciting 2025 ahead!

Under-16 Hurling

We kicked off the year with a challenge match against St. Brigid's Dublin on 3rd February 2024. On 9th March we faced Tooreen in the Spring League and achieved a fantastic victory. Unfortunately, Claremorris was unable to field a team. On 30th March we participated in the Táin Óg Blitz, where we played against Longford Slashers and Clonguish in Longford. It was a wonderful day of hurling, and we emerged victorious in both matches.

In the Championship, we played against Castlebar on 30th June and lost, 2-6 to 3-9. On 14th July we drew against Claremorris, finishing at 2-12 to 3-9. On 21st July we secured a win against Tooreen, with a score of 10-11 to 0-12. In the semi-final on 1st September, we faced Castlebar again, but lost 3-11 to 2-15. Finally, on 14th September we played in the B Final against Claremorris and, unfortunately, lost 3-6 to 2-12.

All players put in a massive effort this year, improving their hurling skills and always pushing each other on. Well done at all. We would like to extend our gratitude to Jenny Glow for providing a new set of jerseys. A special acknowledgment goes to Jamie Brennan for joining the club and participating in competitive hurling for the first time. We also thank our coaches, Tadhg Buckley and Eoghan Collins, for their support and guidance.



The victorious Ballyhaunis and Eastern Gaels team who captured the Mick O'Connell Cup 2024.

Under-16 Hurling panel: Adam Kelly, Ben Gallagher, Bobby Gallagher, Cathal Conlon, Charlie Finn, Cillian Caulfield, Evan Feeney, Éamon Óg Monaghan, Fionn Conlon, Jack Buckley, Jack Nolan, Jamie Nolan, Jamie Brennan, Joshua Maughan, Liam Nolan, Mike Kayange, Seán Donnellan, Senan Heaney, Shane Nolan, Tomas Curran, Tomás Ó Laighin, Zack Smith.

FOOTBALL

Nursery, under-6 and under-8 Football

This year, the grassroot level players began their training in the Community School hall in early Jan./Feb. developing and progressing their skills before moving outdoors in early spring. The under-8s played a number of matches and blitzes throughout the summer months and are showing great progress. In July, they had the honour of playing before the senior players as part of Davitts fiftieth anniversary weekend celebrations. The under-8s finished up their season with two trips to the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence to take part in a county wide blitz and a challenge game against Strokestown. The under-6/Nursery has continued in its development this year with numbers growing weekly. This group excitedly took part in their first match against Éire Óg in the early summer and finished up with a match, also in the COE, against Strokestown. The club hopes to recommence the nursery, under-6 and under-8 weekly indoor sessions in the new year. Many thanks to Shaun Morley who assisted training both in Scoil Íosa and with the under-8 boys and girls each Saturday morning. Also, thanks to the all the trainers throughout the year: Aoife Folliard, William Nestor, Sinead Lilly, Sarah Prenty, John Jordan and Liam Rochford.

Under-8 Players

Sean Lilly, Kyle Kilbane, Killian Fahy, Luke Marigliano, Archie Curley, Dennis Dragomir, Finín McKermitt, Harry Buckley, Jean Lucas, Charlie McConn, Mark Caulfield, Rory Jordan, Oisín Kilcourse, Ellie Higgins, Evie Murphy, Sophie Waldron, Jessica Singh, Sophie Coen, Abbie Ruane, Leighanna Burke, Anna Kinsella, Fiadh Cleary, Daniella.

Nursery Players

Oisín Kilcourse, John Jordan, Chloë Kenny, Ellie Hogan, Luke Hogan, James Rochford, Darragh Rochford, Oisín Wallace, Tadhg Lilly, Blaithín Jordan, Ruby Caulfield, Jack Richardson, Ella Richardson James Powers, Alfie Walsh, Fionn McGuire, Eva Carney, Dawoud, Mary Corrigan, Rory Corrigan, Keanna, Bilal Afzal, Thomas Kinsella, Indie Byrne, Oscar Byrne, Daniel Doyle, Ellis Marigliano, Asad, Hugo Curley, Iwan, Cesari.

Cup

For the last number of years this event has been hosted in the U.G. Connacht GAA Dome and has welcomed teams from Naas, Meath, Sligo and Westmeath. Former Ballyhaunis player Andrew Shanaghy has been instrumental in organising and collaborating with GAA friends throughout Ireland, with the event growing in popularity year on year. Already plans are afoot for the event to take place in April 2025 with ten teams from throughout Ireland expected to participate. It is a testament to the GAA coaches involved, who themselves once competed for the Mick O'Connell Cup at a local level, that they are now shining a national spotlight on the competition.

St. Jarlath's

Player numbers at underage level had been a concern for Eastern Gaels and Ballyhaunis GAA for a number of years. With an increasing number of our local youths opting for other sports, it was clear that in order to retain a maximum number of players participating in Gaelic football a new approach was needed. Initial discussions between coaches from both clubs were very positive and the seeds for St. Jarlath's were planted. Coaches were in agreement that an amalgamation of both clubs with the objective of retaining as many of our young players as possible and competing at a higher standard of football was our sole purpose. Many of the lads were already playing together at Ballyhaunis Community School and they gelled as a team quite easily.

St. Jarlath's teams have been playing together since January 2022 from age grades under-13 up to under-18 and thankfully the club continues to go from strength to strength. Parents, coaches and players are all on board and delighted with the success of St. Jarlath's.

Sincere thanks to both club executives for their ongoing support. Special thanks to Seamus Horan and the late Gerry Lyons whose support in the early stages ensured that St. Jarlath's had the full backing of everyone.

Under-16 team of 1984

A very special weekend at Ballyhaunis GAA took place at the end of August. After months of planning the members of the victorious 1984 under-16 'A' Championship side came together to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the historic victory. That evening we also remembered our team manager and former club chairman Gerry Lyons with the unveiling of 'Gerry's Chair' kindly donated by his former colleague Padraic Timon and friends at Chameleon. Members of the victorious 1984 team then adjourned to Gareth's for their reunion and further presentations.

From the Lyons Family, Knockbrack

As a family we have been humbled and honoured by the support shown to us over the past year.

We will be forever indebted to our GAA family for all your support to us since the untimely death of Gerry on 28th December 2023.

Rest in Peace, Gerry.

- With deep gratitude, Anne, Morgan, James and Michelle.



Selectors of the Mick O'Connell Cup winning team.
From left: Martin Finnegan, Tomás Murphy, Neville Hughes, Justin McDonagh and Dom Lowry.



Ballyhaunis and Mayo Senior Footballer, Jack Coyne, enjoying the championship victory over Charlestown.



Anne Curley presenting the 2023 Footballer of the Year award to Liam Herr.



Ballyhaunis Senior football team 2024

Back, L-R: Neil Carney, Diarmuid Phillips, Adam Noone, Ethan Keane, Seán Herr, Mark Phillips, Kevin Byrne, Johnny Cunnane, Eamonn Phillips, Barry Cribben, Eoghan Collins, Cormac Phillips, Jarlath Carney. *Front, L-R:* Josh Webb, Brian O'Neill, P. J. Greally, Aidan Sloyan, Conor Keane, Joe Sutton, Jack Coyne, Adrian Phillips, Liam Herr, Patrick Kiely, Keith Higgins, Brian Hunt.



Ballyhaunis Senior Hurlers 2024

Back, L-R: Jason Coyne, Stephen Hogan, Luke Cribbin, Joe Flynn, Eoin Ryan, Jack Coyne, Ryan Kilbane, Kevin Kilbride, Mark Philips, Eoghan Collins, Danny Hill, Seán Griffin, Seán Herr, Shaun Morley. *Front, L-R:* James Lyons, Michael Farrell, Seán Gildea, Keith Higgins, Michael Richardson, Adrian Phillips, Diarmuid Phillips, Brian Hunt, Kieran McDermott, Patrick Kiely, Hannan Iqbal, Cormac Phillips.



Ballyhaunis under-14 hurlers



Some Ballyhaunis under-8 footballers.



Some more Ballyhaunis under-8 footballers.



Ballyhaunis under-12 hurlers.



Ballyhaunis under-6 footballers.

BALLYHAUNIS LGFA CLUB

In 2024, the Ballyhaunis LGFA continued to thrive as a cornerstone of the local community, reflecting the club's steady growth and commitment to promoting women and girls in sport. Since its foundation in 2013, the club has seen a continuous increase in registered players, with the 2024 season marking another year of significant progress. Throughout the season, the club's success was driven by the dedication of its managers, coaches, selectors, liaisons, and the ongoing support from parents and the hardworking committee members. As Ballyhaunis LGFA looks ahead, the future remains bright and the club is poised for continued success, building on the achievements and experiences of 2024.

Ballyhaunis LGFA Committee

Anne Cunnane (Chair and Registrar), Edel Kinsella (Secretary), Stella O'Neill (Vice-chair, Assist. Registrar and Fundraiser), Marina Carney and Aibhinn Herr (PRO), Anna Patterson (Child Protection Officer), Ciara Buckley (Photographer).

Management, Coaches, Liaison Officers and First Aiders:

Aoife Murphy (under-10s coach and female liaison officer), Tomás Murphy (under-10s coach), Samantha Cleary (under-12 Coach and female liaison officer), Micheál Dixon (under-12 manager), Sandra Waldron and Siobhan Conlon (under-12 support), Anna Patterson (under-13/14 coach/female liaison officer), Eddie McLoughlin (under-13/under-14 manager), Clare Higgins (under-16 coach and female liaison officer), Pat Neary (under-16 manager/coach), Sharon Lyons (under-18 manager/under-16 female liaison officer), Michael Finnegan (under-18 coach/under-16 backroom team member), Neville Hughes (under-18 coach/under-16 backroom team member), Declan Doyle (Intermediate ladies team manager), Margaret Monaghan and Lisa Carney (female liaison officers of Intermediate Ladies) and John Joe Hoban (Intermediate ladies coach), Fergal Kelly (Intermediate Ladies coach), Tom Colleran (first aider for Intermediate Ladies).

Anne Cunnane and Stella O'Neill

As the 2024 season comes to a close, Ballyhaunis LGFA would like to extend its deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks to two remarkable women who have been the backbone of the club for so many years - Anne Cunnane and Stella O'Neill.

After ten years of dedicated service as chairperson and many other roles, Anne Cunnane is stepping down. Anne's leadership has been instrumental in shaping the growth and success of the club. Her passion, vision, and unwavering commitment to promoting women and girls in sport have left an indelible mark on Ballyhaunis LGFA. Under her guidance, the club has seen tremendous development, not only in terms of player

numbers but in the fostering of a strong community spirit. As we look to elect a new chairperson for the 2025 season, we know that Anne has set a standard of leadership that will be difficult to follow, but her legacy will continue to inspire.

Stella O'Neill is also stepping down after an incredible twenty-two years of service to the club. Stella's dedication to Ballyhaunis LGFA/GAA has spanned more than two decades, and her contributions are immeasurable. Whether in her roles on the committee or simply as a steadfast supporter, Stella has been a pillar of strength for the club. Her commitment has been unwavering, and her influence can be seen across all areas of Ballyhaunis LGFA. Her deep-rooted passion for the game and the club's values has been at the heart of everything she has done.

Both Anne and Stella have given so much of their time, energy, and love to Ballyhaunis LGFA, and their impact will be felt for many years to come. We cannot thank them enough for their invaluable contributions, and we wish them both the very best as they step away from their roles. Their legacy will always remain an integral part of Ballyhaunis LGFA, and they will forever be a part of our club's history.

Under-9s

In 2024, Aoife and Tomás Murphy stepped up to coach the under-9 girls' team, with Sam Cleary supporting as their female liaison officer. For many of the girls, this was their first introduction to football. The management team focused on building their fundamental skills and gave them the opportunity to participate in local blitzes in Aghamore, Charlestown and Claremorris. The girls loved the excitement of competing and gained invaluable experience, which contributed greatly to their development over the season. They now look forward to returning next season, eager to continue their football journey.



Ballyhaunis LGFA under-9s.

Under-11s and under-12s

The under-12 girls' team had a very successful season with Mike Dixon as the coach and Sam Cleary as the female liaison officer, supported by Sandra Waldron and Siobhán Conlon. The under-12s competition is no longer competitive, instead it aligns with the GO-Games structure, encouraging maximum participation for all involved in the team.

The girls started their training at the end of March and had a busy few months leading up to the 'Finals Day' in the Centre of Excellence at the end of July. The team played matches every week and the skills they were developing during their training sessions came through clearly as they dominated the majority of their matches. However, our opponents in the 'Finals Day' match at the Centre of Excellence proved to be tough opponents. They had a big squad to choose from, whereas we only had twelve due to two of our players being away on holidays. However, the spirit this team showed was outstanding: their teamwork, their skill, their pure grit and determination produced the best performance of the season. This included some exceptional performances by certain players and they soundly beat their opponents. Well done girls, we are so proud of you!

In August the same management team moved on to coach the under-11 girls whilst many of the under-12s team moved up to the under-13s squad. A new group of players joined us bringing great enthusiasm, energy and lots of smiles. The training and match schedule had been a bit more relaxed, however, the improvement in skill was just as impressive. It has also been a joy to see the older girls mentor the younger girls who were new to football. This team knitted together very quickly and it was wonderful to see how they looked out for each other during challenging parts of matches where resilience was needed. The season ended at the end of September with a very well run blitz in Tourmakeady, where the girls played three games against our hosts' two teams and Kilmaine. The blitz was a wonderful celebration of the girls' teamwork, skill development and it was great fun. Well done girls – we're already looking forward to next season!

Under-14s

Led by the management team of Eddie McLoughlin, Clare Higgins, and Anna Patterson, the under-14 season kicked off in early spring, but bad weather and the closure of pitches made it difficult to hold consistent training sessions, leading to the postponement of several matches.

The team finally played their first match at home against local rivals Aghamore. The girls fought hard until the final whistle, securing a well-earned draw. The following week, they travelled to Burrishoole, where they led for most of the match, but it ended in another draw. In their third game, they faced a strong Davitts side at home, which resulted in their first defeat. A win in the semi-final against Islandeady, however, earned them a

spot in the Shield final against Westport B. Despite showing tremendous fight and spirit in a competitive game, it wasn't their night.

The Championship followed immediately. First up was Kilmovee, where the team lost by just three points. A rematch with Westport B ended in a hard-fought draw, and the final group game against Davitts saw another defeat. In the semi-final, the girls faced a tough battle against Balla. Although they showed incredible resilience and determination, some questionable decisions and running out of time led to a narrow loss, bringing their 2024 under-14 season to a close.

Throughout the season, the girls consistently gave their all in both games and training sessions. The management team—Eddie, Clare and Anna—are proud of their efforts and look forward to seeing their progress next season.

Under-16s

The 2024 season began with the under-16 team being promoted to a higher division, a testament to their success as under-14s when they reached both the league cup final and championship cup final in 2022. Under the management team of Pat Neary, Sharon Lyons, Michael Finnegan and Neville Hughes, the under-16 girls delivered some strong performances, ultimately qualifying for the league shield county final. In a closely contested match, they were narrowly defeated by Kilmaine.

As summer brought Championship football, the team experienced mixed results, with the highlight being a thrilling and hard-fought draw against local rivals Michael Davitts. In the shield semi-final, they once again faced Kilmaine, this time in an away fixture. The Ballyhaunis ladies delivered an outstanding performance, coming away with a clear victory in what was a tough encounter. The team now looks forward to competing in the shield county final against Islandeady, set to be held at the Centre of Excellence at the end of October. The under-16 panel and management would also like to express their gratitude to Began native James Culliney, whose company, PCH Civil, generously sponsored half-zip tops in the Ballyhaunis club colours for all the players.

Under-18s

Under the management team of Sharon Lyons, Michael Finnegan and Neville Hughes, the Minor Ladies had a strong start to their 2024 league campaign. After a series of solid results, they qualified to face Carnacon in the league cup final. In what proved to be a tough and physical battle, the ladies narrowly missed out on victory, but their resilience and determination were clear throughout the match.

Just a few days after the league final, the Championship began, and the minor team continued to perform well, securing several impressive results along the way. Their efforts led them to a County

Championship Cup semi-final against a strong Breaffy team. The match, played in Breaffy, was highly entertaining and showcased the team's talent and spirit. Despite a valiant effort, the Ballyhaunis ladies were unfortunate to lose to a well-drilled Breaffy side.

The minor panel demonstrated remarkable progress throughout the season, showing great promise for the future. The management team would also like to extend their sincere thanks to James Culliney of PCH Civil, who generously sponsored half-zip tops in Ballyhaunis club colours for all the players, fostering a sense of pride and unity within the team.

Intermediate Ladies

The Ballyhaunis Ladies Intermediate team embarked on a remarkable journey this season, filled with hard-fought battles, memorable victories and unwavering determination. From early preseason gym sessions to thrilling championship showdowns, the team's commitment and passion were on full display. The ladies 2024 preseason kicked off in February with a four-week gym session led by David Hession and generously sponsored by Colleran's Pharmacy. February was packed with challenge games and training at the Centre of Excellence, all in preparation for the upcoming league.

The girls had a fantastic start to their competitive season in the Melissa Patterson Cup, securing an impressive win against Louisburgh on a scoreline of 4-9 to 2-6. The momentum carried forward when they narrowly edged past Claremorris by a single point in the second round. After this exciting win, they shifted their focus to the Division Two League. In the Division Two League opener, they overcame St. Bridget's with an impressive scoreline of 13-11 to 0-7. Amidst these league matches, they took part in the Connacht Seven-a-side tournament at the Centre of Excellence. The team had a strong start, winning all three of their group stage games, which earned them a well-deserved spot in the semi-finals. After an intense battle that ended in a draw, the game was decided by a nerve-wracking shootout. Five shooters showed remarkable composure and accuracy, securing a place in the final. Although the girls narrowly lost by three points to Annaghdown in the final, it was an excellent day that showcased the team's fighting spirit and determination.

With heads held high, the team shifted their focus to the championship, determined to bring home silverware. After two narrow defeats against Louisburgh and Moy Davitts, the final round of the championship was a home game against Davitts. After trailing by nine points, the girls mounted a courageous comeback to secure a draw. This result sent them into the Shield semi-final against Swinford. The semi-final was arguably one of the girls' most impressive performances of the year. The game ended in a draw at full-time, forcing extra time. The team's 'never-say-die' attitude saw them win by a single point with a thrilling score line of 1-21 to 5-8, booking a well-deserved spot in the Intermediate Shield Final.

The ladies wrapped up their season in style, claiming the Shield Final title with a commanding 6-11 to 2-5 victory over Kilmoremoyle. In what was their last game of the season, Ballyhaunis delivered a complete performance controlling the match from start to finish.

Throughout the season, the girls enjoyed many enriching experiences, from yoga and coffee mornings to Zumba sessions and ice-bath recovery trips. Special thanks go to Margaret and Lisa for organising these events. The girls themselves didn't let any occasion slide and made sure to celebrate every occasion, especially John Joe's special birthday! We appreciated the support of our management team—Declan Doyle, Tom Colleran, John Joe Hoban, Margaret Monaghan, Lisa Carney, Fergal Kelly, Captain Marina Carney and Vice-Captain Mae Hession—whose dedication and leadership have been crucial to the team's success.

Also huge thanks to O'Dwyers who have supported us throughout the year, and also The Clock, Corner Bar and Paddy's for their contribution to supporting the team all year. Supported by dedicated coaches, sponsors and supporters, the girls showcased their resilience and teamwork throughout a season that saw them compete fiercely in league and championship campaigns. As they fought their way to the Intermediate Shield Final, Melissa Patterson League Final and Division Two Shield Final, the Ballyhaunis Ladies left no doubt that they are a force to be reckoned with, bringing pride to their club and inspiring the next generation of players.

As we reflect on the 2024 season, it's clear that every level of Ballyhaunis LGFA, from our youngest under-9s to our senior team, continues to grow and thrive. The dedication of players, management, parents, sponsors and volunteers has been the foundation of our success. While we celebrate the progress made this year, we look forward to the future with optimism and excitement. With each season, our teams gain experience, build camaraderie, and continue to strengthen the proud tradition of Ballyhaunis LGFA. We can't wait to see what the next year will bring as we strive for even greater achievements in 2025.



Intermediate Ladies Football Shield Final winner Aoibheann Herr with her brothers Liam and Sean and father Robbie.



Above: Ballyhaunis LGFA Intermediate team.

Back, L-R: Margaret Monaghan, Lisa Carney, Katelyn O'Sullivan, Declan Doyle, John Joe Hoban, Leah Finnegan, Geri-May Henry, Katie Madden, Emma Henry, Orla Smith, Aoife Conway, Roisin Lyons, Chloe Ryan, Aisling Tarpey, Laura O'Connell, Fergal Kelly.

Front: Leah Johnston, Niamh Foody, Eva Henry, Danielle Coyne, Erin Murray, Marina Carney (Captain), Gemmy Foody, Keleigh Cullen, Mae Hession (Vice-captain) Aibhinn Herr.



Left: Ballyhaunis LGFA players who represented Mayo in 2024:

Sinead O'Neill (Mayo Minors), Erin Higgins (Mayo under-14s and Erin Murray (Mayo Seniors).



Taken at the under-11s blitz in Tourmakeady:

Back, L-R: Hannah Waldron, Izabelle Finn, Niamh Conlon, Nora Lyons, Hazel Murphy, Phoebe McNamara, Jade Cleary, Lily Healy.

Front: Eva Grace Kilcourse, Emily Lynch, Jade Swanick, Chloe Finn, Lilly Curley, Saoirse Doyle (Missing: Ciana Collins).



Pictured at under-12 Finals Day: Abigail Dixon, Nora Lyons, Jade Cleary, Hannah Waldron, Phoebe McNamara, Hazel Murphy, Niamh Conlon, Cara Henry, Izabelle Finn, Ava Gildea, Katie Conlon and Michaela Kavanagh (Missing: Olivia Feeney and Estreja Ivaskeviciute).



Ballyhaunis LGFA under-14s. Back, L-R: Olivia Feeney, Cara Walsh, Micheala Kavanagh, Roisin Murphy, Lauren Henry, Anna Kelly, Abbi Norrby, Erin Higgins, Alice Curran, Minki Roos, Abbie Gildea. Front: Molly Thompson, Ava Gildea, Kate Monaghan, Aibhe Donnellan, Katie Conlon, Isobel Neary, Lily Murphy.



Ballyhaunis LGFA under-18s.
Back, L-R: Minki Roos, Ava Neary, Lauren Feeney, Erica Byrne, Sinead O'Neill, Katie Madden, Katelyn McLoughlin, Emma Henry, Orla Smith, Amy Waldron, Eva Boyle, Grace Heneghan,
Front: Kyrach Jordan, Roisin Heneghan, Hannah Skeffington, Alice Curran, Sara Brennan, Abbie Gildea, Erin Higgins, Leah Finnegan, Emma Swanick.

PATRONS

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Some photographs have had to be reproduced smaller than hoped for, due to poor quality of original image supplied. Regrettably we could not include all photographs submitted due to large volume received.

Some Guidelines for contributors of articles and photographs:

If you wish to contribute an article or photograph for consideration in next year's magazine, you can contact Annagh by email at info@annaghmag.ie, or visit our website www.annaghmag.ie

Deadline: Deadline for contributing articles and photographs for Annagh 2025 is Friday, 10th Oct. 2025. The eventual inclusion of any written contribution or image 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 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.

The magazine does not publish advertisements or content which might be construed as commercial promotions. Annagh Magazine Society reserves the right to edit or reject such contributions.

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 supplied with the name of the contributor which will be omitted only if this is requested.

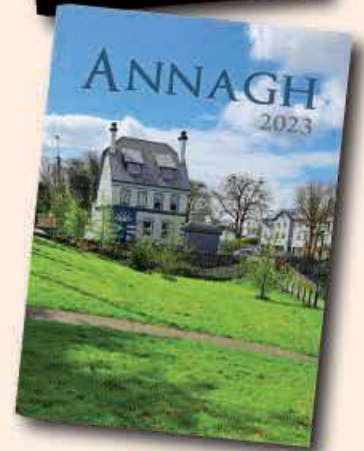
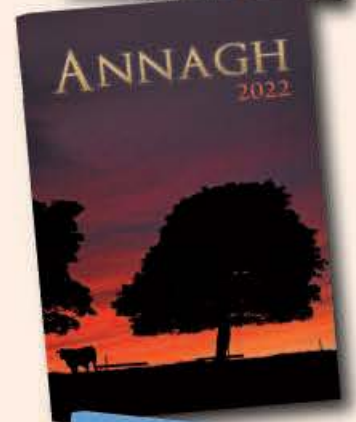
Photographs sent digitally should be in jpeg format, and scanned at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi. If they are any smaller, it may not be possible to publish them at an appropriate size. Resolution determines the sharpness / clarity of the image, and low resolution pictures will appear blurry and pixelated when printed. Email photographs directly to info@annaghmag.ie choosing 'actual size' where it asks for the 'image size' (max 3 at a time). For wedding photographs, alternatively, ask your photographer to email it at large file size: 'high resolution for printing'.

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 clear reference(s) to the relevant photo(s). Hard copy photographs will be returned as soon as possible once the magazine goes to print.

Cover Images

This year's front cover features the MidWest Radio Broadcast Centre on Clare Street. MWR celebrates thirty-five years broadcasting this year, 2024. *Photograph by Noreen Ruane Dalton.*

On the back cover is an image of a piece of tapestry created by the Ballyhaunis Crochet Group and which hangs framed in the meeting room at the Family Resource Centre, Friary House. Created some years ago using a variety of needlework techniques, those who created it were: Marion Carty, Eileen Culliney, Kathleen Cribbin, Maura Fitzmaurice, Julia Flanagan, Linda Hopkins, Bernadette Lyons, Kathleen Raftery and Eileen Rattigan. *Photograph by Sinead Mallee.*





Design: Cathy O'Connell, Limerick, Ireland
 Embroidered by: Cathy O'Connell, Limerick, Ireland
 Embroidered by: Cathy O'Connell, Limerick, Ireland

