Published by Ballintubber Pastoral Council. Editors Carmel Summerville, Michael McHale & Fr Frank Fahey.

The aim of the Bulletin is to publicise and support the aims and endeavours of the various groups and entities that enrich the Ballintubber Community and to form a network of communication between them.

St Patrick's Day Mass 2015

The Pastoral Council
The Pastoral Council has had a busy year so far. Our monthly meetings continue to be a general review of the liturgies and other events in the parish, planning and preparations for upcoming liturgies and as always the implementation of our parish mission. March saw our very successful televised St. Patrick’s Day Mass. A lot of planning and preparation went into this special occasion and the general feedback was that it was a very moving and prayerful event. It is hoped there might be something similar for our Octocentenary celebrations next year, for which planning is now well underway.

Also very successful, despite the challenging weather, was our Easter celebrations which continue to be attended by large numbers of both parishioners and visitors. As ever, the success of both events depended on the generous and voluntary participation of the Ballintubber parishioners and community for which the Pastoral Council is deeply appreciative. (Lindy Quinn)

The Sacristy of the Abbey
The original sacristy of the Abbey is now the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. It was traditionally known as “Rúma Caileachai Dubh” (The Black Nuns’ Room). In the 1840’s it was used as a classroom and the teacher was a Mr. Henneelly.

The present sacristy was originally the mortuary chapel of the De Burgos. Seven members of the family are buried in the vaults there. The traditional name for this chapel was “Teampall a’ Tighearna”. The “Tighearna” was Lord Mayo, a member of the Bourke clan who was made a Viscount by Charles 1.

Five of the images on the tomb were destroyed in Cromwellian times. This image represents St. John.

Tax relief repayment from Collector General from church envelope donations.
As a result of our recent claim for 2013 & 2014, following the completion of forms by 50 parishioners, the Revenue Commissioners have made a repayment of €12,782.

The Parish Finance Committee wish to thank all those who returned the forms and they would urge other eligible taxpayers (PAYE & Self-Assessed) to complete and send in the forms.

As we can only claim repayment on donations which can be verified through the envelope system we would appreciate that, when giving your donation, you might use that system. Thank you.
Building Programme

In the last newsletter an outline plan of the proposed restoration of the East Wing of the Abbey, roofing of the Cloister and the provision of a lift was given. It would be nice to say that these have advanced and are now ready to go to the Planning Office in Castlebar. However, that is not the case. And if any of our readers has had problems in getting planning permission for a house, they will understand that obtaining such permission for a listed and historic abbey is a nightmare of red tape and setbacks. Now each of the agencies are positive and helpful but, when there are 14 different agencies involved, it does make it complicated. However, due to the perseverance of our architect Howley Hayes we do hope that by 2016 A.D. we will at least have the plans on the table.

The Octo Centenary Programme

Members of the Pastoral Council and the Community Council have been meeting regularly over the past few months to devise an outline programme for the Octo-Centenary year. The basis for the year-long programme will be that which is already available and celebrated in the community and its environs. That includes events in the Abbey, Church Island, The Celtic Furrow, Tóchar Phádraig, and the activities in the community itself – from GAA to music and dancing in the Scoilból etc. Four talks/lectures have been lined up for the year. Life in Ireland when the Abbey was Built by Bro. Colmán O Clábaigh, Glenstal Abbey, The Abbey in the time of Cromwell by Prof. John Cunningham, Trinity College, The Abbey in the time of Tibuid na Long by Dr. Anne Chambers), Before the Abbey – Monasteries along the Tóchar and in the West, by Dr. Edel Ó Brathainnach. A special Mass commemorating the 800th celebrations has been commissioned by Ballintubber Abbey Trust to be composed by Fr Liam Lawton. There will be a GATHERING during the last week in July and first week in August. An invitation will be sent out to all people from Ballintubber to come home and celebrate the event. An outline of some of the activities during those two weeks is given below. There will of course be other significant events during 2016 A.D. These will be clarified during the course of this year as they will involve Ballintubber Abbey Trust and also outside agencies. You might pass on any ideas you may have in this regard to the members of the Pastoral Council, Community Council or to the office.

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<th>July</th>
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<td>Talk/Lecture</td>
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<td>Friday 29th</td>
<td>Cultural Concert</td>
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<td>Saturday 30th</td>
<td>Tochar Stage One</td>
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July "15' - August 2016

The New Website for the Abbey

A new or updated Website will shortly be launched by the Abbey Trust( www.ballintubberabbey.ie) This will give an update of all that is and will be happening in the Abbey and its environs. It will also be a useful tool for the Octo-Centenary Celebrations next year. We wish to thank David Quinn for his advice.

The logo for the Octo-Centenary is at present being created by him.

Pilgrim Paths' Day

On the Pilgrim Paths' Day (Easter) over eighty walkers completed the 11 K walk from Aughagower to Ballintubber. They were blessed with fine weather and afterwards shared refreshments in the Dorter and received their special certificates. Similar walks took place at Easter on the eleven other Medieval Pilgrim Paths in Ireland. During April and May, many pilgrims have walked either the whole way or part of the way. We do hope that during the Octo-Centenary celebrations many will undertake the pilgrimage walk in the footsteps of Patrick. This need not be completed in one day. It can be divided up into shorter distances over a number of days – as happens on the Camino. Above all we wish to thank the farmers and landowner along the way for allowing the pilgrims through their land. It is very much appreciated and we do emphasise, when registering the pilgrims, that they show due respect for this trust.

The Station Mass

Ballintubber choir, which now has 30 members, (20 female and 10 male) has, thank God, being going from strength to strength. They did Ballintubber proud on St Patrick’s Day with their soulful hymns and harmonies for the televised Mass. This standard has not been achieved without great commitment, hard work and co-operation. Sr. Frances McElroy has shared all her experience of working with choirs down through the years. Janine Hoban has been tireless in preparing the material for the weekly practice each Wednesday night. Sean Hayes has used his technical abilities to test the choir members reminding them of extra meetings and locations! We are always open to more members especially as we prepare for the Octo-Centenary celebrations next year. Then we hope to participate in the special Mass which is being composed by Liam Lawton for the occasion. (This photo was taken by Louis Walsh)

Ballintubber Abbey Choir

There are 21 members on roll. We hold weekly meetings in the Resource Centre. We arrange for speakers to come in quite often and speak on different topics i.e. health, safety and security in the home, and have many one day trips. We donated €140 to Alzheimer’s Association. Although our membership is satisfactory we are always open to new members. The photo was taken on our recent three-day outing to Donegal. (Pauline Prendergast)

Over 55's Club

We want to thank all those who host the Stations in their homes. This is a very important aspect of community building and community life. For some it is the only time that they get to meet and know their neighbours. The celebration of Mass in the station area reminds us that Christ is not only present in the celebration of the Eucharist in the house but that we can and do make Him present every day in our homes and in our neighbourhood through the quality of our relationships with each other. The photo is of the recent stations in Mary & William Murphy’s house, in the Crevagh Station area. (Photo taken by Michael Donnelly)
Ballintubber Community Council

Community Council:
Creagh - Michael Chambers & Marie Jennings
Sheehan - Noel Heaslip (Secretary)
Corcoran - Paul Feeney & Jean Runcle (Treasurer)
Banogues - Ursula Donnelly

Ballintubber has been entered into the Best kept Burial Ground Competition. BCC would like to thank Eddie Ball and his team from TUS for building the compost area. Contact Paul Feeney on (087)6377023

Community Clean Up - Litter Action League
Thank you sincerely to all those who participated in the community clean up on Saturday the 28th of March. Due to the quantity of litter collected, a monthly clean-up has been proposed for the community litter free. Ballintubber has been entered in the Litter Action League, a competition run by Mayo County Council (MCC). This competition commenced this April and monthly litter inspection by MCC will take place throughout the summer. Ballintubber scored 89/100. Unfortunately we lost this round of the competition. We would ask the community to be vigilant and to pay particular attention to litter within the speed zone on the main road in the vicinity of the School, Resource Centre, Corrigan’s and both the Killawalla and Ballintubber Abbey roads.

Community Involvement Scheme
Works have been carried out by Mayo County Council in Drummin / Errew and Knockaraha in the past few months. We are aware that the entrance to Knockaraha still requires additional attention and we are continuing to raise this issue with MCC. Additional work has been carried out at the Killawalla junction by Corrigan’s Costcutters. The green area in that vicinity has been kerbed. We would like to thank Gabrielle Clesham and her team from the Rural Social Scheme for the removal of the dangerous bend and building of the wall on the road leading from the main road to Ballintubber Abbey. Mayo CC have been contacted to address the road surface in this area. We would like to thank Mayo CC for paying particular attention to hedgerow maintenance in our community. Mayo CC are due to return to our community to commence and complete work which funding has already been sought for.

The Seniors Alert Scheme - The Seniors Alert Scheme grant can be applied for through the Community Council. Grant support is provided towards the cost of purchasing and installing monitored personal alarms as well as additional or replacement pendants. Please contact a member of the community council if you would like to avail of this service.

Carrar Community Text Alert Scheme.
Congratulations to all those involved in setting up the Carrar Community Text Alert Scheme. If you would like to be included in the text alert please contact Paul Feeney on (087)6377023

Ballintubber Abbey Graveyard
BCC would like to thank Eddie Ball and his team from TUS for building the compost area in the graveyard. New gates have recently been installed on the entrance to the graveyard. A water tap will be in place in the vicinity of Elizabeth’s house in the next few weeks. Ballintubber Graveyard has been entered into the Best kept Burial Ground Competition. We would ask the community to be aware of litter in the graveyard.

Tidy Village Competition
It is envisaged that the tidy village competition will be resurrected in our community this summer. In the lead up to the 800th anniversary of Ballintubber Abbey it is imperative that our community looks its best for the celebrations. It is hoped that this competition will provide a platform to enhance our community.
A table quiz was held in Corley’s on Friday the 1st of May to raise funds to purchase plants and shrubs to make Ballintubber Bloom this summer. Thank you to everyone who attended and provided spot prizes on the night. A special thank you to the members of the community council who helped organise the event.
Please keep your eyes open for more information regarding the Tidy Village Competition. Ballintubber Community Council would like to thank everyone who work so hard in keeping our area tidy. Let us all do our bit and make Ballintubber Bloom this summer.

Carnacon Ladies Gaelic Football Notes
The season has kicked off swiftly with all teams except the minors taking part in competition presently. The Senior/U16 and U14 teams are all top of the Mayo Ladies League Tables which is a great credit to both players and management. Our U10/U12s are competing well and the numbers are increasing weekly. Participation is the aim of the game at this age group. The highlight of the season to date was the Aisling McGing Memorial Cup Tournament. Despite the inclement weather conditions – this didn’t dampen the spirit of football served up over the May bank holiday weekend. On the Saturday Burrishoole defeated Louisburg who were in turn defeated by Carnacon in the semi-final and Castlebar defeated Claremorris in the other encounter. On Sunday, Carnacon retained the cup with a comprehensive win over Castlebar Mitchells. James McGing presented Aisling’s cup to Aisling Brennan – Carnacon captain. Thomas McGing presented Carnacon’s Martha Carter with the player of the tournament award.

The liturgy group are members of the community that meet on a regular basis to discuss various aspects of all liturgical events. They review liturgical ceremonies that have taken place and plan for up coming events.

Historical Notes
Lough Carr, in Irish Fionn Loch Coar, the Fair Lake of Carr, is said to be one of the three ancient lakes of Ireland, the other two being Loch Foirdream (near Tralee) and Loch Lurgan (Galway Bay). In a map of Lough Carr, made in 1600, it is described as a lake that ‘ hath plenty of  eels and troutes ‘. A remarkable feature of Lough Carr is the colour of its waters. It is a pale pellucid green or greenish white, partly attributed to a soft calcareous deposit of yellowish marl which envelops the whole bottom. Another story attributes its name (fionn or white) to the angels that landed there in the form of white birds after they had helped Patrick banish the black birds (demons) of the Druids on the mountain.

An interesting feature of Loch Carr is the pavements that lie along its shore, exposed sheets of bare limestone that attain maximum development in the Burren, continues on through Corrib, Mask and Carra. This tract of Karst limestone ends in Knockaraha. The limestone underbase was formed about 350 million years ago from corals that grew in the shallow tropical sea that existed when Ireland was at that time on the equator! There are around 73 islands scattered around the lake. The Bronze age settlements, ring-forts, a promontory fort, crommages, standing stones, castles, abbeys, churches and a range of other signs indicate that human habitation has been present here for thousands of years. Its lake area may be the richest orchid site in Ireland, one of the most famous being the Irish Orchid, which, outside Lough Carr, is not found elsewhere in the British isles or northern Europe. Another rare plant, not found elsewhere in Ireland is the Spring Gentian. Irish Orchid, which, outside Lough Carr, is not found elsewhere in Ireland is the Spring Gentian. Irish Orchid, which, outside Lough Carr, is not found elsewhere in Ireland is the Spring Gentian. Its lakeshore may be the richest orchid site in Ireland, one of the most famous being the Irish Orchid, which, outside Lough Carr, is not found elsewhere in the British isles or northern Europe. Another rare plant, not found elsewhere in Ireland is the Spring Gentian.

Confirmation
Tickets are on sale from any club member and this promises to be a night of fun and craic featuring local couples from the area. Congratulations to our own Fiona McHale who was appointed Secretary to the Ladies Gaelic Players Association earlier in the year.

Tidy Gardens and Village Winners 1997?
The Passion Play 2015

They all know it will be coming around soon..... As sure as the cheery golden daffodils shoot through the ground and the lambs attempt to gambol on unsteady legs, around the third week of Lent the rumblings start. The word goes out, notices appear in the newsletter and the wheels start to move, slowly at first and then with more urgency as Lent progresses. Bad backs, prior commitments, early bedtimes are surmountable obstacles. A dedicated and committed band of people from the community, from our more respect-ed senior experienced participants to some of our youngest school children, come together to organise and produce the annual event that is the Ballintubber Passion Play.

The genesis of an idea that started in the mind of Fr Fahey is still going from strength to strength in this our 26th year. Each of the three nights the crowds came out in force armed with blankets and cushions, to soak in this evocative and spiritual experience. However, that’s not to say it was all plain sailing. It was touch and go with the weather but the Carmelites came through for us again and despite some hairy moments, with high winds, all props and actors managed to stay firmly rooted in the Abbey grounds and were not blown over to Carnacon.

This year a very important key person was missing. Vivien Dooley and his team, who without fail for a quarter of a century have produced such magnificent sound and lightning, was unable to be with us. Our fervent prayers are with Vivien. However, Michael Moran, Westport, at his own expense stepped into the breach and with the Sound and Lighting under the direction of Gary Monaghan, Westcoast Productions, they did a really splendid job and we were so grateful to them.

Hollywood has nothing on the special effects of the Passion Play. Children and adults alike visit the tomb to investigate how Jesus rose from the dead. Whatever the role (props, back room, baggage, costumes, or actors), the mantle is often passed down from family member to family member. It has been said that it’s akin to the mafia!! – once you’re in, you’re in it for life, but you know what? That’s not a bad position to be in, as involvement in this wonderful production teaches you the value of commitment, teamwork, the fun and more importantly, brings home to us once again the miracle of the Passion, the sacrifice our Lord Jesus made for us and what more fitting and wonderful herald to Holy Week. (Tom and Pauline Berry)

The Canon Regulars (From Fr. Kenney’s notes 1946)

The Order that occupied Ballintubber Abbey was the Canon Regulars of St. Augustine. They were not monks in the strict sense. Although they made vows and were bound to observe certain laws they generally practiced the functions of the secular clergy.

They were introduced to Ireland in 1126. Before the suppression of the monasteries they had as many houses in Ireland as all the other orders put together. In the Tuam Diocese they had several houses, the principal ones being, in addition to Ballintubber, those of Annaghdown, Cong, Tuam, Dunmore and Mayo Abbey.

About 1600 AD these abbeys were dismantled and became un-inhabitable but probably the canons eked out an existence around the ruins or in some neighbouring shelter for some years. Indeed, in the townland of Srahskeheen, (Killawalla) there was a story handed down that three ‘women’ lived in a cabin there at one time and said Mass occasionally. These ‘women’ may have been the canons, now in hiding, but whose black habits with their large cloaks, long hair and the birettas (liturgical head covering) gave them the appearance of ‘women’! In some instances they would have found shelter and assistance in small numbers from the neighbouring gentry during the greater part of the 17th Century. In 1699 the Irish Augustinian Canons united with the Lateran Congregation and this congregation became extinct in the person of Rev. Pat Prendergast P.P (and last Abbot) of Cong, who died in January 1829.

The Passion Play Cast

First Holy Communion

The following made their First Communion on Sunday 17th May in the Abbey.

Maedhb Duffy, Dylan Jordan, Jack Barnicle, Molly Pittendrigh, Moya McConnell, Nicole Mannion, Sadbh O’Malley, Aaron Ryan, Cadyn Vahey, Ciaraíin Staunton,

School Retreats At Abbey 2014/2015

The numbers making their Confirmation Retreats in Ballintubber Abbey continue to increase while the numbers at post Primary level are steady. Maeve Tierney, Knockrasta, has joined the retreat team this year.

Post Primary Confirmation

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<th>Schools</th>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>825</td>
<td>1,507</td>
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We wish to thank the retreat team for their hard work, dedication and professionalism.

BEK Swimming Club

BEK Swimming Club has been operating in the local area for many years. We offer swimming lessons for beginners to advanced, progressing on to water safety and life saving. There is also the opportunity for children aged 16+ to complete Assistant Teacher Training. We employ fully qualified coaches. The swimming lessons are provided on Saturdays between 9am and 10.30am (September to May) at the swimming pool in Castlebar. The club offers a supervised bus service for children who live along the routes and this both collects and delivers the children home. Our aim is to teach children to swim in a safe and enjoyable environment. We welcome newcomers to our club throughout the season. Please contact Jim Fox, Chairperson for further information on: 086 8554830.

BEK Swimming Club
(Ballintubber/Seer/Killarawalla)