

# TIME FOR ASPIRING REPORTERS TO SHINE

## Inspiring story of lad's US cycle trip

**THIS is the winning entry: Ard Fhear! A Neighbour's Inspiration by Tomás O hUallachain from Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne in Dingle, Co Kerry**

TWO elderly customers prop the counter, their eyes fixated on their settling pints.

Applying the creme de resistance is Tomas Mac a tSaorsigh. Saddle sore, Tomas hands the men their pint of plain. "Anois a bhuachaillí," exclaims Tomas in his native tongue.

The young cyclist, after his 3,053-mile exertion, is at his ease manning the bar of his father's premises in the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht.

Inspired that a 22-year-old neighbour could accomplish such an achievement, I have Tomas join me in the snug once his afternoon customers are, like their pints, settled.

I asked what made him cycle alone from San Diego to Florida's St Augustine.

He said: "When 16-year-old Kerry teenager Donal Walsh tragically passed from cancer in 2013, a charity in his name was established.

"I felt the best way to turn a hobby into an awareness mission was to cycle across the US to help raise funds for the Donal's Live Life Foundation."

For 42 days Tomas battled headwinds and punishing terrain on his epic journey, with just seven rest days.

Departing on October 24, it wasn't until December 11 that he freewheeled to his finish line having seen California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. I asked had he any downtime whatsoever.

"In Austin I took three days off and had a badly needed night on the beer."

I asked how he managed the infinite US roads.

"Leaving Ireland I was sceptical, scared about cycling a different country. Yet I've met incredible people on the way."

His inventory was limited. A bike, sunscreen, two panniers, two pairs of bib shorts and an Irish team gilet. Two Donal Walsh cycling jerseys, three pairs of socks, runners and a light jacket. Cycling shoes, gloves and a tub of chamois cream completed the list.

Tomas added: "I was offered food, accommodation and was treated like a king. The American people have been absolutely incredible to me."

He called his experience 'priceless' and raised €3,907 for the Foundation.

For a young man who only found cycling after his father banned him from the Playstation, Tomás is an inspiration to us all.

WINNERS . . . Tomás Ó hUallacháin, Jack Farrell, Emma McGoe and Caitriona Ni Chonaill



# The future's bright for Irish journalism

## BRIGHT and inquiring minds of the future were out in force yesterday for NewsBrands Ireland's Press Pass Awards 2016.

More than 8,000 Irish students took part in the scheme, which accepted entries last year and encourages young people to develop literacy and critical thinking skills and to analyse the society they live in.

Sixteen budding writers of the future were awarded

By FIONA ELLIS

for their original journalism, created as part of the Newspapers in Education programme.

The winners were selected by a panel of newspaper editors and reporters, chaired by Professor John Horgan, the former Press

Ombudsman. And the overall winner was Tomás O hUallachain from Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne in Dingle, Co Kerry, for his piece Ard Fhear! A Neighbour's Inspiration.

Trophies were also awarded in five other categories: Features, Opinion, News, Sport and Photojour-

nalism. Minister of State Finian McGrath presented students with their awards and said: "Newspapers have a vital role to play in any free society.

"They are watchdogs, chroniclers and the eyes and ears that go where most cannot be."

He added: "When you

engage with newspapers you engage with society.

"When young people engage with society, that society benefits enormously from their input and their energy."

And NewsBrands Ireland chairman Vincent Crowley added: "We are consistently impressed by the standard of work that the young people of this country produce. This year is no exception.

"It bodes well for the future of journalism in this country and for Ireland more generally."

The audience, made up of nominated students, their teachers and families, also heard from Michael Clifford of the Irish Examiner.

Clifford was the NewsBrands Ireland Journalist of the Year 2016 and he highlighted the value of quality journalism and the importance of a trusted media.

@IrishSunOnline

## NEWSBRANDS IRELAND 2016 WINNERS

**OVERALL WINNER:** Tomás O hUallachain, Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne, Dingle, Co Kerry

**FEATURES:** 1st: Caitriona Ni Chonaill, Colaiste Ghobnatan, Baile Mhic Ire, Co Cork

2nd: Mark O'Donnell, St Columbas Comprehensive, Glenties, Co Donegal

3rd: Natasha Holmes, Presentation Secondary, Clonmel, Co Tipperary

**OPINION:** 1st: Siofra O'Dwyer (Scoil Mhuire, Bunrana, Co Donegal

2nd: Aoife Foley, St Mary's Secondary, Macroom, Co Cork

3rd: Ciara Tomlinson, Jesus and Mary College, Goatstown, Dublin

**NEWS:** 1st: Kate Ni Dhubhain, Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne, Dingle, Co Kerry

2nd: Ciara Ni Bhruic, Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne

3rd: Niamh O'Dowd, FCJ Secondary School, Bunclody, Co Wexford

**SPORT:** 1st: Emma McGoe, Mean Scoil Mhuire, Longford

2nd: Sorcha Nic an tSionnaigh, Laurel Hill, Limerick

3rd: Colm Breslin, Pobalscoil na Trionoide, Youghal, Co Cork

**PHOTOJOURNALISM:** 1st: Jack Farrell, Causeway Comprehensive, Co Kerry

2nd: Carley Mannion, Colaiste Iognaid, Galway

3rd: Clodagh O'Leary, FCJ Secondary, Bunclody

## 'ENGAGES OUR IMAGINATIONS'

**CHAIRMAN** of the Judging Panel Prof John Horgan had this to say on the winner: "In an era of 'alternative facts' the responsibilities of journalists are always increasing. But it is important to recognise the real skill of the journalist does not reside just in the facts, but the narrative in which he or she embeds them.

"It is not a coincidence that most journalists describe what they produce

not as an 'article' but as a 'story'. Journalists present their facts in narrative form because that is the way our brains have been conditioned, over millennia, to make sense of facts and to remember them.

"In doing this, journalists take certain liberties with the facts – not by changing them, but by organising them. They are allowed to decide, for instance, which are the most important facts in their narrative,

where to put them, and how to best engage the reader's interest.

"Our overall winner, I feel, knows this in his bones. From a deceptively low-key introduction, he engages us and our imaginations in a fascinating story, through short paragraphs which keep the reader racing ahead, to a conclusion which ties up the events of the narrative in a way many professional journalists would salute."



PRIZE . . . Prof John Horgan, Tomás O hUallachain & Vincent Crowley