

YOUNG WRITERS AWARD

POST PRIMARY LEVEL

Post Primary Winners

1st *Holes in the Ground* by David Rawle, 5th Year,
Moyné Community School,
Age 17

Adjudicator's Comments:

This is inspired writing. An imaginative story-line is enhanced by the seamless way in which it evolves. The writer's thoughts are moulded in a language that is compellingly evocative. Opening and closing paragraphs, which are similar in content, bookend the story very effectively. The writer gives us a fresh look at the grandfather / grandson relationship, combining familiar aspects of it in creative ways. A really well-written story told with verve and style.

HOLES IN THE GROUND

David Rawle 5th Year, Age 17
Carrigallen Vocational School

He stared at the grave with his name on it, tears swimming down his chin, as he lays the pages down on the soft grass. 'Thank you' he whispered softly to himself, and the wind.

'Live for today...' he whispered into the child's ear. Little Billy Finlan sat in his grandfather's knee, his favourite place in the world, and despite being only 8 years old, his eyes shone with admiration. He was born when his grandfather retired, and so the old man gave him all his time and love he had left. Mainly, he gave him the gift of stories. He created ripping yarns that would delight and terrify the young boy.

Little Billy Finlan loved his grandfather deeply, and his stories even more. His favourite was one his grandfather repeated often, and he never understood what it

meant, when Billy asked him how he was so old. His grandfather would think for a moment, then he would say the same thing. 'If you go out in your garden, dig a hole, and then the next day fill it up again, every day for the rest of your life, you'll live forever.' Surely it couldn't be that simple? 'But how?' His grandfather just winked. So, just ten years old, he dragged a huge shovel into his tiny garden, and dug a hole. The next day, he covered it up. He did this, every day, for five years.

One day, he was outside digging, one of his grandfather's stories floating around his head. Suddenly it came to him. The stories, holes, digging, and mischievous winks. The shovel fell with a clang, and he ran inside. He sat down with a pen and piece of paper, and he began putting his own story down, and then taking bits away, writing page after page in the frenzied hope of immortality.

For years, his pen flashed across the pages while his imagination soared ever higher, now 18, he had his whole life ahead of him. He visited his grandfather less and less. Now in his 80's, his days were spent waiting for him, and his nights were spent missing him. He left his house only to prepare for Billy coming over, and he only left his chair to boil the kettle, 'Just in case'. After a long time, he threw out the kettle. He sat down again, and wondered to himself if he was waiting for Billy or waiting to die.

Billy wrote the last word of the final draft, his fingers shaking, his body trembling, his mind rippling.

'The End.'

He gathered the pages, and ran out the door. Billy raced through the streets like a

meteorite to his grandfather's house.

A single page went flying in the wind. He darted after it, desperation and fear overwhelming him. He chased the floating page, feeling the rest come loose in his arms, but he held on tight. He leaped forward and just caught the page. Such was his joy, he didn't even see the truck as it hurtled around the corner, taking his soul, his life and his dream. The pages oozed blood, and slowly they all tumbled away in the wind, forgotten by all but the breeze. And so 'Live for Today' by William Finlan was lost to the wind.

A single page floated into the old man's garden, and when he saw the speck of red blood, he felt his soul finally break.

His granddad slumped into his chair, and crumpled all that remained of Billy's book. He looked around him. 89 years old, and what single thing did he have to show for it?

'Live for Today'. Billy lived for today. What have I lived for?

And then, his aching joints stopped hurting, his heart left aside all grief of the past and his mind became as clear as glass. He got out of his chair, and knowing that any day could be his last, he started to write.

He stares at the grave with his name on it, tears swimming down his chin, as he lays the pages down on the soft grass. He sent a copy of his book to a publishing agent, and he was waiting to hear back. 'RIP Willam Finlan', His own name, and despite himself, he smiled at the inscription on the stone. 'Live for Today, Dream for Tomorrow and Learn from Yesterday.'

His own words, he just never knew what they meant.

'Thank you' he whispered softly to himself, and the wind.

YOUNG WRITERS AWARD

PRIMARY LEVEL

*1st Prize Learn from yesterday, live for today,
dream for tomorrow*
Niamh Torsney 5th Class,
St Joseph's NS Killenummery

Adjudicator's Comments:

This young writer describes clearly and impressively her team's progress to the Community Games Finals in The National Sports Campus, Abbotstown, Dublin.

Manorhamilton Area U/12 Girls' Gaelic Football Team conquered Leitrim and Connacht on their way to the National Finals where they won bronze medals.

This writer blends her brief accounts of their matches with interesting insights into their preparations and training sessions, their stay in a Dublin hotel on the eve of the Finals, and her own responses to their successes and the odd setback. An engaging chronicle of their 'campaign' to national honours.

LEARN FROM YESTERDAY, LIVE FOR TODAY, DREAM FOR TOMORROW

Niamh Torsney 5th Class
Killenummery NS

When I hear this saying, I automatically think of the Community Games All-Ireland Gaelic final. I have experienced it and I have learned a lot from my mistakes. Here is my journey to the All-Irelands. One Friday evening I went to the first trials. There were twenty five girls and only fourteen to be selected. At the start we had to warm up, passing around the ball and finally we had a match. It was a very tough trial. The coach said he would send a message to all the parents the following week to say who got in to the squad. Eventually mum got the text to say who was in the squad. Thankfully I made it.

The following Friday, was the first training session. The coach gave us a good talking to, He said we couldn't miss training, we had to be fully committed, play as a team and no giving out to each other. We had a few challenge matches. Our first major match was the Leitrim final. We played as a team and

won well. The next match was going to be the Connacht semi- final and final all on the one day. We went to training twice a week because we were really determined to win a Connacht title for Leitrim.

Finally the day arrived. I was nervous, I had butterflies in my belly. We all travelled together down to Galway. We arrived at ten O'clock, our first match was at 11 o'clock. The facilities were great. An official met us and he brought us to our dressing room. We felt very important. Our first game was against Westport County Mayo. We beat them well. It was like a cricket score. I scored two goals and three points. It is not often that Leitrim beats Mayo. The Connacht final was a different story. We were playing against Sligo. It was a very tough but exciting game. Sligo was very strong team but all our hard work paid off and we won by a point. We were ecstatic. We couldn't believe we were the Connacht champions. When we arrived in Dromahair there was a huge crowd out. We weren't expecting the crowd. It made the day even better.

We had a three week break before the All Ireland final. We were like heroes in our village. The All Ireland finals were held in Abbotstown Dublin. The coach said if it's possible could we stay in Dublin the night before the finals. We all decided to stay in the Green Isle Hotel. We had great fun playing in the hotel. It took our minds off the match. The next morning arrived and it was the day of the final. We drove out to Abbotstown. We were all set to go. We were playing the favourites, West Meath. Just before the game it started to rain. They got two late goals and won by eight points. We were heartbroken I never felt so sad. We had to get over it quickly because we had another game in an hour.

The next game was for a bronze medal. They scored two early goals but we came back in the second half and scored four goals. We won well in the end. I scored the last goal. When the referee blew the full time whistle, we were relieved that we won the game and got a bronze medal. We learned a lot that day. It is not all about winning. As a team we have a bright future ahead.

First Award Winner 1969

In memory of Rosemary Tiernan, Bormacoola who won the essay competition of the first Leitrim Guardian with an essay entitled "My Leitrim of the Future".



Rosemary was born on the 18th of November 1952, the eldest of four girls. She attended Gortletteragh N.S. In 1965 she won a local councils scholarship which allowed her to enrol in St Joseph's Secondary School in Newtownforbes. During a teachers strike she returned home and one day in conversation with Jude Flynn he asked would she enter a essay competition for the first edition of The Leitrim Guardian. She wrote the essay "My Leitrim Of The Future" and was delighted when she won first prize. There was such excitement in the house on the evening of the prize giving and she made her way to Kinlough, with her younger sister Marian. We saw her on the Six o'clock news the next day and we watched her receive her prize with such pride and happiness.

After she finished her Leaving Cert she moved to Dublin where she lived for the remainder of her life, but Leitrim was never far from her heart. She was a very proud Leitrim lady. She always kept up to date on the happenings at home and loved getting her copy of The Leitrim Guardian at Christmas. Sadly Rosemary passed away in 2012 and we know she will be so proud to see that her essay is being remembered now on this special anniversary.