

The John Steinbeck Festival Limavady.

## Photographic Competition 2021

A fine range of submissions was received illustrating the competition themes of: The Homeplace; The Human Animal; On the Road; and Helping Hands, in a variety of creative ways. Many reflected on the picturesque local landscape. Others sought to convey a whole story in one thoughtful picture. Humour was evident in some, and all showed levels of imagination and artistic inspiration that impressed the jurors.

The twenty entries selected for exhibition all successfully encapsulated something of the essence of Steinbeck's legacy. Like his novels, they explore the interplay between geography and humanity. They all demand the viewer to pause and appreciate a view or an image where details or activity are worthy of closer inspection.

One overall winner was selected and three other photographs were chosen for special commendation. These four submissions were equally divided between the categories of landscape and human life. All were stunning photographs. It was a difficult task to decide between them.

### **Overall Winner:**

#### **Castlerock Pier** (*On The Road*) by **Mari Ward-Foster**

This dramatic photograph taken at the Barmouth of the River Bann shows the angry waves of the North Atlantic breaking over the western wall that channels the river on its final course into the sea. The wall itself resembles a road, fraught with dangers, extending out into the ocean. The ominous clouds in the slate grey sky, the obvious energy of the waves, the jagged rocks protruding from the foaming sea and the puddled concrete of the wall with its rusting markers combine to suggest an epic confrontation. The juxtaposition of the solid manmade features and the dangerous phenomena of the natural

world convey a timeless story of man battling nature. This could evoke the perilous journey taken by the impoverished migrant labourers in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, heading for the Pacific edge in California.

### **Commendations:**

#### **Living on the Road** (*On The Road*) by **John Phillip Hutton**

This beautifully composed photograph shows an authentically clothed and equipped itinerant cooking food over a campfire. None of the items photographed betray any sense of the modern world. The fire is fuelled by wood and the cast iron kettle, suspended from the cooking tripod, suggest a time contemporaneous with Steinbeck's 1940's USA. The sharpness of focus and the high degree of contrast in this black and white photograph indicate a high level of technical expertise. It hits the brief for "On the Road" exactly as anticipated.

#### **The Homeplace** (*The Home Place*) by **Jimmy Cooke**

This photograph is really like a companion piece to the first commended work just described. The technical excellence in its production is similarly self evident. It shows an aged gentleman, "hopped up" from the cold, intently splitting firewood for kindling. The suggested inclemency of the weather conditions and the necessarily manual nature of his activity suggest the timeless situation where man battles the elements. The overall demeanour of the gentleman and his facial expression somehow convey a stoic resignation appropriate to the human condition.

#### **Downhill Fading Reflections** (*On The Road*) by **Annika Clements**

This beautifully artistic photograph looking into the sun setting beyond Lough Foyle and the Donegal hills is simply breathtaking. It shows our local landscape in all its majesty. The abstract cloud pattern reflected on the wet sand conjures up landscapes of Ireland

captured by the painter Paul Henry. It shows an example of an intertidal zone featured as part of our Festival's collaboration with the Northern Ireland Science Festival and Ulster University's School of Environmental Science. It references Steinbeck's fascination with marine ecology.

# Photography Competition

The following 20 entries will be used in a touring exhibition which will be launched later in the year when regulations allow for this to happen.

<i>Lough Finn</i>	M. Cahill
<i>Working Hands</i>	S. Thompson
<i>Covid Bubble</i>	L. Mc Greevy
<i>The Home Place</i> *Commended	J. Cooke
<i>Reflections</i>	C. Corbett
<i>Tamlaght Finlagan</i>	K. Dougherty
<i>Train over Water</i>	T. Hegan
<i>Living on the Road</i> *Commended	J. P. Hutton
<i>The Reader</i>	J.P. Hutton
<i>Man and Dogs</i>	M. Ward-Foster
<i>Bishop's Palace</i>	M. Ward-Foster
<i>Castlerock Pier</i> *Overall Winner	M. Ward-Foster
<i>Teabreak</i>	J. Hassan
<i>On The Road</i>	B. Shaw
<i>The Home Place</i>	W. Dickey
<i>Downhill Reflections</i> *Commended	A. Clements
<i>Solace At The Edge</i>	A. Clements
<i>Country Dancing Mojve Style</i>	J.T. Davis
<i>Derelict House Texas</i>	J.T. Davis