



Noel with his mother and grandmother, Evelyn and Sylvia.

Burtonport man is 'Apprentice of the Year'

Burtonport native Noel McBride has won the Apprentice of the Year award, for Tool Making 2007. It was conferred at the prize giving ceremony in the Radisson SAS Hotel Sligo on Friday last.

Noel was educated in Acres National School, and the Rosses Community School Dungloe, where he completed his education before being employed by Irish Pressings, a metal pressings and tool making company based in the Gweedore Business Park.

Irish Pressings began operation in 2005 and Noel was the first person to be employed by the company, where he was involved in the installation of machinery, and the setting up of the factory floor from the beginning.

Having had an aptitude for metalwork at school, it was a logical step for Noel to pursue working in this environment when the opportunity arose. Noel in fact has followed the example of his employers, Declan and Brendan Ward from Kincasslagh, who themselves were former recipients of this award.

"This is a great honour for me personally and also for the company, because I was given a lot of help from Brendan and Declan, who from the start encouraged me to pursue this career," said Noel.

Brendan Ward who is production manager with Irish Pressings was very complimentary of Noel's abilities and dedication, and was not at all surprised that he won the award, which in his words was "richly deserved".

Irish Pressings is currently supplying metal parts to the construction industry all around Ireland and most recently to the automotive industry, where they manufacture metal parts used in the manufacture of cars and vans.

They also design and manufacture press tools used by other metal pressing companies, both at home and abroad.

"This is where Noel's abilities will be used to the full," said Declan Ward managing director of Irish Pressings, "and if he continues his apprenticeship with the same interest and work ethic, he has a bright future in the industry," he said.

Noel's other interests include fishing. His late grandfather, Joe Ban McBride, was a well known fisherman, having worked mainly from Burtonport harbour during his career. His uncle James, who still carries on the family tradition.

He is also a notable sportsman, and is currently a member of the Dungloe GAA senior team, having played at all age groups for the club. He was also a member of the Donegal under 21 GAA team who competed in this year's Ulster championship.



Brendan Ward, Production Manager, Irish Pressings, Noel McBride, Irish Pressings and James Glynn, Fas Instructor, Training centre Sligo.