



THE BARD OF BARNESLEY VISITS LOCAL CHILDREN

Brian Hayes, coordinator of the National Gamekeepers' Organisation Charitable Trust, has recently organised and coordinated a highly successful nationwide competition. The Trust, with the huge financial support from Barry Atkinson's Spider's Appeal had thrown down the gauntlet of creativity to all school children in the country. Could they put

their imagination to the subject of 'Countryside at Work' and produce works of art, poetry and photography? These were the three categories for which children and their schools could win fabulous prizes and which were a wonderful incentive for our budding young artists.

One of the prizes was an exhilarating poetry workshop masterminded by Ian McMillan, the Bard of Barnsley. Ian is hugely regarded and very well known as a great wit, raconteur, musician, writer – you name it- he'll do it. He is often on BBC radio and has been spotted on such television programmes as 'Have I Got News for You'. So he's also very brave!! Now it was with some awe and wonder then that on Thursday, February 11th 2010, Sophie Taylor from Dingle Primary School of Kingswinford received the first prize for poetry. Brian and his wife Yvonne were there on behalf of the Organisation to also present to Sophie, a terrific laptop. Charlotte Foster, who came second with a well conceived photograph of the school's new rockery, was rewarded with a beautiful book of poetry by Lindsay Waddell. These prizes assuredly will be a huge incentive for children to continue to consider the many merits and facets of our countryside.

Ian McMillan was introduced to a tumultuous reception in the school hall where all the children were delighted to create their own 'Mr Moore, Mr Moore!' school poem. It was a delight to see children from four to eleven following the hilarious antics of chief poet Ian as they all composed lines of funny rhyme and rhythm. The fun and frolics continued after a coffee break (...children's playtime) when Ian led a superb master class in children's poetry with Sophie's class. Laura Harris and Alison Grant, both class teachers at the school were in tears (...of enjoyment) as Ian showed how a professional poet can call up powers of imagination and comedic creativity skills to thrill everyone present, regardless of age and ability. At a breathless and stimulating pace, all the children and Ian created a totally original poem which was completely pertinent to their classroom, their environment and to themselves. It was a brilliant experience for all concerned which resulted in the children creating more fun poetry and becoming huge Ian fans. No-one wanted the experience to stop!! If you would like to know more about the competition, the prizes, the poems and Ian McMillan, why not try the following websites:

www.gamekeeperstrust.org.uk

www.uktouring.org.uk/ian-mcmillan

Alison Grant

