

## AUTHOR AND POET HARRY LAING VISITS THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Junior school has been extremely fortunate this year and had visits from a wonderful array of authors.

These have included: Deborah Abela, Oliver Phommavanh, Penny Reeve, skyping Katrina Germein, Julie Robertson and Sharon Perry. On Friday 31 August, we had the final visit of the year from author and poet Harry Laing:

<http://harrylaing.com.au/workshops/>

Taken off Harry's web site: "I have a passion for poetry, comic performance and for teaching. As a poet I've had two books published **Thirst** (1993) and **Backbone** (2010) and my first book as a children's author is **Shoctopus-poems to grip you** (2015) a book of illustrated poems for 6-12 yr olds. I've written and performed 8 solo shows and toured one of them, *Away with the birds* for STARTS (Southern Tablelands Arts). I was awarded CASP grants to write and perform a two-hander *Playing for Time* in 2012 and a staged radio show *Under Braidwood* in 2014 I've also written for radio. My two series of quirky country tales *Stories From the Edge of the Forest* and *Tales of a Tree Changer* were broadcast on ABC Radio National's Bush Telegraph in 2005/2006".

Harry gave a poetry presentation to Years 5 and 6. He was really impressed by their listening skills and questions. He talked about how poems should be vivid and sharp. They also have short lines which is different to narratives. He then did a writing workshop with Year 5. Harry was impressed hearing quality rhyming work, which is hard to do. After reading his poem, *SuperFly*, the children were asked to write a poem about the things that most annoys them. This elicited some punchy and funny responses.

Benji wrote this poem which he was a good sport to share:

### **Me!**

I am really annoying,

Everyone's ears I'm destroying,

Always saying toilet jokes in class,

People want to smash my head with glass,

In class I'm always in trouble,  
My voice leaves the classroom in rubble,  
My parents should have thought twice,  
Like a dog I always spread lice,  
I'm the most annoying thing I know,  
So that's why on sight people go !!!!!

Amelia C wrote this poem during the day of Harry's visit:

#### A Gymnasts Life

You fear the loss and pain of defeat,  
But are still able to stand on two feet,  
You break and cry all you want,  
But nothing can keep you away from the hunt,  
This is what you've worked for,  
The pride and honour you take out on the floor,  
You remember the struggle and pain you had,  
When all the good had turned to bad,  
When behind the scenes, you prayed,  
That it would all just go away,  
The doubt and regrets of what you went through,  
Made you want to give it all to,  
The next girl in line, who gave it her all,  
But always seemed to fall,  
You remember the times you thought to give up,  
But could never find the reason to disrupt,  
Everything you gave to the sport,  
The heart's desire and support,  
But when the pressure builds, it tears apart,  
How are you able to not depart?,  
How are you able to carry a smile?,  
When everything is in a pile,  
You hold your head high, and never look back,  
Because this is what keeps you intact,  
It's what runs in your veins, and a key to your heart,  
And it's only the beginning, only the start,  
It holds a future that could never be told,  
One that can shine, with the brightest of gold.  
The sky is its limits,  
With the moon as its spirits,

As no-one could ever predict how grand,  
One could travel with hard work put in, to expand,  
To truly become a CHAMPION!

Year 2 were also fortunate enough to be involved in a writing/performance session and showed themselves to be highly enthusiastic.

The students responded extremely well to his energy and passion for writing. The teachers are looking forward to seeing the student's writing after Harry's visit.

**Mrs Emma Harris**

Years 1, 2 and 3 Coordinator

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