



QUEEN
ELIZABETH
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

23rd November 2007

Award winning Poet performs at QEGS

On 22 October award-winning Celtic bard and performance poet Jim MacCool visited the school to perform some of his *Ionan Tales* as part of National Poetry Month. The event was organised and hosted by QEGS English Department and English Society for the benefit of a large number of students from both Penrith secondary schools. *The Ionan Tales* is very loosely based on the concept of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, following a group of modern day pilgrims on a journey to Iona. Jim performed twice to two very different audiences.

First he treated Year 8 to his rendition of his cautionary moral fable *The Boxer's Tale*.

His warm-up included a full repertoire of Gaelic songs and poems, some haunting and some hilarious, to get the audience in the mood for Celtic culture. The idea was that tale and warm-up combined, students were taken on a musical and literary tour from the northern tip of Scotland to the south of Ireland blending traditional songs and original compositions.

Secondly, Jim performed to an audience of Year 12 and 13 students, over fifty from QEGS and over thirty from UCC. This time the centre-piece was a passionate reading of *The Selkie's Tale*. It told the story of a bachelor farmer tempted late in life into a liaison with a selkie or seal-woman who, as an agent of the Devil, lures him to his doom.

This is what some of the Year 8 students had to say about Jim MacCool - *Connor Walker*:

"Jim MacCool had an amazing voice which kept you interested" *Mitchell Lea*: "I liked how he changed the pace and pitch of his voice to emphasise detail and increase tension" *Emily Latus*:

"He was very entertaining with the way he used musical instruments to get a rhythm going" *Helen Mackey*:

"Jim MacCool uses stress, pace and pitch to make his poetry more understandable. His versatile voice made *The Boxer* come alive. I think he is a brilliant performer"

Annabelle Metcalfe: "I liked the way he took us on a tour round the western coast

of Britain and his accents were brilliant" *Krista Roze*: "He involved everyone which got us listening intently and hanging on his every word"