

Poppyscotland News Release

SOWING THE POPPY SEED – EDINBURGH SCHOOLS ARE TOP OF THE POPPIES IN NATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION

Two Edinburgh schools, Hermitage Park Primary and James Gillespie's High, have won a national schools poetry competition, organised by veterans' charity Poppyscotland in partnership with the Scottish Poetry Library.

Poppy Poetry is part of Sowing the Poppy seed – Poppyscotland's three-year education project that aims to revolutionise the way pupils learn about veterans, remembrance and conflict.

The winners were Kirsty Simpson, P7, Hermitage Park Primary School, with her poem *We Meet in the Silence*, and Robert Wright, S1, James Gillespie's High School, with *Birds of the Battlefield*.

There were two categories – P4-7 and S1-3, and almost 4,000 entries were received. Stimulus for the competition was photographs by acclaimed war photographer, Robert Wilson, taken in Baghdad, Iraq, and Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Poppyscotland Chief Executive Ian McGregor said: "It is vital that young people know about conflicts, remembrance and the role of veterans in their communities. The poetry competition enabled pupils to learn in a way that is both creative and engaging."

At a presentation at the famous Lady Haig's Poppy Factory today (23 February), the winning pupils were awarded a digital compact camera and their schools were given an SLR digital camera. As part of their prize, winning pupils' classes will also enjoy professional poet workshops with the Scottish Poetry Library.

Robyn Marsack, Director of the Scottish Poetry Library, commented: "Poetry provides a way for children to grasp the experience of war and its consequences imaginatively, and we're very pleased to support Poppyscotland in their creative approach to education."

Sowing the Poppy seed was developed by Poppyscotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland in conjunction with Determined to Succeed, Lady Haig's Poppy Factory and the Royal British Legion Scotland. The materials include films, challenges, posters, poppy seeds and archive footage, as well as activity guides and research activities to support teachers.

Sowing the Poppy seed can be downloaded from www.poppyscotland.org.uk/education

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