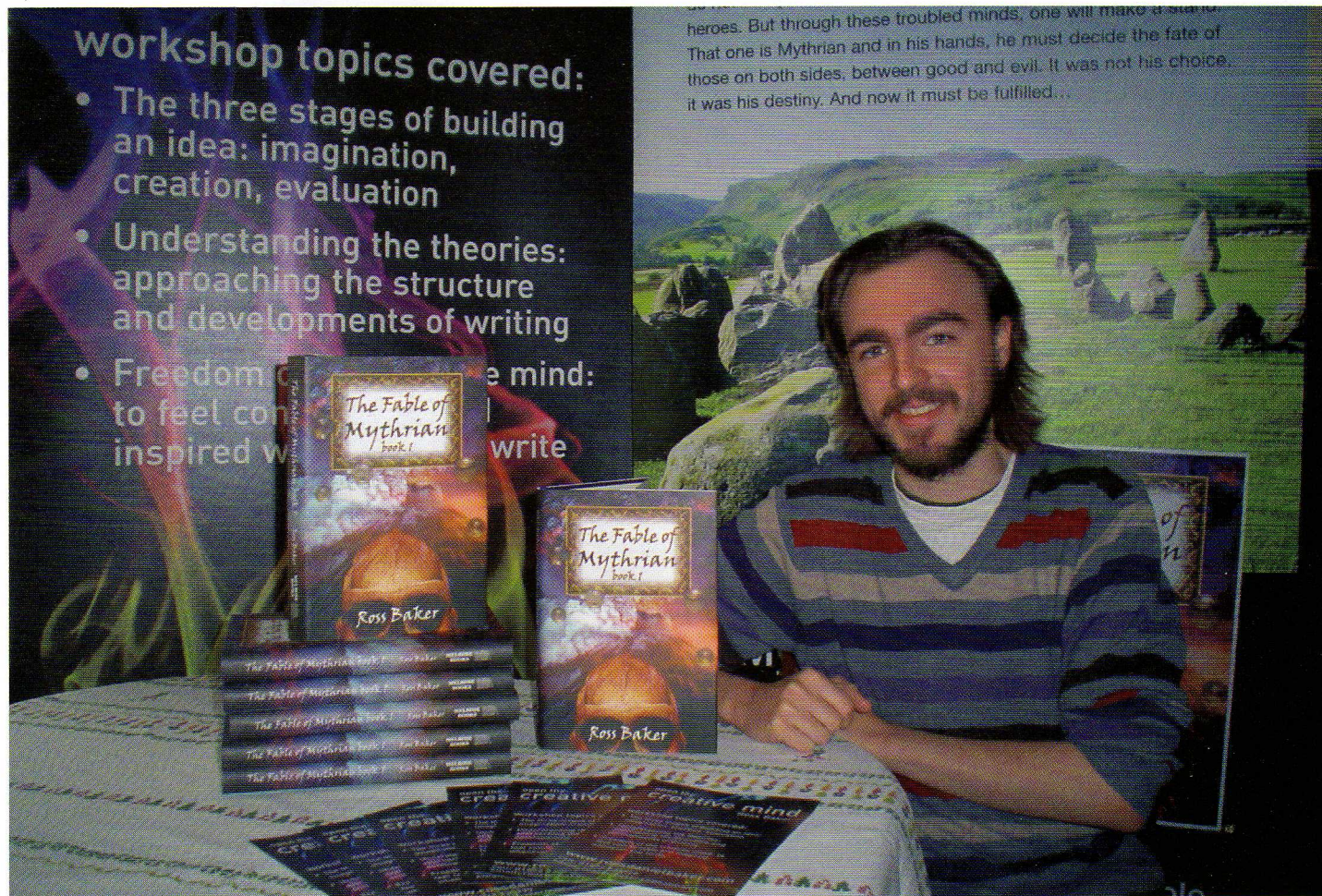


Ross Baker

Ross Baker moved to Oakham aged 11 with his family and admits it took a while for him to settle here. A child of the computer games era, Ross became fascinated with the fantasy genre and developed his love for the arts through his own ideas for characters, storylines and design. Now 20, Ross has written the first of a series of fantasy tales and tells Amander Meade about his journey to become an accomplished young author and poet



You still live in Oakham despite your early misgivings about Rutland - are you more kindly disposed towards the area now?

It took me a while to adjust to Oakham which is very different from Wellingborough where I spent my early childhood. After school when I began my course in Countryside Management at Brooksby College, I developed a greater understanding of the environment and our need to preserve it. When I came up with the idea for my book 'The Fable of Mythrian', I became absorbed in the countryside around Rutland which provided the inspiration for many of the places in my book.

'The Fable of Mythrian' is the first in a series of six; once inspiration arrived, how easy was it to complete?

I have always had a colourful imagination and building up a collection of ideas was no problem. The only thing that slowed me down was my grammar, which is something I continue to work on. 'The Fable of Mythrian' took me around a year to plan out and a further year to write. The next hurdle was finding a publisher

which is never easy but eventually my work was accepted by Melrose Books in Cambridgeshire.

What has the response been to the book?

I have been busy working my way around bookshops on promotional signings, giving interviews on radio and in local press and now the response is growing and people are really enjoying the book. I will pursue this series although I am working on several different books at the moment as well as developing my poetry. I really want to expand my writing as far as possible and look for new challenges.

Tell us about your workshops for young writers in schools

After publishing my own book, I wanted to set up workshops for students to encourage creative thought and an interest in writing for themselves. I started with local schools and the response from students was very positive - I was impressed with the attitude and level of interest shown by the pupils. The workshops themselves usually consist of a thirty minute session for older children or young adults

followed by questions and answers. We cover topics such as developing an idea, characterization and working on settings - the aim is to stir the imagination and increase an interest in literature.

Following a very successful signing at Borders Bookshop in Leicester, I have begun working with them to set up workshops for students in the shop itself as well as continuing to offer talks and workshops at schools across Leicestershire and Rutland. Travelling around the country to signings also creates the opportunity to visit schools elsewhere.

Contacts:

- Ross's book is 'The Fable of Mythrian' available to order through local bookshops or from Borders in Leicester priced £10.99.
- Schools interested in contacting Ross to arrange a talk or workshop should email: Roosterbaker45@hotmail.com or visit www.rossdanielbaker.com
- Also find out more through Leicestershire Library and Education at www.leics.gov.uk