

Press Notice

CZECHS TURN TO DOLPHINS TO INSPIRE KIDS TO READ

Horace Dobbs, the author of a series of children's books about a dolphin named Dilo and the illustrator Rico Oldfield, were presented with large gold medals made of gingerbread by the staff and pupils of the Bratislava Junior School in Varnsdorf during a recent tour in the Czech Republic.

These surprise awards were the result of a visit by a Czech group to Yorkshire in 2010 where they were guests at the Dolphin Festival of Art and Drama based on Dilo in a cluster of schools around Swanland. The visitors were so impressed by what they saw that they set up their own programmes of learning in the Czech Republic based on the principles of IDEAL (Integrated dolphin education and learning) that Horace Dobbs has been pioneering in England and Germany for over a decade.

The Czechs were so thrilled by the resultant enthusiastic response of the staff and pupils they invited Horace and Rico with a team from England to visit the Czech Republic to see and experience the newly adopted approach to education in action.

In a kindergarten near Liberec the headmistress told her UK visitors that she wanted to move away from the rigid state system originally imposed during the Russian occupation and for all Czech schools to adopt a fresh approach to teaching. She said that the joy that Dilo brought into her classes encouraged the children to develop their own identities and personalities. This she explained was essential to set the up and coming generation on the road to creating the innovative ideas and skills that were essential for the future of her country that had moved into a global economy in which many of the traditional methods of generating wealth had moved away to countries such as China.

"The Czechs are now leading the world," said Horace at a televised launch of the Czech edition of his book *Dilo and the Witch of Black Rock* in Michnuv Palace in Prague at the conclusion of the tour.

Horace later commented: "The problems facing the Czech economy are similar to those we are having to deal back home in the UK. Dilo the dolphin has to face up to many problems, such as losing his mother and being put in prison. It was obvious from our visit that the kids understood these challenges and could also clearly relate their own behaviour to his mischievous antics. If they and other kids around the world carry with them into the future the joy and optimism that Dilo is bringing into their lives the world will become a happier place."

The British tour was a prelude to a major campaign in 2012 by the Czech Government to improve literacy in the Czech Republic and adjacent countries.

For information on IDEAL download the **free Special Edition** of the International Dolphin Watch (IDW) E. Magazine **DOLPHIN** through www.idw.org

To encourage children to read in the UK and overseas, IDW plans to give away 1000 free books to schools.

NOTE TO EDITORS – FOR AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH HORACE DOBBS
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