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suitability before being placed with an experienced counsellor.

Funded by statutory services, the association organises various fundraising events. Recently, MIND has been promised a second-hand mini-bus and has been raising funds to meet the day to day running costs.

One event was 'Operation Santa Claus' when members and staff made a collection in a number of pubs in the area just before Christmas. A total of £820 was raised, with Melksham contributing over £150.

The group relies heavily on voluntary help to make the groups work effectively. If you have any time you could give to MIND, please telephone the office on 01249 814447. All volunteers receive training and the next training course is in March.

Stories at Lowbourn School

AS PART of the National Literacy Strategy, Lowbourn Junior School invited professional story teller Michael O'Leary to tell a variety of his wonderful stories.

Michael O'Leary, an ex-infant and junior school teacher based in Southampton, is an experienced story teller who brings his stories to life with a story box containing a variety of artefacts and musical instruments.

He has told stories all over the country from West Cork to East Anglia and back again. He has also featured on Radio Solent, Radio Bristol and BBC Radio Northern Ireland.

Michael's story telling fulfils an important aspect of the National Literacy Strategy in a lively and appealing way to children.

His stories are creative with follow up activities and fun participation. No books are used when Michael tells his stories.

"Stories, listen to them and telling them have been part of my life for as long as I can remember," explains Michael.

"In mid-life I became a

teacher and the value of sharing stories with children and indeed adults, was suddenly very obvious to me.

"I became a professional story teller almost to my surprise as if that is what I had been training for all along."

Michael loves traditional stories and believes he is the link in a chain that stretches from the past to the future; "My style is based on building a rapport with the listeners. It also involves discussion and communication."

Pictured is Michael on his box of tricks with Mark Lock, 8, Shaun Croucher, 8, Leanne Harewood, 7 and Charlie Alexander, 7.




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