Picture Perfect: North East's 'Postcards from the Park' winner is snap happy!

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The photo, entitled, 'Fly Away', impressed the judges who included celebrated photographer Mike McCartney (brother of Paul), Angela Nicholson from Amateur Photographer magazine and Tim Kerr from the Press Association.

The ‘Postcards from the Park’ competition celebrates public parks and the £1.2billion invested in parks and the environment by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). Now in its third year, this competition has been organised in partnership with parks charity GreenSpace and has encouraged thousands of people across the UK to capture what they love most about parks in an imaginative way.

The overall winner of the competition will be announced and presented with their £1,000 prize by Chris Packham, TV presenter (Spring Watch), wildlife photographer and passionate environmentalist, on Friday 4 September at the Café Gallery in Southwark Park, London. All regional, country and category winners’ photos will be professionally curated and displayed in an exhibition there. The winning photos will also be turned into postcards and distributed at Lottery-funded venues across the UK.

North East winner, Sarah McCrea, said: “I have never won a photography competition before and am really excited to see one of my photos not only in a gallery but also on a postcard. I wander through Gosforth Central Park most days to enjoy the space, greenness and grass the park offers, as well as watching the people using the park for different activities. This photo was taken this summer when Anna and her family came to visit, as you can see the park was the highlight of the day. It was lovely to be able to capture some of the fun and freedom just playing in the park offers you when you are six!”

Professional photographer and main judge, Mike McCartney, said: "This competition has continued to really capture the public’s imagination and we’ve had over 1,000 more entries than last year, with not only an increase in quantity, but also in quality. It’s wonderful to see people out and about enjoying their parks and photography. Sarah McCrea’s photo is just one of many great shots that demonstrate the popular appeal of parks.”

Chris Packham, said: “We’re so lucky in the UK to have such wonderful and varied green spaces which not only offer massive benefits in terms of health, quality of life and well-being, but also offer brilliant opportunities to get up close and personal with nature. It’s essential we keep on investing in them as there is still plenty of work to be done to look after them all properly. Every community deserves to be near a great park!”

Carole Souter, speaking on behalf of HLF, BIG and GreenSpace, said: "Parks are vital places that give people an opportunity to escape the daily hustle and bustle and enjoy the fresh air. The huge number of photographs that were entered for this competition shows just how popular they are right across the country. That is why HLF and BIG support parks with such a massive investment of our funding.”

Since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded more than £525million for the restoration of more than 500 historic public parks across the UK, while the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has invested more than £700million in

environmental initiatives. Together, HLF and BIG have been investing an additional £150million* in regenerating and improving people's enjoyment of parks, putting them firmly back at the heart of community life.

Notes to editors

To view a gallery of the winning entries.

* The two Lottery Funds have been working together in partnership on Parks for People, a joint £150million grants programme over three years to 2009 for public parks. The Big Lottery Fund is investing £80 million (in England only) and £70million is coming from HLF (across the UK). This joint programme continues to support projects currently underway, but is closed to new applications. However, HLF continues to fund new parks projects to the tune of £20million a year.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 28,800 projects, allocating over £4.3billion across the UK.

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) rolls out close to £2million in Lottery good cause money every 24 hours, which together with other Lottery distributors means that across the UK most people are within a few miles of a Lottery-funded project. BIG, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Out of every pound spent on a National Lottery ticket, 28p goes directly to good causes. BIG is responsible for distributing half of the money to improve communities and the lives of people most in need. HLF distributes 16.67% of the money to heritage projects across the UK. There are 12 other organisations responsible for distributing lottery money to good causes. www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

This year marks The National Lottery's 15th Anniversary. Since 1994 over £23billion - that's £25million each week - has been raised by Lottery players for the arts, sport, heritage, environment, education, health, charity and voluntary sectors.

Further information

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