

## Barry Hines, author of book behind Kes, dies



*Barry Hines pictured in his home town of Hoyland Common. Photograph: Ben Duffy/SWPix.com*

Barry Hines, the author behind the film *Kes*, has died aged 76, prompting tributes from the worlds of literature and politics.

Hines had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for the last nine years. His second novel, *A Kestrel for a Knave*, was adapted for cinema as *Kes* in 1969 by the director Ken Loach. Hines died on Friday.

His friend, the writer and broadcaster Ian McMillan, tweeted on Sunday morning: "Very sad news: the great writer Barry Hines, creator of Barnsley's defining myth *A Kestrel for a Knave*, has died. Rest in peace."

Hines wrote several novels, from his first in 1966, *The Blinder*, about football, to his last in 2009, *This Artistic Life*. He also wrote the screenplay for the TV drama *Threads*, which imagined a nuclear attack in Sheffield.

*Kes* is the story of 15-year-old Billy Casper growing up in South Yorkshire and his developing relationship with a kestrel.

Tony Garnett, who produced the film *Kes*, paid his own tribute, saying: "Kes writer Barry Hines is dead. I'm sad, thinking of my old friend, a man I loved."

On his blog, Garnett, who worked on four films with Hines, wrote: “His character and his writing were all of a piece. Direct, simple and honest. His simplicity was hewn out of a close analysis of others and their place in a society riven by class interests.

“To the end, he knew which side he was on. He had been born to the sound of clogs, on their way to Rockingham pit where his father worked.”

The journalist Tony Parsons described Hines as “inspirational” and Dan Jarvis, the Labour MP for Barnsley Central said he was “a brilliant writer”. Jonathan Coe, the author of *What a Carve Up!*, said: “A Kestrel for a Knave leaves an indelible mark on all who read it. He leaves a great legacy.”

Hines went to Ecclesfield grammar school and Loughborough College of Education. He taught PE in schools in London and South Yorkshire from 1960 to 1972 and went on to become an honorary fellow at Sheffield City Polytechnic.

“Barry was absolutely dedicated to writing,” said Paul Allen, a family friend, who said Hines applied himself to his career as a coalminer would have done, putting in shifts. “He kept an office for a long time at Sheffield Hallam University and he used to get up and go to the office every day. He regarded it as work.

“With *A Kestrel for a Knave*, he was the authentic voice of the South Yorkshire Barnsley coalfield area,” said Allen. “It was a book teenage boys would read when they wouldn’t read anything else.”

Later in his life, he and his wife, Eleanor, left Sheffield to live near his childhood home in Hoyland Common, near Barnsley.

He told the *Yorkshire Post* in 2007 that one of his favourite places to go was the local working men’s club. “When I came back to live here I walked in and the men were playing cards,” he said. “They turned round and said ‘Aw-reet?’ as if I’d never been away. I liked that. They didn’t say: ‘Oh, Barry’s come back from such-and-such a place’, they just said ‘Aw-reet?’”

McMillan said Hines was a writer “who proved to me that our mucky little part of South Yorkshire was worth writing about, that the way we spoke was a kind of poetry”.

He added: “He showed me that you can represent dialect on the page without losing any of its power and without turning it into a series of comic turns, and that people who spoke like me and him were capable of analytic and nuanced thinking.”

Robert Booth - *The Guardian*