Lottery grant is smashin' news for Black Country



The LearnPlay Foundation team

That's because you'd be speaking the longwidge of the Black Country. So you'll be chuffed at the news the dialect is getting the recognition it deserves thanks to a project awarded £31,800 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Young people from the LearnPlay Foundation, based in West Bromwich, will chart the history and heritage of their Black Country dialect for an interactive film and online game.

After experiencing negative reactions to their way of speaking, finding it hard to make themselves understood, and fearing of the impact it could have on future employment opportunities, they were inspired to take action.

Now they've teamed up with Urszula Clark, Professor of Linguistics at Aston University, to explore the fascinating history of what is regarded as one of the last examples of Early Modern English and the enduring love people of the Black Country have for their dialect.

Shannon Hadlington, one of the young people involved from LearnPlay Foundation, said: "I cor believe we have won funding for our project. I'm excited that my idea is going to be turned into a game and film. Hopefully this will put the Black Country on the map and mek people realise we am clever folk who have been responsible for some key things across the ages."

The DVD will see historians delve into the origins of the Black Country dialect, how it has changed over time and the views of it across the United Kingdom. Local people will also feature using the dialect and providing an insight into what it means to them and to the people they meet.

For all those who aren't as familiar with Black Country dialect, the DVD and online game will provide the opportunity to learn phrases, discover their meanings and find out about their historical context.

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "This is an excellent example of a project funded through our Young Roots programme. Not only does it enable the young people involved to discover the heritage behind their unique way of speaking, but also to make a creative and lasting impact on an issue that matters to them. We're delighted to play a funding role thanks to National Lottery players."

As well as celebrating an important part of their identity, the young people involved will gain a range of skills from storyboarding and interviewing techniques to coding and game testing. Some will also gain a qualification through ASDAN Expressive Arts and Electronic Data Interchange programmes.

Black Country Dictionary

Here are some examples you may be familiar with, and others you may not be!

- Bloke...Man
- Conk...Nose
- Caerke'ole...Mouth
- Gray Pays un Baircon...Grey peas and bacon (traditional Black Country dish)
- Jammy...Lucky
- Maergrum...Moodiness / pulling a face
- Muwer...More
- Pace...Sandwiches
- Sprog...Child
- On yer Tod...On your own

Notes to editors

About the LearnPlay Foundation

LearnPlay Foundation (LPF) is a not-for-profit organisation with social, educational, community and charitable objectives which aims to support all members of the community and in particular, those from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds and areas through activities and programmes (both accredited and non-accredited) that engage, raise aspirations, develop confidence and soft skills, assist with workplace conduct and pre-employability skills, engender community cohesion, tolerance and understanding, promote active citizenship, volunteering and intergenerational activities. This is achieved through innovative and engaging courses/ sessions and schemes that utilise games based technologies and interactive digital media that provide tangible outputs and sustainability paths for the communities that we work with. The organisation also produces interactive digital products for community based groups and issues.

Further information

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