Apardion is a leopard’s quest

01/11/2011

Apardion, A Leopard's Quest tells the tale of a spirit from the Northern Lights who visits Aberdeen to discover if the city might be his birth place. Apardion visits fourteen heritage landmarks on his travels, discovering secrets from the past as he explores the fascinating buildings.

With a foreword by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Rothesay, the book aims to be a springboard to engage over 3,000 pupils across schools in Aberdeen on a journey of discovery about the history of the Granite City. Author of the book Sheena Blackhall will read a short extract with pupils from different primary schools in Old Machar and Hazlehead will talk about their involvement in the project to date at the book launch.

Film clips and podcasts that the pupils have been involved in will be shown including "A Walk through history at Marischal College".

From October 2011 to June 2012 Old Machar and Hazlehead Associated School Groups will adopt the different landmarks, research the history and culture of their chosen landmark with their findings translated in to a variety of mediums including film, podcasts and literature. These resources will be shared through a dedicated website and an app, which will allow both visitors and citizens of Aberdeen, to enjoy an interactive virtual or actual tour of the heritage landmarks.

AVC Media Enterprises as media partner for Apardion, A Leopard's Quest will develop the website and app, as well as provide use of AVC audiovisual equipment, use of its Business Centre and give advice and support in the delivery of the films, animations and podcasts. The finished website and app will be available in June 2012.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is the major funder of the project with a grant of £42,000. The initiative has matched funding through support from the business community although there are still opportunities for other would-be sponsors to get involved in the project. Each landmark will have a podcast created for the finished website and app and it is hoped sponsors will support individual landmarks.

Jenny Watson said: "As well as raising the attainment, achievement and aspirations of our young people the initiative aims to highlight the beauty, heritage and culture of our Granite City. The template for this project could be used at local, national and at international level as it is easily transferable to other cities or cultural areas."

The Lord Provost said: "The Reading Bus is a fantastic initiative which is always finding innovative ways of engaging with young people. By working in partnership with local business and funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund this project is sure to capture youngsters imaginations and provide them not only with an enjoyable learning experience but give them a wonderful insight into the heritage and history of their city."

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "Our heritage offers a rich resource for education and it is wonderful to see it being used in such an innovative way. The Reading Bus is providing powerful and memorable experiences for the children, making learning fun and opening their eyes to the history which surrounds them. Young

people are the future custodians of our heritage so their passion for it is vital if we are to keep it from being lost forever."

Spencer Buchan, Managing Director of AVC added: "We are delighted to be appointed as media partner for this fantastic initiative. From a media company perspective, we believe that it is essential for children to engage in all forms of communication from a young age, enabling them to progress essential life skills for both social and academic development. To be a part of this initiative means that we are able to lend our expertise, whilst also sharing knowledge with the younger generation as we work in partnership with other organisations to create a common good for our city."

The book is written by Sheena Blackhall with illustrations from Julie Lacome. It will retail at £5.99 and can be purchased online at The Reading Bus website or at local shops.