

15th Welsh History Competition

“Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative” 2004/2005

Report

In 2005, the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative is celebrating its 15th anniversary. Over the years some 20,000 young people (age 5-18) have participated and sponsors have donated £1/3million approximately.

The Initiative moreover succeeded in starting two major projects that will have long lasting effects on its work. Thanks to sponsoring the competition coordinators were able to start their archive that can be accessed at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Moreover the initiative launched its own website (www.whsi.org.uk) which provides information on the Initiative and gives summaries of some of the projects.

In all some 2,000 young people participated in the initiative this year. Awards ceremony was held on 4 July 2005 at Cardiff University at the Julian Hodge Lecture Theatre. 92 young people attended it to receive prizes for their schools' heritage projects and had an opportunity to meet the sponsors. In this 15th competition round sponsorship was about £ 30,000. The winning class among infants schools was awarded with £500.

Mr. Wolf Schmidt, member of the board of the Körber Foundation and member of the EUSTORY Executive Committee joined the ceremony. Unfortunately, Mr. Kim Howells, MP Minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who had agreed to give the keynote address at the 2005 ceremony had to cancel his participation because of official duties in the Near East. On his place the deputy Minister for Education and local government, Ms Christine Chapman AM, held the keynote speech. Other guest speakers were the deputy Lord Mayor and Dr David Grant, Vice Chancellor of Cardiff University

As in the past schools were free to chose their own topics for the heritage project. A variety of subjects was covered and the results of the students' research was represented in often remarkably creative ways. In the exhibition of the awarded works one could find, for example, an animated film about a “Sit-in-Strike” in 1935, models and plans of ancient houses and their interior designs, an interactive CD-Rom about the changing faces of a community.

Students from the Cardinal Newman School, Pontypridd, dedicated their work to the „Tollgates in the locality and the Rebecca Riots“ and developed a role play presentation about this topic. Three students from this school together with their teacher for Welsh language attended the EUSTORY Summer Academy in Berlin.

In October 2005 again all schools in Wales will be invited to participate in the 2006 Initiative.

Lady Danusia Trotman-Dickenson
Competition co-ordinator