

Star children's author unveiled as Jacobite judge

The star author of children's book 'Woodenface', Gus Grenfell, has been named as one of the judges of a prestigious short story competition for pupils in the Highlands.

Gus will be judging entries to the 'Jacobite Jess' short story competition later this month. The competition is being backed by Highland based company Jacobite Cruises as part of a drive to bring World Heritage Status to Loch Ness and the Great Glen. Jacobite Cruises is part of Destination Loch Ness (DLN) the group aiming to secure World Heritage Status for Loch Ness and the Great Glen.

More than 600 Primary 6 & 7 pupils are taking part in story telling sessions culminating in them creating their own short stories which will be judged on national Tell a Story Day – the 31 October. The young authors will learn about UNESCO World Heritage Status, Loch Ness and the Great Glen and the Loch Ness monster, as they set about creating their masterpieces.

Entrants are being asked to write about 'Jacobite Jess', Nessie's cousin. Jess has lost her memory and needs them to help her re-discover her past. The pupils have been set the monster challenge of writing an imaginative short story which will bring her past to life.

Gus commented: "I'm delighted to have been invited to judge this competition. I'm sure pupils will be busy getting those creative juices flowing and letting their imaginations run wild, which is just what we want. The wilder and wackier the better! I'm really looking forward to reading the entries."

John Bellshaw from Jacobite commented: "We've been overwhelmed by the great response to the project from schools, the story teller and the judges. Everyone involved has been extremely enthusiastic. And it's great to get people like children's author Gus Grenfell on-board.

He added: "We hope this project raises awareness of the bid to bring World Heritage Status to Loch Ness and the Great Glen, and from the great response we've had so far I'm sure it will."

Other judges include local story teller Andrew MacKintosh, a representative from Jacobite Cruises, and Editor of the Inverness Courier. The first prize is a £200 donation from Jacobite Cruises, and a class cruise trip on Loch Ness. Runners up will also receive a free class cruise.

Notes to Editors

'Woodenface' was published in 2007 and is Gus Grenfell's first children's book. The story focuses on a young girl fascinated by the ancient power of trees and woods. The novel has made it onto the long list for the Branford Boase Award 2008. This prize is awarded annually for what the judges consider to be the best first novel for young people published in Britain. It has also previously been voted as BRAW (Books, Reading and Writing), the network for Scottish children's books, Teenage Book of the Month.

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