

TREASURE QUEST

Welcome to Treasure Quest – and happy hunting!

This Multimedia product consists of an interactive CD and a website - www.heriquest.com. The product aims to provide children with knowledge of the cultural heritage of South East Europe, a sense of belonging to the common cultural heritage of the region and a sense of shared responsibility for its preservation. The multimedia product reflects the diversity and identity of the cultures, ethnicities and religions in the region. It was developed in partnership with experts from the South East European countries and is indeed a truly regional resource. But how did it come about?

Two years ago, the British Council made available funds for projects in this sector through the Cultural and Environmental Heritage Fund for South East Europe. Each country could decide how to use this money within certain parameters and we decided that the focus in Bulgaria should be to encourage the use of new methodology in the teaching, preservation and promotion of cultural and environmental heritage. The project was initiated and led by Professor Todor Kretev and was developed in consultations between his team and colleagues in the British Council in Sofia. There were two stages: the first was led by the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia, in partnership with ICOMOS Bulgaria and the Association of Cultural Tourism, the second stage was led by The Association for Cultural Tourism.

The first step was to set up a Multimedia Laboratory at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACG), Sofia which provided the infrastructure to develop a range of materials not only for mainstream educational use but also for the preparation of events of national and regional importance like the Forum on the Cultural Corridors of South East Europe held in Varna, 20–21 May 2005 under the patronage of the Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov. The Varna Declaration was adopted at the Forum where the heads of State assumed commitments to contribute to the promotion of cultural heritage, to protect cultural heritage at risk, to develop regional cultural tourism, to promote intercultural education and to facilitate the setting up of a regional network with the participation of national and international experts. The multimedia laboratory played a key role in the preparation of this regional forum, particularly through the development of interactive maps of the region and the multimedia exhibition “The Heritage of South East Europe” presented at the Forum.

The second year’s work in the laboratory focused on the production of *Treasure Quest* which was finished in both English and Bulgarian language editions in time to be presented to the British Council Cultural Heritage regional conference in Jaice – Sipovo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) where it generated considerable enthusiasm among the participants from SEE and from the UK – so much so that the governments of several other countries in the region are now negotiating rights to use it in their own educational systems. I am really proud that the British Council has been part of the development of this multimedia project but the honours should go to Professor Kretev and the many others on his team who showed creative vision as well as technical expertise in the creation of *Treasure Quest*.

Ian Stewart
Director, British Council Bulgaria