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World first for Manx - BBC Children's TV Series translated into Manx Gaelic

An international DVD producer has announced that an award-winning BBC TV series for children has been translated into the Manx language, making it the first ever animated Manx programme.

Friends and Heroes, or *Caarjyn as Fenee*, as they'd say in Manx Gaelic (Gaelg) is set in the first century AD and follows the adventures of two children, Macky and Portia. As they engage in countless escapades and fight for justice across the Roman world, they share the timeless stories of the Bible and learn lessons that help them through many trials and tribulations. Each episode uses a combination of traditional hand-drawn and stunning computer generated animation to bring the stories to life.

As reported today on the BBC (see www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21242667) the native language of the Isle of Man, declared extinct by Unesco in the 1990s, is now undergoing an extraordinary revival.

First shown on BBC TV in 2007, *Friends and Heroes* is now available in 11 language versions including: Arabic; Chinese (Mandarin); English; French; German; Hindi/Urdu; Italian; Korean; Portuguese (Brazilian); Russian and Spanish (South American), with Manx Gaelic to be launched this Spring. Every school on the Isle of Man will be given a complete series set, subsidised by AFD Software - the production company, to help them in learning the language.

"This news is 'Yindyssagh erskyn towse' - (Fantastic above all measure) and is a real breakthrough for Manx Gaelic (Gaelg)." said Adrian Cain, Manx Language Officer for the Manx Heritage Foundation. "Each programme will feature a full Manx soundtrack as well as English and Manx sub-titles, making a fantastic teaching and learning resource and helping give Manx Gaelic a much higher profile both on the island and internationally."

David Dorricott, MD of the production company said, *"The AFD group has thrived since moving to Ramsey, Isle of Man in 1997 - and our staff have enjoyed the superb quality of life here. The Celtic roots of this Island Nation go back many centuries, and they are interwoven with the Celtic Christianity of the Irish and Scottish Celtic saints."*

When the opportunity arose to make a Manx translation of the Friends and Heroes Children's animation series, which we first produced for the BBC, we were simply delighted.

Not only will this provide the only children's animation series in the Manx Language; the entertaining adventures of Macky and Portia and

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their friends also bring the Bible stories, so important to Celtic culture, into 21st century life.”

Notes for Editors - ABOUT FRIENDS AND HEROES

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Friends and Heroes Manx version (*Caarjyn as Fenee*)

The Manx version of the first Series (Episodes 1-13) of Friends and Heroes is due to release in Spring 2013 and, when available, will be sold in a series pack at £20 and will be available from www.friendsandheroes.com/uk/manx. A sample (half of Episode 1) of the animation in Manx can be seen at the same link, or can be embedded from YouTube (see

<http://youtu.be/f4DoD4VH99A>)

Friends and Heroes TV Series

The Friends and Heroes Series has been shown on CBBC and BBC2 Television. Episodes feature Bible stories from both Old and New Testaments woven into the adventures of Macky and Portia, two first century 14 year-olds. As children watch their exciting escapades, they come to understand that the Bible has a great deal to offer when trying to decide what is right and what to do in today's world. Friends and Heroes comprises three series, each of 13 x 25 minute episodes: Series 1 set in Alexandria, 69AD; Series 2 in Jerusalem, 70AD and Series 3 in Rome, 71AD. Every episode includes at least two Bible stories presented in amazingly engaging computer generated animation.

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