

Vienna, 6 June 2013

Press release

Gas Connect Austria and Book Club send school kids on journey of discovery

Gas Connect Austria has inspired over 500 young researchers to explore the history of their local areas. Over the past few weeks, museum educators have visited a large number of Lower Austrian primary schools, with the support of the Austrian Book Club for Young People and experts from the Federal Office for the Care of Monuments. The aim of the initiative was to encourage school pupils to investigate the history of their local community. Children were introduced to the fascinating world of archaeology, local history and heritage conservation in fun workshops held at each school. It was then up to the pupils to go out and uncover the exciting past of their own towns and villages. Their research projects are being showcased on the websites of the various schools and local communities.

Discovering history first hand

“Our gas pipelines are securely hidden under the ground. During the excavations we carry out in the course of constructing them, we continually come across artefacts from the past,” explained Stefan Wagenhofer, Managing Director of Gas Connect Austria. “These finds all have stories to tell about people who lived in the area before us. With the Kinder erforschen die Geschichte ihrer Gemeinde (children discover the history of their community) initiative, we wanted to help the history of their local area come alive for school pupils in a hands-on way.”

The programme captured the imaginations of many children living in places located along the course of Austria’s gas transmission network.

They were fascinated by the replicas of archaeological finds and the interesting sites they visited. Some of the questions that constantly came up included: How can I light a fire using stones? What can bones and pottery fragments tell us? How can I become an archaeologist? After each workshop, the young researchers set to work looking for buried treasure and unsolved mysteries in their local community. A special edition of the Book Club magazine, Yep, packed with details on the topic of archaeology was published to help the students with their research.

Many of the projects completed following the workshops have been posted on school and community websites. The programme came to an exciting conclusion in June, when Gas Connect Austria invited all the classes that took part to the Lower Austrian state exhibition in Asparn an der Zaya.

A strong regional partnership

The initiative was the latest chapter in an ongoing cooperation between Gas Connect Austria and the Austrian Book Club for Young People. Supporting the communities located along the pipeline network is particularly important to the gas network operator, which is why Gas Connect Austria has been involved in a series of education initiatives since 2010. These have included distributing book packages and book tokens to primary and secondary schools, a mobile reader’s theatre, reading festivals, workshops and readings by authors.

Participating schools

The following primary schools took part in the *Kinder erforschen die Geschichte ihrer Gemeinde* initiative: Auersthal, Deutsch Wagram, Eggendorf, Enzersfeld, Gänserndorf, Grossgerungs, Grossgöttfritz, Kirchberg am Wagram, Leobendorf, Lichtenau, Rappottenstein, Rastefeld, Spillern, Stetten, Stockerau-West and Weikendorf.

Background information

Gas Connect Austria GmbH

Gas Connect Austria, a wholly owned subsidiary of OMV Gas & Power GmbH, is the country's largest transmission system operator with around 400 employees. Besides marketing transport capacity in Austria and abroad, the company maintains smooth and reliable operation of Austria's 2,000-km high-pressure gas pipeline network. It operates the physical hub in Baumgarten an der March, near the Slovak border, which is the central crossroads of the Austrian transmission network. The Baumgarten station is Austria's largest gas import and reception point, and one of Central Europe's most important gas hubs. It dispatches incoming gas supplies to domestic distribution networks, and to Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia. Existing gas infrastructure is regularly inspected, maintained and modernised in order to safeguard long-term security of supply. Gas Connect Austria offers a comprehensive range of logistics services tailored to the requirements of domestic and foreign market participants. In its role as the market area manager, the company is responsible for coordinating natural gas transportation in Austria's Eastern market area.

Austrian Book Club for Young People

Reading is an essential skill for discovering the world around us, dealing with day-to-day life, and making effective use of analogue and digital information and communications media. It is a basic requirement for living an independent life and actively participating in society.

The Book Club is:

- Austria's biggest non-profit organisation aimed at promoting sustained development of reading skills;
- A socially engaged reading network with volunteers in schools, kindergartens, administrative districts and federal states;
- A publishing house producing and distributing content for children and young adults, and
- An advisory centre for reading education with over 60 years of experience.

Contact:

Gas Connect Austria GmbH

Communications Department

Tel. +43 (0)1 27500 ext. 88052

Email: communications@gasconnect.at

www.gasconnect.at

Österreichischer Buchklub der Jugend (Austrian Book Club for Young People)

Communications

Henrike Blum

Phone/fax: +43 (0)1 219 8543

Mobile: +43 (0)680 133 9526

Email: henrike.blum@buchklub.at

www.buchklub.at