

The 1950s shine for Leith tenants

Tenants from an Edinburgh retirement housing development have been taken back in time with a play showcasing Leith in the fifties.

Joined by pupils from Abbeyhill Primary School last week tenants from Bield's Gordon Court were treated to a first glimpse of the production of 'Moonshine on Leith' – inspired by the tales of the tenants themselves.



Written by playwright Laure Paterson and performed by the Citadel Arts Group, the script follows two hairdressers struggling to run their salon out of the front room of their

Leith flat.

The play draws inspiration from stories submitted by 10 tenants from the development to 'Remembering the Fifties: A Book of Living Memories' – a 83-page book that was published locally earlier this year.

Liz Hare, Director of the Citadel Arts Group, said: "It was been an absolute pleasure to be able to perform this in front of the children of Abbeyhill Primary School and the tenants at Gordon Court.

"The production was only a snippet, so the next chapter for the group is to perform the finished, full-length play – possibly at Abbeyhill Primary School – with the Gordon Court tenants as guests-of-honour.

"The whole experience on the day was exciting, especially as the play is based on the real memories of the people viewing it.

"Laure has done a fantastic job translating this into a very funny, emotive play that really does strike a chord with both the young and the old."

Featuring real items from the era, including washboards, hairdryers and hair pins, the pupils and tenants were encouraged to share memories, learn colloquial phrases from the time period and discuss how they thought the play would ultimately transpire.



The creator of the play, Laure Paterson, said: "I felt everyone was making the play and they were almost making it for me, it was a kind of magic.

"We're all thinking along the same lines for the ending, but the kids had a more interesting take on how it should finish.

"I really liked their imagination and I liked how they said it could be a happy ending. I'm definitely making it a happy ending."

One tenant who the play struck a chord with was 85-year-old Mary Mair who has been a tenant at Gordon Court since 2011.

She said: "It's so special to see this as every item or story here is someone's memory. I loved having the children here too. It was fantastic to speak to them and see them learn about history – it's their history after all."

The Citadel Arts Group is a drama company that is based in Leith and produces productions inspired by the local area and

its history.

For more information on the group or for a copy of 'Remembering the Fifties: A Book of Living Memories', visit www.citadelartsgroup.co.uk.

Gordon Court in Edinburgh is a Bield development for those aged 60 and over who want to be able to retain their independence while having help on hand when needed.

Bield is a registered charity which has been providing a wide range of housing and services for around 20,000 older people across 23 local authority areas for more than 40 years.

To find out more about Bield and its developments, visit www.bield.co.uk