

TUESDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2009

UK CITIES JOIN TOGETHER TO DISCOVER THE LOST WORLD

The cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Bristol announced today that they will be joining together in a collaborative reading campaign in February next year. **The Lost World Read 2009** will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Arthur Conan Doyle, and the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin. Thousands of free copies of Edinburgh-born Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* will be distributed through libraries, schools and supporting partner organisations together with a 'quick read' edition and a paperback comic biography on the Life of Charles Darwin. The three cities will be joined by the county of Hampshire, and the 15 Library authorities of South West England and it is hoped that other cities and local authorities will come on board.

An exclusive cover has been designed for the free edition of the book by Bristol's Aardman Animations, featuring their most famous creations, Wallace & Gromit. A spokesman from Aardman commented "Wallace and Gromit are big fans of reading and are so excited about being part of this project. They think it's great that so many people, up and down the country, are going to be joining in."

The reading campaigns in each area will be supported by a programme of public, community and schools events, including performances, films, discussions, debates and readings. A dedicated website will be launched in the New Year which will have details of all the activities in every part of the country.

Edinburgh's campaign will be led by the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, Glasgow's by The Aye Write! festival and Bristol's by The Great Reading Adventure. Although Glasgow has collaborated with other cities in previous years, this is the first time that Edinburgh and Glasgow will work together on their annual reading campaigns.

Melanie Kelly, Research Director and Project Manager of Bristol Cultural Development Partnership said: "Our experience of running the Great Reading Adventure here in Bristol has shown that mass-reading projects are a great way to bring people together across different communities. As well as sharing the joy of reading, it's also a fantastic way of learning about the past and exploring issues of concern today, like the environment. This will be our seventh annual event and we are looking forward to working with our partners in making it the most successful yet."

Ali Bowden, Director of the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust said "We are delighted to bring this wonderful book to Edinburgh and Glasgow next year. It is a fantastic adventure story for all ages, and from an author with a strong Scottish connection. The One Book One Edinburgh citywide reading campaigns have been growing in strength and popularity, and it is a logical step forward to collaborate with Glasgow in bringing this book to a wider Scottish audience."

Karen Cunningham, director of Aye Write! said "I think the book is a wonderful choice, perfect because it not only celebrates a Scottish author but also has that link to Darwin and his theories. The book has a little bit of everything in it: it has excitement but also touches on a number of issues. Most of all it is a really good read, and Conan Doyle can really tell a cracking good story – we think it will appeal to everyone."

Angela Hicken, Literature Development Officer and National Year of Reading Coordinator for Hampshire, said "We'll be using the superb collection of books to encourage new visitors to libraries as part of a campaign to recruit borrowers. We're excited by the chance to celebrate the writing of Arthur Conan Doyle who spent many years living in Hampshire and is buried in the churchyard of the stunning thirteenth century 'All Saints', at Minsted in the New Forest."

The Lost World Read 2009 will run throughout February 2009 and full details of the events and activities supporting the reading campaign will be released early in the New Year.

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Editors Notes:

Bristol Big Reading Adventure

Since 2003 Bristol's annual Great Reading Adventure has encouraged everyone in the city to read the same book at the same time. The project is now well established as part of Bristol's cultural calendar. By promoting reading, the project aims to: develop standards of literacy; stimulate new forms of creativity; facilitate learning about the past; and bring diverse communities together. Each year's book is selected because it provides opportunities for discussing historic and contemporary issues of interest to local people, and thousands of copies are distributed free of charge.

The first book chosen was Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, which is partly set in Bristol and was used as a way of learning about the city's piratical and maritime past. In 2004 the project was based around John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids*, which allowed debate about environmental issues and GM technology. In 2005 Helen Dunmore's *The Siege* promoted learning and reminiscences about the Second World War, particularly the experiences of civilians in cities under attack. In 2006 the project extended across the South West of England as a contribution to the Brunel 200 programme with a regionwide reading of Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, a classic novel that dramatises the sense of excitement and limitless possibilities bought by nineteenth-century innovations in transport.

Small Island Read 2007, the following year's project, not only covered the South West but also Hull, Glasgow, Liverpool and much of the North West, making it the biggest mass-reading initiative to have taken place in the UK. The chosen book was Andrea Levy's novel *Small Island* which was used to explore themes of migration including the enforced movement of enslaved Africans. For 2008, the Great Reading Adventure was once again a Bristol-only project, based upon a specially commissioned graphic-style history of the city. The Great Reading Adventure was initiated and continues to be led by

Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (Arts Council England, Bristol City Council, GWE Business West).

One Book One Edinburgh

The One Book One Edinburgh citywide reading campaigns aim to bring as many of the city's residents together reading the same book at the same time. Through schools, libraries, book groups, and community groups, free books are distributed and the campaign backed by a busy programme of events and activities taking place throughout Edinburgh.

The first One Book One Edinburgh citywide reading campaign, co-ordinated by the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, took place in 2007 when thousands of free copies of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* were distributed throughout the city. As well as a paperback edition of the original text, four editions of a sensational graphic novel by Alan Grant, and illustrated by Cam Kennedy were also made available – the original story, a Scots edition, a Gaelic edition and a modern text version. Every primary and high school in the city participated in the campaign. In 2008, another Stevenson classic – *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde* – was selected and again the original text paperback was supported by a graphic novel by Grant and Kennedy.