

MAYOR OF LONDON



PRESS RELEASE

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MAYOR OF LONDON ANNOUNCES "DICKENS 2012" London to be the gateway to the global celebration of Charles Dickens's Bicentenary

As Walt Disney Pictures chooses London to host its world premiere of *A Christmas Carol* – the latest Hollywood adaptation of Dickens' work - the **Mayor of London Boris Johnson, Film London** and the **Charles Dickens Museum** have today announced plans for **Dickens 2012** – a major celebration of events and activities to mark the bicentenary of literary giant **Charles Dickens**.

Dickens 2012 will be a national and international celebration of one of the world's most inspiring authors and include cultural and educational events, as well as providing a legacy for future generations. There will be exhibitions, film-making schemes, a theatre production and a film and television retrospective to mark what would be the 200th birthday of one of the most important figures in literature.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson welcomed the capital being the launch pad for international celebrations: "Dickens stands for London. He not only created an incomparable pageant of London characters. He turned the city into the greatest character of all. That Dickensian vision of London - the fog, the mud, the snow, the rich, the poor, the Christmas party glimpsed through a frosted windowpane - is a vision that lives in the imaginations of everyone who reads him. Dickens 2012, to mark his bicentenary, is the chance to celebrate a wonderful London writer, and bring his work to a wider audience around the world."

Dickens 2012 in London will see the capital's major cultural institutions and organizations, such as the **Museum of London, BFI Southbank, National Portrait Gallery, V&A, Barbican Centre**, the renovated and expanded **Charles Dickens Museum, Film London**, and the **City**

of London Corporation working in partnership to create a programme of events which will allow Londoners and the city's visitors to encounter the magic of Dickens. *For additional details of activities see **Notes to Editors**.

Although a writer from the Victorian era, Dickens's works continue to inspire art, literature, artists and academics and this is especially evident in Cinema. As arguably the most ambitious cinematic adaptation opens in screens across the world, a new adaptation of Dickens's **Great Expectations** from award-winning producers **Stephen Woolley** and **Elizabeth Karlsen** (*Interview with the Vampire*, *Little Voice* and *How To Lose Friends & Alienate People*) and Optimum Releasing, will start shooting in the capital in 2010.

BAFTA-winning producer **Woolley** said: "Dickens was always my favourite author as a child, and I am very excited about putting together a new version of *Great Expectations* to tie in with the admirable plans for a Dickens bicentenary celebration. We fully support the Mayor's office and everyone else involved in this event, including Film London."

Outside of the capital, events will be taking place across the UK and around the world under the banner of Dickens 2012. A Dickens film and television retrospective will embark on a national and international tour after opening at BFI Southbank. Kent, where Dickens set much of 'Great Expectations' and 'David Copperfield' and spent his formative and last years, will be hosting a programme of arts events in 2012 presented by **Medway Council** and **Visit Kent** while the **British Library** is planning several educational initiatives around the UK.

Internationally an exhibition of films made throughout cinema's history based on Dickens's writings will be taking place at **MoMA** in New York. The **Château d'Hardelot**, Condette in France (which Dickens visited many times), is creating a programme of cross-Channel events while **Museum Strauhof** in Zurich will host a Dickens exhibition. *For details of additional UK and international partners see the **Notes to Editors**.

Adrian Wootton, Chief Executive of Film London said: "In partnership with The Charles Dickens Museum, Film London is delighted to be taking a leading role in Dickens 2012. This campaign will encompass all the arts, offer many educational initiatives and provide a legacy for future generations but Dickens connection to film in particular is so explicit. With Stephen Woolley's *Great Expectations* about to start filming on location in the capital next year and our own

London Borough Film Fund Challenge short film-making scheme inviting submissions based on Dickens in 2011, it is clear the man and his writings still very much has the power to inspire both young and old.”

Dr. Florian Schweizer, Strategic Director of The Charles Dickens Museum: “The Charles Dickens Museum is proud to be coordinating Dickens 2012 on behalf of our campaign partners. Two centuries after his birth, Dickens remains one of Britain’s most important cultural ambassadors and a timeless icon of our national heritage. Dickens 2012 is an opportunity to celebrate and share that icon with the rest of the world. The Charles Dickens Museum was set up in 1925 to act as guardian of our Dickensian heritage, and Dickens 2012 is a fantastic opportunity to promote Dickens’s artistic and social legacy by engaging new generations of readers and writers around the world.”

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Notes to Editors

*** Dickens 2012 campaign partners**

Additional partners, events and activities to be announced in the run up to 2012

Organising partners

- **The Mayor of London – Greater London Authority**

The GLA is keen for the Dickens bicentenary to be a great cultural campaign for London and to fully exploit opportunities for all of London's residents and visitors to enjoy the events and experiences to be held. The GLA also wants to ensure that work on the bicentenary maximises synergies with other major events and cultural institutions over 2012, including the Cultural Olympiad.

- **The Charles Dickens Museum**

The Charles Dickens Museum in London is the Headquarters of Dickens 2012 and coordinates the London, national and international campaign activities. Currently planning a redevelopment programme, the Museum aims to open a new learning and visitor centre by 2012 as one of the key legacy projects of the bicentenary.

- **Film London**

In partnership with The Charles Dickens Museum Film London will coordinate the London, national and international activities. In 2011 Film London’s grassroots short film fund, the London Borough Film Fund Challenge, will launch a Dickens inspired round of the scheme with films delivered for 2012. Additional Dickens themed film activity to be announced.

- **Dickens Fellowship**

The Dickens Fellowship is a worldwide organisation which promotes the knowledge and appreciation of Dickens's works and life. Dickens 2012 is an opportunity for the Fellowship to extend public knowledge

of Dickens and to raise the profile of the Dickens Fellowship. Dickens Fellowship branches nationally and overseas are also organising special events in their own areas.

London partners

- **Barbican Centre**

The Barbican Centre intends to present a production of 'A Christmas Carol' for Christmas 2010 which could be revived to tie in with the bicentenary events.

- **BFI Southbank**

BFI Southbank is organising a major film and TV retrospective on Dickens programmed by Dickens experts Adrian Wootton and Michael Eaton for early in 2012. The BFI is also involved in national activities – see below for more details.

- **City of London Corporation**

The City Corporation provides local government services for the City of London. The City's streets and alleyways are home to many of the buildings that Dickens would have known and which are referenced in his works. Our interest is in identifying any City links and opportunities in the celebration period that we can explore and develop to create benefit for the various communities we serve - visitors, workers and residents.

- **London Borough of Camden**

The Council's creative and cultural team has a remit to help support any form of cultural activity in Camden. The Council is in discussions to work in partnership with Dickens House to organise activities for the bicentenary.

- **Museum of London**

The Museum is planning a major exhibition for 2012 with the working title of 'Charles Dickens and Victorian London'. A full programme of events will accompany the exhibition including readings, conferences and film viewings. The Museum's learning department will develop resources based on the exhibition aimed at primary and secondary schools.

- **National Portrait Gallery**

The National Portrait Gallery is planning a photographic exhibition on Dickens.

- **Spread the Word**

Spread the Word is London's leading writer development agency, working with diverse communities across London – many of which Dickens wrote about. Dickens 2012 is an opportunity to revive the Dickens legacy as an incredibly relevant writer in the 21st Century and to inspire a new generation of young writers.

- **Victoria and Albert Museum**

The V&A's National Art Library holds a considerable number of the surviving Dickens MSS, marked up proofs, letters and many editions of his works. Some manuscripts (dependent on Trustee approval) and proofs are being lent to Portsmouth Museum for 2012. The NAL will be holding a small display of Dickens material and probably related graphic works in 2010 to mark the anniversary.

- **Visit London**

Visit London is keen to promote Dickens 2012 as part of London's offering to both international and domestic audiences.

National

- **BFI**

The BFI is heavily involved in the film plans for Dickens 2012. In addition to the BFI Southbank retrospective (detailed above), the BFI National Archive is researching all the Dickens-related material held in the archive for use in exhibitions and researching possible titles for restoration. The BFI is also looking at the possibilities of organising outdoor screenings and publishing a Charles Dickens book.

- **Booktrust**

Booktrust is the largest literature charity in the UK, encouraging reading for pleasure and inspiring, through prizes, campaigns, events and book gifts for children, a lifelong love of books. Booktrust hopes to support Dickens 2012 through its portfolio of prizes and campaigns.

- **British Council**

The British Council is the UK's leading agency for cultural relations. The British Council is interested in the international possibilities of Dickens 2012 to bring new international perspectives to the UK and work with new UK interpretations of Dickens internationally.

- **British Library**

The British Library is an active partner of Dickens 2012 and is planning several educational initiatives around the figure of Dickens.

- **Canterbury Christ Church University**

Canterbury Christ Church University, having committed itself to marking Dickens 2012 in such a way as to honour the author's Kentish connections and contribute to the 'Tale of Four Cities' travelling conference, has begun to plan for a day of discussion and celebration to be held at its base in Chatham on the eve of the bicentenary.

- **Dickens Journals Online (DJO)**

The aim of DJO is to create, launch and maintain a complete edition of the weekly journals (Household Words and All the Year Round) that Dickens edited between 1850 and 1870. The complete website, with AV material, annotations, introductory essays, learning journeys for schools will be launched in February 2012.

- **Dickens House Museum Broadstairs**

The house has been adapted as a museum to commemorate Charles Dickens association with Broadstairs. For 2012 the museum will host a season of lectures and a special exhibition to celebrate the house's connection to Dickens. The house was once the home of Miss Mary Pearson Strong on whom Charles Dickens based much of the character of Miss Betsey Trotwood in his novel 'David Copperfield'.

- **English Association**

The English Association (EA) is the oldest learned society in the UK dedicated to the study of English Language and Literature. Individual EA members as well as committees are already working with the Dickens Fellowship and Dickens House Museum on conference planning, competitions for schools and resource packs for teachers. Plans for 2012 include EA publications with relevant themed issues and a Dickensian theme for the Fellows' Poetry Prize Competition that year.

- **Kent County Council / Visit Kent**

Kent County Council and Visit Kent are working in partnership with Tourism South East, Medway Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Thanet District Council. The aim is to develop an exceptional programme of arts, events and marketing initiatives leading up to the 2012 bi-centenary of Charles Dickens' birth to attract visitors and establish a legacy for the South East to be known as Dickens's Country.

- **Medway Council**

The Council hosts two Dickens Festivals annually (June and December) and it aims at enhancing the two established celebrations and other plans including commissioning an original performance piece inspired by Dickens, the restoration of Dickens's Swiss Chalet (Rochester), facilitating public access for the first time to the Percy Fitzgerald archive collection of Dickens memorabilia, a Dickens film season at the Central Theatre in Chatham and a special exhibition based on 'Great Expectations'.

- **NewstrAid Benevolent Fund**

The NewstrAid Benevolent Fund is the occupational benevolent fund for the circulation, distribution, wholesaling and retailing of the UK newspaper and magazine industry, established in 1839 as the Newsvendors' Benevolent and Provident Institution. Charles Dickens was president from 1854 until his death in 1870. Dickens was passionate about the plight of the Victorian newspaper street sellers, who were always out in all weathers and at all times of the day and night. He said of them: "Our newsman is not in the habit of forgetting us. Let us try to form a little habit of not forgetting our newsman."

- **Portsmouth City Council**
Portsmouth City Council, through Portsmouth Museums and Records, will use the Dickens's bicentenary to engage the city's communities with its archives, which graphically illustrate the social issues described by Dickens in his novels. The project will culminate in an exhibition at the City Museum featuring manuscripts of Dickens's novels, on loan from national institutions.
- **RSA**
Dickens was a member (now 'Fellow') of the RSA from 1849 until, it is believed, his death in 1870. He served as a Vice-President from 1850 to 1852 and served on two of the RSA committees. The RSA would like to promote and explore further connections with Dickens and to make contact with other organisations with a view to possible future partnership working and/or mutual promotion.
- **Tourism South East**
Tourism South East is working with Portsmouth and Kent to promote a South East England 'Dickens Experience' for domestic and international visitors.
- **University of Exeter – Global Circulation Project**
Led by Prof Regenia Gagnier, the Global Circulation Project provides help and scholarly information on the global circulation of Dickens and the team is already collecting information on all Dickens films in China.
- **University of Leicester**
The University is co-organising the London section of the 'Tale of Four Cities' conference and working on a funding bid together with the Charles Dickens Museum to support this through a wider-reaching oral history project.
- **University of Kent**
The University of Kent is collaborating with Canterbury Christ Church University in organising the Kent section of the 'Tale of Four Cities' conference and will also be incorporating bicentennial activities in its undergraduate and postgraduate Dickens programmes.
- **Watts Gallery**
The Watts Gallery is organising an exhibition around the theme of 'Dickens and Art' and is interested in finding a partner venue in the US.

International

- **Château d'Hardelot, Condette, France**
The Château, which Charles Dickens knew well, is currently hosting a great variety of cross-Channel events, in partnership with the Kent County Council. In 2011, the Château will host a Charles Dickens Exhibition.
- **Dickens Festijn, Deventer, The Netherlands**
- **The Dickens Project, UC Santa Cruz**
- **Lowell National Historical Park, MA**
- **Museum of Modern Art, New York**
MoMA's Film Department will organise an international exhibition of films made throughout cinema's history based on Dickens's writings.
- **Museum Strauhof, Zurich**
The Museum, administered by the Cultural Department of the City of Zurich, is preparing an exhibition about Dickens' life and work.
- **University Charles-de-Gaulle Lille 3, France**
The University has initiated the 'Tale of Four Cities' conference project and is co-organising the Boulogne-sur-Mer section.
- **University of Paris 7, France**
The University is co-organising the Paris section of the 'Tale of Four Cities' conference

- **Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Mass**

About Dickens 2012

Dickens 2012 is an international celebration of the cultural, educational legacy of the life and work of Charles Dickens to mark the bicentenary of his birth.

Born in Portsmouth on 7 February 1812, Dickens was the most popular novelist of the Victorian era and is widely regarded as one of the finest novelists of all time. He created some of literature's most memorable characters and his novels and short stories have never gone out of print.

The power of Dickens's prose, the richness of his characters and his powerful sense of social morality are just as captivating and relevant in the 21st century. His most famous stories, among them 'Oliver Twist', 'Great Expectations', 'David Copperfield' and 'A Christmas Carol', have spawned films, plays, television dramas and musicals. After Shakespeare, no other writer matches Dickens in terms of global cultural influence. The 200th anniversary of his birth in 2012 offers a unique opportunity to commemorate the life, work and values of a national treasure, not just in Britain but around the world.

www.dickens2012.org

About Film London

Film London is the capital's film and media agency. Film London sustains, promotes and develops London as a major international film-making and film cultural capital. This includes all the screen industries based in London – film, television, video, commercials and new interactive media. Film London is supported by the UK Film Council and the London Development Agency. Film London also receives significant support from Arts Council England London, the European Regional Development Fund, the Mayor of London and Skillset.

Film London's activities include:

- Investment in new and established film-makers through a range of low budget production schemes
- Supporting training and business development activities
- Developing audiences and access provision across the film and media sector
- Showcasing of London films and talent
- Domestic and international tourism initiatives
- Promoting London on an international stage as an attractive base for film and media production
- Providing comprehensive information on London locations and production services, as well as practical advice and support to film-makers shooting in London

www.filmlondon.org.uk

About The Charles Dickens Museum

The Charles Dickens Museum in London is the world's most important collection of material relating to the great Victorian novelist and social commentator. The only surviving London home of Dickens (from 1837 until 1839) was opened as a Museum in 1925 and is still welcoming visitors from all over the world in an authentic and inspiring surrounding. The Museum has embarked on a project called 'Great Expectations' that will establish the Charles Dickens Museum as Britain's most accessible literary house museum in the city he immortalised in his works and as a significant legacy project of the 2012 bicentenary campaign.

Together with The Dickens Fellowship, the Charles Dickens Museum is a founding member of Dickens 2012 and has coordinated the campaign from the outset, driving the project forward by building a strong network of partners and stakeholders. It is currently working on numerous projects to improve public access to Dickens including:

- life-long learning programmes
- new writing and reading campaigns
- support for the education sector

- tourism initiatives
- promoting Dickens internationally at festivals and conferences
- providing resources for academic and commercial researchers

www.dickensmuseum.com