

Monday 12th January 2009

LOST WORLD READ 2009

UK'S LARGEST EVER COLLABORATIVE READING CAMPAIGN DISTRIBUTES 200,000 FREE BOOKS

Organisers of the largest collaborative reading campaign ever held in the UK announced today that almost 200,000 free books will be distributed to the public in the participating areas in February and March 2009. Readers in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bristol, Hampshire, Shrewsbury, Oxford and most of South West England will be able to pick up a free copy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* from their local library, or from a number of participating partner organisations from Saturday 31st January 2009.

The campaign celebrates Arthur Conan Doyle's 150th birthday and Charles Darwin's bicentenary with a mass-read through the creation of four new books. Two versions of *The Lost World* have been produced – a paperback and a special quick read edition. A comic biography of Darwin's life will also be available, introducing his theories on evolution which are explored in *The Lost World*, as well as a reader's guide which looks at Darwin, Conan Doyle, dinosaurs and fossils, as well as evolutionary themes in British science fiction. The campaign artwork features Wallace and Gromit, designed and donated by Aardman Animations. Full details of where you can claim your free copy of the book can be found on The Lost World Read website, (www.lostworldread.com) which will be launched on Friday 30th January 2009.

The Lost World is the Edinburgh-born author's gripping adventure story, which follows the journey of Professor Challenger and his companions in search of a lost world in South America and their exciting encounters with dinosaurs and primitive man.

Glasgow and Edinburgh have come together to create Scotland's largest reading campaign. 80,000 books will be distributed free through schools, libraries, businesses, partner

organisations and cafes, pubs, restaurants and bars across the Cities. The Lost World Read 2009 will run throughout February and March 2009 with a public programme of more than 100 events being held across the UK. There are talks, exhibitions, workshops, walking tours, plays, films and public performances covering *The Lost World*, Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Darwin and a web-based animation project – The Lost Book.

In Edinburgh, a UNESCO City of Literature, 22 events have been scheduled and highlights include screenings of the 1925 classic silent movie of *The Lost World*, talks on the importance of Darwin's theory of evolution in the modern day by renowned speakers including Professor Aubrey Manning, and appearances from award-winning science fiction authors China Miéville and Ken MacLeod. Children can participate in their very own Dino Dig or become a Dinosaur Detective, or enjoy performances of How The Giraffe Got It's Neck. In addition a specially commissioned 'Kora and the Paper Cinema' will deliver a live paper animation performance of *The Lost World* which will visit schools and community centres in the City.

There will be an extensive range of public and schools events in Glasgow, forming part of the Aye Write! Bank of Scotland Book Festival. Full details of all the events taking place in Edinburgh can be found on the City of Literature website (www.cityofliterature.com) and the Aye Write Book Festival programme launches on the 17th January (www.ayewrite.com).

A campaign leaflet has been distributed in Edinburgh giving information about Arthur Conan Doyle and his links to the city. Born in Edinburgh on Picardy Place, he is one of our most famous Scots, known around the world for having created fiction's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes.

Ali Bowden, Director of the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, who are co-ordinating the campaign in the city said "There are so many ways in which people can get involved in the campaign this year – through book groups, libraries, attending events or participating in the web-based animation project – The Lost Book – and of course, through reading the wonderful adventure story, *The Lost World*. There's something for everyone and we're delighted that – in the world's first UNESCO City of Literature – we can come together like this to celebrate one of Edinburgh's most famous authors."

Karen Cunningham, Director of the Aye Write! Festival said "This is a fantastic opportunity to bring together readers from Glasgow and Edinburgh to celebrate one of Scotland's most popular writers – we hope this will engage children of all ages to 'explore' the fun of reading"

Andrew Kelly, Director of the Great Reading Adventure said ""We are delighted to be able to celebrate three landmark anniversaries - the births of Darwin and Conan Doyle, and the publication of On the Origin of Species - with the mass-read of *The Lost World*, which will bring together thousands of participants of all ages. This is a great way for people to reacquaint themselves - or encounter for the first time - this classic adventure story and also to learn about literature, natural history, dinosaurs and the continuing impact of Darwin's work. The four publications specially produced for the project, along with the extensive website and wide range of activities taking place will ensure this is an enjoyable and informative experience. We are also pleased to be working with so many different partners, old and new, from across the country."

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Campaign Artwork and images are available on request
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Editors' Notes:

The Lost World Read 2009 – UK's largest

The Lost World Read 2009 is the largest ever UK collaborative reading campaign. It brings together existing initiatives such as the Glasgow City Read, One Book - One Edinburgh and the Bristol Great Reading Adventure. At least **250,000** people are expected to participate in the cities and regions, by reading books, participating in debates and using the project website.

The 4 Editions

Paperback – the classic story jam-packed with adventure

Reader's Guide – find out more about Conan Doyle and Darwin, take a look at fossils and dinosaurs and the impact their discovery had upon the popular imagination, and enjoy a survey of evolutionary themes in British science fiction.

Quick Read – a short version of the story for younger or less confident readers who want something to start them off. It's got a special Wallace & Gromit cover (because they love a bit of exploration...) and there are puzzles and games too.

Darwin – a graphic biography of the life of Charles Darwin, including his studies in Edinburgh, to give you the bigger picture on the themes in *The Lost World*.

Partners

The Lost World Read 2009 is a collaborative project developed by Bristol Cultural Development Partnership in conjunction with partners across the UK: Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, Glasgow Aye Write! Bank of Scotland Book Festival and libraries across the South West of England as well as City of Westminster Libraries, Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Oxford City Council and Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council.

The Bristol Great Reading Adventure – now in its seventh year, books read include *Treasure Island*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *Small Island* and most recently *The Bristol Story*, the history of Bristol in comic/ graphic form. Further details of the 2008 project can be found at www.bristolreads.com Darwin and Darwinism will be the subject of debates and presentations during the spring programme of the Bristol Festival of Ideas (www.ideasfestival.co.uk), among other events.

One Book – One Edinburgh – Edinburgh was designated a UNESCO City of Literature in late 2004 and as a result the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust charity was formed to promote reading in Edinburgh, encourage involvement with Scotland's literature and nurture literary partnerships around the world.

The Lost World Read 2009 is the third 'One Book - One Edinburgh' citywide reading campaign run by the Trust with the 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 in Edinburgh. Previous campaigns have focused on *Kidnapped* (2007) and *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (2008). This project has successfully pioneered using graphic novels as part of reading campaigns. Further details at www.cityofliterature.com

Glasgow City Read – now in its third year. In 2007 the city joined Bristol, Liverpool and Hull in a reading of *Small Island* and in 2008 was the first city worldwide to choose a book of poetry (Edwin Morgan) as their read. The project is linked closely to the work of libraries and reading groups and is part of the build up to The Aye Write! Bank of Scotland Festival which will be running Darwin-themed events as part of the 2009 programme. Further details at www.ayewrite.com

Charles Darwin and Arthur Conan Doyle

2009 marks the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the birth of Arthur Conan Doyle. Both authors are known worldwide: Darwin for his transformation of thinking about the ways by which life forms have evolved with the publication of his *The Origin of Species* and Doyle for, amongst other works, his Sherlock Holmes stories. Both authors are linked directly and indirectly with participating areas in the project.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Conan Doyle was born on 22 May 1859 at 11 Picardy Place. His family lived in various locations in and around Edinburgh, and he studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh before serving as a ship's doctor on a voyage to the West African coast. He lived most of his life in the south of England, including periods in Plymouth, Portsmouth and Westminster, working as doctor and writing. He is best known for his stories about the detective Sherlock Holmes, which were a major innovation in the field of crime fiction and huge bestsellers. He was also known for his series of adventure titles based around Professor Challenger (which include *The Lost World*). He was a prolific writer whose works include historical novels, science fiction, poetry, plays and non-fiction. He died on the 7 July 1930, age 71 in Crowborough, East Sussex, and is buried in New Forest, Hampshire. *Find out more about his life at www.lostworldread.com*

Charles Darwin

Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, he was partly educated in Edinburgh and Cambridge, the Beagle, on which he made his famous survey of the natural history of the southern hemisphere, sailed from Plymouth and docked in Falmouth on its return, and Darwin's fellow naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace lived in Poole, in Dorset, where the Jurassic Coastline is internationally recognized as one of the finest sites for fossil finds Darwin also built on the pioneering work of amateur and professional scientists in all the regions and cities involved, including, for example, James Hutton in Edinburgh. Doyle's classic book of exploration – *The Lost World* – covers Darwinism and the adventure is motivated by the ambition to prove dinosaurs still exist.

Darwin 200

Darwin 200 is a national programme of events celebrating Charles Darwin's scientific ideas and their impact. The core period of activity will run between two landmark dates: 12 February 2009, the bicentenary of Darwin's birth, and 24 November, the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin revolutionised the thinking of his day by placing humans firmly within the natural world, and his innovative thoughts are just as important in the 21st century. His concept of evolution through natural selection has been described as 'one of the most illuminating scientific ideas of all time'. Many organisations, large and small, across the UK are planning a variety of events to celebrate the life and legacy of Charles Darwin. From conferences and exhibitions to graphic novels and dramatic performances, there is something for everyone from scientists to young children. Visit <http://www.darwin200.org> for further details.