

ROALD DAHL DAY 2009 – September

The FOURTH annual celebration of the Fantastic Mr Roald Dahl!

September 13th 2009 marks the fourth annual Roald Dahl Day – on what would have been the great man’s birthday. It is a celebration of the work, life and multi-faceted legacy of one of the world’s best-loved storytellers. Not only is the celebration a day, but also much more - now taking place over an entire month...!

The fun kicks off at the Edinburgh International Book Festival with a special event hosted by Children’s Laureate Michael Rosen on Saturday 30th August. Festivities conclude on Saturday 3rd October, when the first Children’s Laureate and Roald’s principal illustrator Quentin Blake takes to the stage of the Royal National Theatre in London, accompanied by actors reading from Roald Dahl’s work, to celebrate the unique partnership of Blake and Dahl.

Between Edinburgh and London, all over the country there will be as much action, surprise and delight nationwide as between the covers of a Roald Dahl book. Confirmed events include...

- The legendary “Everything You Wanted to Know About Roald Dahl” road show hitting five NEW locations – Edinburgh, Leeds, Llandudno, Newcastle and Norfolk. Offering school audiences a chance to pose the most fiendish questions they can conjure up to Roald Dahl experts from the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre in Great Missenden - plus some surprise VIP guests!
- Newcastle/Gateshead will play host to the 2009 ROALD DAHL CITY READ. The City Read will launch at Newcastle City Library on September 11th - in an event attended by Roald’s widow, Felicity Dahl - and challenge every man, woman and child in the city to pick up a copy of FANTASTIC MR FOX. There will be a range of exciting special happenings in Newcastle/Gateshead throughout September and October including events at Waterstone’s, Seven Stories, at Newcastle City Library and The Sage, Gateshead. Additional partners of the Roald Dahl City Read include the Juice Festival and the Journal. A definite highlight of

the City Read will be a gala screening of FANTASTIC MR FOX, ahead of its UK release.

- Cardiff, Roald Dahl's birthplace, will pay tribute to Roald on Monday September 14th. The Llandaff Society will unveil a blue plaque on the site of the legendary sweetshop which Roald Dahl visited as a child and wrote about memorably in BOY, recalling its draconian owner, Mrs Pratchett and the fiendish "Great Mouse Plot" hatched by young Roald. Roald's widow Felicity and his son Theo will be in Cardiff for the unveiling, which takes place at 2:45 pm and will be followed by a celebratory tea at the Cathedral School, where Roald was once a student. On Monday September 21st, the action will move to North Wales for an extra-special "Everything You Always wanted to Know About Roald Dahl" event in Llandudno.
- Roald Dahl at the Bath Festival of Children's Literature – a special public "Everything You Wanted to Know About Roald Dahl" event on September 26th, featuring special guests Michael Rosen and Roald Dahl's indispensable secretary Wendy Kress.
- The second annual Roald Dahl Funny Book Prize. Awarded to the funniest children's books of the year (in two age categories – picture books and books for older children), this award was set up by outgoing Children's Laureate Michael Rosen, in conjunction with Booktrust. Michael will again chair the judging panel – which this year includes comedian Bill Bailey, illustrator Mini Grey and writers Louise Rennison and Andy Stanton (a winner of the inaugural award in 2008). The shortlist will be announced on September 7th; the winners in November.
- Great Missenden, where Roald Dahl lived and wrote, will provide a focus for festivities, with a weekend of special events at the award-winning Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre, including specially themed FANTASTIC MR FOX storytelling and guided village trails, craft activities, face-painting, behind-the-scenes tours of the Roald Dahl archive AND a chance to meet in person those dastardly farmers Boggis, Bunce and Bean!
- On Sunday September 13th, from 2:00 – 5:00 pm, there will also be a special opening of Roald Dahl's garden at Gipsy House – full of delights including his writing hut and Danny's gipsy caravan - in aid of the Roald Dahl Foundation, the grant-giving charity

established in Roald's name.

- The stage version of Roald Dahl's classic tale THE BFG – adapted by David Wood, directed by Phil Clark - is on tour throughout 2009. For more information on the tour, go to www.lovebfg.com.
- **In October, Twentieth Century Fox will release Wes Anderson's movie of Roald Dahl's FANTASTIC MR FOX. The movie stars the voices of George Clooney, Meryl Streep, Bill Murray and Jarvis Cocker. Puffin is publishing seven movie tie-in books, ranging from the original novel to a storybook and CD set, sticker book and Funfax.**
- Jonathan Cape is publishing ROALD DAHL'S COMPLETELY REVOLTING RECIPES, illustrated by Quentin Blake (September 3rd, £9.99). Roald Dahl loved food – in his stories and in real-life. Here is a glorumptious collection of fifty Roald Dahl recipes, to guarantee fun times in the kitchen.

BUT the public and schools events are only **HALF THE STORY**. Every year for Roald Dahl Day, groups up and down the country organise their own celebrations, using as a starting point our Roald Dahl Day Event Kit, available for free download at www.roalddahlday.info. This year, we are expecting the biggest response to date. The Event Kit is already online and packed with ideas and activities so what are you waiting for? Log on and start planning your very own celebration!

A key part of Roald Dahl Day is **The Roald Dahl Day Challenge**. This year, the challenge is to do something Dahl-esque **EVERY** day throughout September. The calendar of challenges will soon be available to download at www.roalddahlday.info.

Quotes:

Felicity Dahl, Roald Dahl's widow, says:

“I can hardly believe that the FOURTH Roald Dahl Day celebrations are already being planned. The original idea was for a one-off celebration but we were overwhelmed by the response from around the UK. I know Roald would have been touched and thrilled by this continuing affection for his work.”

1. For further information about **Roald Dahl Day**, please contact:

Justin Somper, just so,
(020) 8341 6523, justso@globalnet.co.uk

2. For further information on activities at **the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre**, please contact:

Isabelle Reynolds, The Roald Dahl Museum & Story Centre,
(01494) 892192, isabelle@roalddahlmuseum.org

3. For further information on **the Roald Dahl Funny Book Prize**, please contact:

Katherine Solomon, Booktrust,
(020) 8875 4583, Katherine@booktrust.org.uk

Notes for editors:

ROALD DAHL AND HIS LEGACY

Born in Cardiff in 1916 of Norwegian descent, Roald Dahl was one of the world's most imaginative, successful and loved storytellers. Since his death in 1990, his work has not only endured but is still increasing in popularity. His stories are currently available in almost 50 languages. UK sales alone are over 50 million books and rising.

The official Roald Dahl website, currently attracts two million visitors per year with an online membership of around 200,000 fans.

10% of author royalties from all Roald Dahl books, films, plays, and merchandise are donated to the two Roald Dahl charities:

The Roald Dahl Foundation, created in 1991, supports chronically sick children and their families through a programme of grant giving to charities, hospitals, and individuals in the UK. To date, the Roald Dahl Foundation has given over £6 million in grants. The Roald Dahl Foundation is proud of its strong record in funding crucial nursing posts

in the areas of epilepsy, acquired brain injury, and haematology. There are currently 46 Roald Dahl Nurses throughout the UK.

The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre is a unique cultural, literary and education hub, which opened in June 2005 in Great Missenden where Roald lived and wrote many of his best-loved works. The Museum was named “Small Visitor Attraction of the Year” at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence 2008

In September 2006, the first national Roald Dahl Day was celebrated. The event proved such a success that Roald Dahl Day is now marked annually on and around 13th September.

There have been many adaptations of Roald Dahl’s work for the big screen. The latest of these is Wes Anderson’s animated movie of FANTASTIC MR FOX, including the voice of George Clooney as Mr Fox, which opens in the UK in October 2009. Roald Dahl’s writing has also inspired classical music, opera, plays and musicals.

For further information, please visit:

www.roalddahlday.info - everything you need to know about - and celebrate – Roald Dahl Day this September.

www.roalddahl.com - the official website of Roald Dahl

www.roalddahlfoundation.org - official site of the Roald Dahl Foundation (charity no. 1004230).

www.roalddahlmuseum.org - official site of the Roald Dahl Museum & Story Centre (charity no. 1085853).