

BRITISH TOURISM WEEK 23-29 MARCH 2009

- Britain's fifth largest industry – worth £114 billion – 8.2% of the nation's economy –
- Supports 2.7 million jobs and over 200,000 SMEs – more jobs than construction or transport
- 2009, a defining moment: weak pound makes Britain more affordable than ever –
- 4.9 million Britons will consider taking a holiday at home instead of overseas –

3 March 2009

BRITISH TOURISM WEEK ORGANISERS SUGGEST 'LIT-TRIPS' THE NEW TREND FOR 2009

World Book Day takes place this week and the organisers of the third British Tourism Week (23-29 March 2009) believe 2009 could be the year of literary tourism. It follows research into the types of activities overseas visitors enjoy in Britain, which shows 765,000 visits and £609 million involve visiting literary, music, TV and film locations.

Organisers of British Tourism Week hope holidaymakers will be inspired by Britain's literary heritage to take more of these 'lit-trips', in the same way as film tourism or 'set-jetting' has an increasing influence on travellers' choice of destinations. Many literary locations will exhibit at the consumer days of the Best of Britain and Ireland event which closes British Tourism Week on 28 and 29 March. As well as the nations and regions of Britain and Ireland – home to many authors and poets – they include attractions Canterbury Tales, Dickens World and the World of Beatrix Potter, as well as Shakespeare Country and Wordsworth's Dove Cottage and, of course, the British Library.

2009 marks 50 years since George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published and 25 years since it was *actually* 1984. The year witnesses the National Trust opening of Agatha Christie's house, Greenway in Devon, where she lived as Mrs Malowan from 1936 to 1959.

Bernard Donoghue, head of government relations at national tourism agency VisitBritain and co-chairman of British Tourism Week's multi-sector steering committee, says: "World Book Day celebrates literature's influence and a good read has long been associated with our holidays. Authors and poets have been inspired by every part of Britain and their work makes us want to experience those places for ourselves. 'Lit-trips' could be a real opportunity for British tourism in 2009, especially as we aim to inspire a potential 4.9 million extra Brits who are considering a holiday at home because of the economic downturn."

Film tourism too has a literary flavour this year. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, sixth and penultimate book in the popular series, comes to cinemas in the summer, while Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law is released towards the end of the year. A new film written and directed by *The Pianist's*

Jane Campion, *Bright Star*, explores the three-year romance between 19th century poet John Keats and Fanny Brawne, cut short by Keats' untimely death at 25.

Last year, British destinations won the first three places in TripAdvisor's top ten of the world's literary hotspots. London, Stratford-upon-Avon and Edinburgh gained accolades for their connections to the greatest authors and poets ever. Dickens, Chaucer, Milton, Keats, Shakespeare, Conan Doyle, Stevenson were all mentioned in the report. Britain is also the home of Tolkien, Fleming, Bronte, Austen, Wordsworth, Dylan Thomas, Agatha Christie, George and T S Elliot, Lewis Carroll, John Bunyan, Shelley, Stoker and many more, plus contemporary authors such as J K Rowling and Clive Barker.

Visit www.britishtourismweek.com for more information on events being organised around the country.

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For further information, please contact Elliott Frisby, Press and PR on 020 8563 3035 or 07951 996241

Notes to Editors

- British Tourism Week (23-29 March 2009) has been established to demonstrate the critical value of tourism to the economy of the United Kingdom. Through a week of events throughout the UK it will:
 - Increase awareness of the success and importance of the tourism industry
 - Raise quality standards
 - Promote training and professionalism
 - Improve competitiveness of the UK tourism industry
 - Support the preparations for hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- British Tourism Week culminates with the Best of Britain and Ireland trade and consumer event at London's Excel from 26-29 March. www.britainandirelandevent.co.uk
- British Tourism Week is organised by VisitBritain and UKinbound with the support of the Tourism Alliance, Tourism Society, ABTA the Travel Association, VisitScotland, Visit Wales, Visit London and Britain's regional tourist boards.