

Michael Morpurgo will launch **Private Peaceful Day on March 31** with a live Q&A via satellite following special screenings of the film for schools, it was announced today.

In a major event for schools, held in partnership with the National Literacy Trust and education charity Into Film, 100 cinemas across the UK, including those in the Picturehouse & Cineworld groups, will screen the film as part of the Centenary commemorations of WW1. Students will also be able to watch Michael answer questions live about Private Peaceful. Students attending the screenings will be invited to send in their questions, with a selection of the best being asked during the Q&A.

Each pupil attending the screenings on Private Peaceful Day will receive a free Michael Morpurgo book donated by HarperCollins. The screenings are part of a wider programme of events around Michael's seminal book, which has been a mainstay of WW1 teaching for almost a decade.

Children and young people throughout the UK will be able to see the film in their schools and youth clubs through Into Film's club programme, which enables pupils to watch, discuss, review, make and learn through watching a variety of films.

Following the screenings, the National Literacy Trust, partnering with Into Film (the new UK-wide film-learning programme, which incorporates the legacy of two former charities FILMCLUB and First Light and aims to put film at the heart of children and young people's learning) will distribute a new cross-curricula resource for schools that will encourage greater understanding of the issues raised by Private Peaceful and increase film and more traditional literacy skills. This will be available both on and off line in early summer 2014.

Private Peaceful is a moving story of brotherhood, comradeship and the impact of war, recounting the story of brothers Tommo & Charlie Peaceful from their rural childhood in the fields of Devon to the battlefields of Flanders.

The British-made film stars the late, incomparable, Richard Griffiths in his last role alongside a host of British talent including George MacKay (*Sunshine on Leith*), Jack O'Connell (*300: Rise of an Empire*), Alexandra Roach (*One Chance*), Maxine Peake (*Silk*), Frances de la Tour (*Hugo*) and John Lynch (*Sliding Doors*).

Michael Morpurgo says: "Private Peaceful deals with one of the darkest aspects of a terrible war; the execution of our own side. I wrote it wanting to highlight what I believed to be the injustice of those shot at dawn, but also to show the impact of the war, of any war, on family and friends and loved ones. This heartfelt and moving film brings vividly to life the simple fact that soldiers are human beings, not just uniforms."

Guy de Beaujeu, the film's producer says: "The film has been praised by teachers as an excellent teaching aid in its depictions of WW1 and for remaining true to Michael's original novel. There is a growing realisation among education providers that Private Peaceful is the perfect project for the Centenary – it is non-judgemental, non-jingoistic and unsentimental."

Abigail Moss, Deputy Director at the National Literacy Trust says: “We’re delighted to be working with Fluidity Films and Into Film on this exciting venture to bring Private Peaceful to the heart of learning and literacy for thousands of students across the UK. Teachers will be able to use this timely resource to focus on the First World War and actively engage children and young people through the film, in both literacy and film literacy learning. We hope that this will have a positive impact on students’ attainment across curriculum areas as well as being a fun and interactive way for schools to mark the centenary year of WW1.”

Jane Fletcher, Schools Programme Director at Into Film says: “Curriculum linked and enrichment teaching resources for learning through and about film are a key element of Into Film’s remit to put film at the heart of children’s and young people’s learning and cultural experience, and we are thrilled to be partnering with National Literacy Trust and Private Peaceful to bring this unique new teaching resource to our membership of Into Film clubs in schools, colleges and youth groups throughout the UK. We hope that this resource will enable teachers to support young people’s development of their literacy and film literacy skills by exploring behind the scenes of both Michael Morpurgo’s book and the film, which in turn brings World War 1 to life for the students.”

Throughout the year audiences will be able to see and take part in a range of events and activities around Private Peaceful. The launch will coincide with a major initiative by CityRead London. The charity has chosen Private Peaceful as the book all of London will be encouraged to read for a week from 31 March.

Screenwriter Simon Reade’s acclaimed one man show is on tour through Scamp Theatre/Fiery Angel at venues around the country, Michael Morpurgo’s a capella concert with Coope, Boyes & Simpson will also tour and Simon’s play for schools is being performed in schools and colleges across the UK.

The nation’s 4,000 libraries are also being encouraged to join in with Private Peaceful Day to get the whole nation reading the book and seeing some version of Private Peaceful.

Students will be encouraged to share their thoughts about Private Peaceful and upload images connected to the book and film on the film’s Facebook page.

Schools wishing to book screenings can see the list of participating cinemas and booking details on www.privatepeaceful.co.uk.

Ends

For more information and stills:

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Editors' notes:

Private Peaceful is suitable for KS2 (yr 5+) and KS3. The film is a 12A and contains moderate battle violence.

The special Q&A screening takes place Monday 31 March, 2014, 10am-12.30pm. Tickets are £3.50 per student, accompanying adults go free.

Each student attending will receive a free copy of Michael Morpurgo's *A Medal for Leroy* to take home from the screening. Private Peaceful (ISBN 9780007486441) is published by HarperCollins.

The National Literacy Trust is a national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy. We run projects in the poorest communities, campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents, and support schools.

Visit www.literacytrust.org.uk to find out more, donate or sign up for a free email newsletter. You can also find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

For further information about the National Literacy Trust, please contact Claire Nevill, Media Manager on 0207 820 6275 or at Claire.Nevill@literacytrust.org.uk

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Cityread London is an annual festival of literature that aims to bring reading to life for the city's inhabitants, workers and visitors. Taking place each April Cityread London encourages the capital to simultaneously pick up a book and read it together. Taking the book as a starting point, a month-long programme of book groups, film screenings and other events takes place across all 33 London boroughs in libraries, bookshops, museums and other venues.

Into Film is an education charity that seeks to put film at the heart of children and young people's learning and cultural experience. Our ambitious UK-wide programme will provide 5-19 year olds with unparalleled opportunities to see, think, make and imagine, contributing to their educational, cultural, creative and personal development.

We will achieve this by:

- Working with the education and informal youth sectors to support and promote learning through and about film
- Partnering with industry to enhance the appreciation and understanding of film
- Taking advantage of the learning solutions made possible by digital technology

Into Film incorporates the legacy of two leading film education charities, First Light and FILMCLUB, and will be working together with a range of partners in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Into Film is supported by the BFI, together with funding from the film industry and a number of other sources.

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