

## **LEADING CHILDREN'S AUTHOR TO BRING LITERATURE TO LIFE IN LIVE INTERNET BROADCAST**

Michael Morpurgo OBE, multiple award-winning author and former Children's Laureate, will bring children's literature to life on 17 June when he hosts a live internet broadcast to thousands.

The event is the latest to take place in the '**Meet Our Authors**' programme, run by Scottish Book Trust, Scotland's leading agency for the promotion of literature, reading and writing and sponsored by Scottish Friendly Assurance, one of the UK's leading providers of tax-free family savings and investment solutions.

Meet Our Authors is an exclusive series of authors' events streamed live over the internet to provide young people, parents and teachers with the chance to get up close and personal with some of the world's leading children's writers. The programme is the first of its kind in the UK. Anyone can sign up to watch and it is completely free.

On 17 June at 11am, Michael Morpurgo will captivate a live studio audience of children while being filmed and broadcast simultaneously over the internet to tens of thousands of viewers. An astounding, 45000 children in more than 800 schools have already signed up to the event, which is supported by digital media including Facebook and YouTube featuring event information and exclusive video clips.

Michael has written over 100 books, five of which have been made into films, including the highly acclaimed *Out of the Ashes* (2001). In 1999 this work was publicly recognised when he and his wife were awarded an MBE for services to youth. He was later awarded an OBE in 2006 for services to literature. Morpurgo's award-winning *War Horse* is currently smashing the box-office record at the New London Theatre .

The series of live events forms the centrepiece of a two-year long programme that will feature household names including Philip Pullman, Eoin Colfer, Charlie Higson and Jacqueline Wilson. The first live broadcast took place in March with former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen, to which over 100,000 children logged on. Last month, award winning children's author of "The Gruffalo" series of books, Julia Donaldson, wowed a live audience of 75,000 with her animated rendition of "*What the Ladybird heard.*"

Jasmine Fassel, of the Scottish Book Trust, commented: “ Scottish Book Trust is really pleased that Michael Morpurgo could make space in his busy schedule to come to Scotland this week. Having a storyteller of his calibre involved in the programme is a fantastic opportunity for children all over the country, giving them a chance to ask him any questions they like”

Neil Lovatt, sales and marketing director of Scottish Friendly, sponsor of Meet Our Authors, said: “The increasing demand for these live events is evidence that the passion for reading at an early age is as strong as ever. Scottish Friendly has worked closely with Scottish Book Trust for more than 11 years to ensure that children even in the most rural areas have equal access to the work of leading authors. This revolutionary and interactive series of author events means we can bring to life the world of reading and writing to thousands more children.”

Ends.

### **Notes to editors:**

1. Full details on ‘Meet Our Authors’, including forthcoming events and information on Twitter and YouTube links can be found at [www.facebook.com/meetourauthors](http://www.facebook.com/meetourauthors)
2. The live events are funded by the National Lottery through the Scottish Arts Council Inspiring Communities Fund.
3. Morpurgo’s prizes and awards include:

- 1991 **Carnegie Medal** (shortlist) *Waiting for Anya*
- 1993 **Prix Sorciere (France)** *King of the Cloud Forests*
- 1995 **Carnegie Medal** (shortlist) *Arthur, High King of Britain*
- 1995 **Whitbread Children's Book Award** *The Wreck of the Zanzibar*
- 1996 **Carnegie Medal** (shortlist) *The Wreck of the Zanzibar*
- 1996 **Nestlé Smarties Book Prize (Gold Award)** (6-8 years category) *The Butterfly Lion*
- 1999 **Prix Sorciere (France)** *Wombat Goes Walkabout*
- 2000 **Red House Children's Book Award** (Overall Winner) *Kensuke's Kingdom*
- 2001 **Prix Sorciere (France)** *Kensuke's Kingdom*
- 2002 **Nestlé Smarties Book Prize (Bronze Award)** (6-8 years category) *The Last Wolf*
- 2002 **WH Smith Award for Children's Literature** (shortlist) *Out of the Ashes*
- 2003 **Blue Peter Book Award: The Book I Couldn't Put Down** (shortlist) *Cool!*
- 2003 **Carnegie Medal** (shortlist) *Private Peaceful*
- 2003 **Children's Laureate**
- 2004 **Red House Children's Book Award** (Overall Winner) *Private Peaceful*
- 2004 **Whitbread Children's Book Award** (shortlist) *Private Peaceful*
- 2005 **Blue Peter Book of the Year Award** *Private Peaceful*
- 2006 **OBE**
- 2008 **Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award** (shortlist)
- 2008 British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year (shortlist) *Born to Run*

4. Scottish Friendly Assurance is a progressive and modern financial services group. It provides investors and their families with a wide range of products, from simple savings solutions, such as friendly society tax-free savings plans and a Child Trust Fund, to administration of sophisticated whole of market open architecture 'wrap' investments.  
[www.scottishfriendly.co.uk](http://www.scottishfriendly.co.uk)