



LiteratureWorks PRESS RELEASE

One Giant Read provides audiences with an out-of-this-world virtual reading experience

STRICTLY EMBARGOED – 0001HRS FRIDAY 06 NOVEMBER 2015

Science fact and science fiction will collide with the launch of an initiative themed around an International Space Station mission this winter.

As British European Space Agency astronaut Tim Peake's Principia Mission prepares for launch in December, a new reading initiative – One Giant Read – will become a reality here on Earth.

Created by charity Literature Works, in partnership with the RNIB and the UK Space Agency, and supported by Gollancz, The Poetry Archive and the Plymouth Literature Project at Plymouth University, the project offers easy to access reading materials and content themed to the Principia Mission.

The site will also be accessible to people living with sight loss and aims to raise funds for RNIB's 'Talking Books' and to enable more projects which bring reading and writing opportunities for everyone.

For every month Tim circles the Earth, the One Giant Read website will publish a series of themed writing and reading challenges showcasing the very best of science fiction writers and exploring the influence science fiction has had on science fact.

Tracey Guiry, CEO of Literature Works says: *“Science fiction is one of the most widely read and popular genres in the UK, and many ideas dreamt up by writers and poets in the past have now become science fact. The One Giant Read brings accessible examples of the best audio books, poems and videos from scientists to get readers excited about arts and science, and our One Giant Write competition challenges writers use the next seven months to complete and enter their unpublished novels.”*

Jeremy Curtis, Head of Education at the UK Space Agency, says: *“We are thrilled that Tim's mission will inspire such a great project that will recognise and encourage the imagination and creativity needed to continue our exploration of space. This exciting project will use literature to bring the latest science and engineering to new audiences.”*

Once launched, the site will be packed with recordings, videos and texts which will keep readers entertained and also stretch the ways they think of the UK Space Programme.

It will feature works from contemporary writers and poets, including audio books from Alastair Reynolds and Stephen Baxter, kindly donated by Gollancz, poems from Simon Barraclough and Sir Andrew Motion and many others, as well as recorded poems from The Poetry Archive, and reviews of classic science fiction writers such as Iain M Banks, Doris Lessing, Isaac Asimov, Arthur C Clarke, JG Ballard and Philip K Dick.

Gollancz Commissioning Editor, Marcus Gipps, said: *“We’re thrilled to be involved with One Giant Read. The best of science fiction builds on the world we live in, and Tim Peake’s forthcoming stay on the International Space Station reminds us that we can already achieve remarkable things. Audio versions of our books are hugely popular already, and both Gollancz and our authors are delighted to be supporting an initiative to increase the resources available for people with sight loss.”*

Scientists will be adding their commentary designed to both enthuse and educate from academics on topics from space to robotics, navigation to geology.

Professor Kevin Jones, Executive Dean in the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Plymouth University, said: *“Space exploration is one of the greatest scientific achievements of our time, and consistently inspires people to think beyond the boundaries of what might be possible. I hope the One Giant Read project can capture that spirit, using a combination of science fact and fiction to educate audiences about the impact science and the arts can have on their daily lives. It provides a unique opportunity for us to use our world-leading expertise to enthuse people about the STEM subjects.”*

With only 7 per cent of all readable materials in formats accessible for blind people, the One Giant Read project aims to raise funds to enable more books to be recorded for the RNIB’s famous Talking Books library and for more reading and writing initiatives to be provided.

The website, <http://onegiantread.literatureworks.org.uk>, will go live on Tuesday 01 December 2015.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

For more information about this news release, contact Literature Works CEO Tracey Guiry on 01752 585073 via info@literatureworks.org.uk or visit www.literatureworks.org.uk

The Principia Mission’s One Giant Read is one of nine projects to be awarded funding by the UK Space Agency as part of a scheme to support educational outreach associated with Tim Peake’s mission. For more about the Principia Mission, visit <https://principia.org.uk/> and <https://www.esa.int/principia>.

Literature Works is a development agency for writers and readers and an Arts Council national portfolio organisation based in Exeter and Plymouth. They bring together all elements of the literature sector, writers, poets, libraries, booksellers, publishers, agents, schools and communities of readers in ways that strengthen and sustain the whole sector. They enable the best writing talent to develop and ensure that the very best writing and reading opportunities are made available to the widest and most diverse audiences and communities. They provide information, news and resources via their website, Twitter and Facebook and provide resources and opportunities for writers to earn their living.

Literature Works is very grateful to Gollancz, RNIB and Plymouth University for their support of this project. One Giant Read is supported through the Plymouth Literature Project, led by Literature Works and Plymouth University.

UK Space Agency

The UK Space Agency is at the heart of UK efforts to explore and benefit from space. It is responsible for all strategic decisions on the UK civil space programme and provides a clear, single voice for UK space ambitions.

The Agency is responsible for ensuring that the UK retains and grows a strategic capability in the space-based systems, technologies, science and applications. It leads the UK's civil space programme in order to win sustainable economic growth, secure new scientific knowledge and provide benefits to all citizens.

The UK Space Agency:

- co-ordinates UK civil space activity
- encourages academic research
- supports the UK space industry
- raises the profile of UK space activities at home and abroad
- increases understanding of space science and its practical benefits
- inspires our next generation of UK scientists and engineers
- licences the launch and operation of UK spacecraft
- promotes co-operation and participation in the European Space programme

The European Space Agency (ESA)

The ESA provides Europe's gateway to space. ESA is an intergovernmental organisation, created in 1975, with the mission to shape the development of Europe's space capability and ensure that investment in space delivers benefits to the citizens of Europe and the world.

ESA has 21 Member States: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, of whom 19 are Member States of the EU.

One other Member State of the EU, Hungary, has signed the Accession Agreement to the ESA Convention and, upon ratification, will soon become the 22nd ESA Member State.

ESA has established formal cooperation with seven other Member States of the EU.

Canada takes part in some ESA programmes under a Cooperation Agreement.

ESA is also working with the EU on implementing the Galileo and Copernicus programmes.

By coordinating the financial and intellectual resources of its members, ESA can undertake programmes and activities far beyond the scope of any single European country.

ESA develops the launchers, spacecraft and ground facilities needed to keep Europe at the forefront of global space activities.

Today, it develops and launches satellites for Earth observation, navigation, telecommunications and astronomy, sends probes to the far reaches of the Solar System and cooperates in the human exploration of space.

Learn more about ESA at www.esa.int

About Plymouth University

Founded in 1862 as a school of navigation and now the 15th largest university in the UK, Plymouth is one of the leading modern universities, ranked in the top four institutions in the country and 37th internationally under the age of 50 by the Times Higher Education. Twice awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education, it has won numerous accolades in respect of its teaching and its research.

The University has one of the highest number of National Teaching Fellows of any UK university (20 National Teaching Fellowships in Higher Education since 2000), is ranked 19th in the UK and in the top 100 globally for research quality (2015 CWTS Leiden Rankings), with two-thirds of its research ranked as world-leading or internationally excellent (2014 Research Excellence Framework). It was also the first university in the world to receive the Social Enterprise Mark.

Its 27,000 students, which include those at its partner colleges across the South West, are enrolled on courses from farming to fine art, business to biology, and design to dentistry. The University has invested more than £150 million in its campus and is the first modern university to have launched a medical school. The University plays a key role within the South West region's economy and through its £100 million network of support facilities and services, is growing and supporting hundreds of businesses across the region and beyond. To find out how Plymouth is making a difference, please visit www.plymouth.ac.uk



