

**PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release**

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**'THE MARCHES' RADIO PLAYS AND FILMS ON BBC RADIO 4 & THE RED  
BUTTON**

Over the past 12 months The Rural Media Company, BBC Radio Drama, Arts Council England and the Herefordshire communities of Kington and Ewyas Harold have collaborated to create a remarkable new project entitled The Marches, which combines radio, film and the web with community participation.

Working with over 150 people aged from 7 to 85, the project has created two original 45-minute radio dramas and two accompanying films that capture the sounds and images of rural life, together with the voices, lives, stories and histories of communities who live on The Marches. This innovative project has created a wonderful opportunity for Herefordshire people to truly put their communities on the map.

The two radio plays will be broadcast in the **Afternoon Play slot on Radio 4 (2.15-3.00pm) on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September and aired at the same time by BBC Hereford and Worcester**. Listeners can watch the accompanying films by pressing the red button from any BBC TV channel and selecting 'The Marches'. The plays and films will then be available for one month via the BBC Radio 4 website ([www.bbc.co.uk/radio4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4)) allowing a national audience to enjoy them after they have been broadcast.

Award-winning writer Sebastian Backiewicz had the daunting task of turning hundreds of local stories into two 45-minute dramas, entitled **'Man in a Wheelbarrow'** inspired by people from the town of Kington, and **'Fearless Librarian Saves The Day'** created by the community in Ewyas Harold.

Rather fittingly, *'Fearless Librarian Saves The Day'* celebrates the Herefordshire Mobile Library Service, which recently fell victim to local cost saving measures. The Ewyas Harold play draws upon stories gathered from across the community, but in particular from Graham Sprackling. Graham worked for Herefordshire Library service for 40 years, 30 of those (1962-92) as a Mobile Librarian, and his wonderfully funny and touching recollections helped provide the perfect backbone to the play. "It was strange at first, hearing some of the things you remember in a play, but I really enjoyed it," said Graham.

The famous Kington Festival Wheelbarrow Race features in the Kington play, as do many other stories, ideas and themes gathered from across the market town. Primary school caretaker and Kington street cleaner David East was a key figure in gathering local stories from across the town and features in the radio play himself.

Creating the two films that will be broadcast simultaneously with the radio plays has been quite a task. Adrian and Rachel Lambert directed the Ewyas Harold film. Taking the idea of the village hall fete, the film required 120ft of trestle tables and the creation of 20 carefully composed visual re-

interpretations of the radio drama, complete with 18ft of turf, gravel, a freshly caught salmon and mass community participation on the last day of filming! John Humphrey's directed the Kington film, lovingly crafting an incredibly beautiful visual exploration of Kington and the locations, places and events in the play, including some stunning photography of the Wheelbarrow Race itself.

"This project is a landmark for both Rural Media and BBC," said the Company's Creative Director and producer of The Marches, Adrian Lambert. "It demonstrates the way in which through creative partnerships isolated rural communities can have a voice and produce high quality, broadcast drama and documentary for a national audience."

Adrian went on to say: "Creating a radio play is something quite new to us and working with Sasha, Sebastian and the BBC team has been fantastic for both Rural Media and the two communities involved. The films have also given us the opportunity to explore a different approach to filmmaking and enabled us to utilise the latest camera technology".

### **Man In A Wheelbarrow**

**Wednesday 7th September, 2.15pm, BBC Radio 4**

Trudy's arrival in Kington has caused quite a stir. The young American, with her dyed neon hair, looks more like a visiting rock star than an inhabitant of the Herefordshire market town. Trudy claims that she's researching local history, but her story doesn't add up. When she starts surreptitiously following the town's street cleaner, questions are asked about the real reason for her visit.

**The cast stars:** Sasha Pick as Trudy; Richard Elfyn as Duggie; Stuart McLoughlin as Leon; Jane Whittenshaw as Molly; and Sam Jones as Mal.

### **Fearless Librarian Saves the Day**

**Thursday 8th September, 2.15pm, BBC Radio 4**

This is the story of no ordinary librarian. Sitting behind the wheel of a clapped-out mobile library, Harry Hayman is the easy rider of Herefordshire's remote country lanes. Whether it's as a knight in shining armour, a getaway driver or an unlikely Casanova - Harry repeatedly finds himself having to save the day. But when his cherished job is jeopardised, can he pull out all the stops? A road trip that weaves together stories inspired by life in the Herefordshire countryside.

**The cast stars:** Morgan George as Harry Hayman; Fenella Woolgar as Lavinia Jackson; Stuart McLoughlin as Glyn; Christine Pritchard as Vivian; William Thomas as Leslie; Manon Edwards as Ethel; Sean Baker as Cavendish; Sally Orrock as Cassie.

Both plays are directed and produced by Sasha Yevtushenko.

#### **Note to Editors**

- **The Rural Media Company** [www.ruralmedia.co.uk](http://www.ruralmedia.co.uk) is an award winning charity and company limited by guarantee based in Hereford and working locally and nationally. Rural Media is supported by ScreenWM, Elmley Foundation and Herefordshire Council.
- The Marches project was originally titled **Amplifying Voices** and is supported by the Arts Council of England and Herefordshire Council.
- **Arts Council England** (ACE) is the national development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from the Government and the National Lottery.
- Production images of both locations are available on request.