



memo

Press Release

MIRANDA RICHARDSON TO RING OUT THE BELLS FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF BIODIVERSITY IN SUPPORT OF THE MEMO PROJECT

Passionate supporter of the Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory (MEMO), Miranda Richardson will make a big noise about the on-going extinction of species.

Miranda is tolling the MEMO bell at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday, 22nd May, 1.45pm. A chain of bells will ring out from Portland to London ending with the Great Bell of Bow. The MEMO project will persuade the authorities in capital cities all over the world to participate in the tolling of bells for this most global of issues. Bells are also being rung in US, India and Brazil.

MEMO (Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory) is a project to build a sublimely beautiful, ongoing memorial commemorating all the species to have perished in the Earth's ongoing sixth mass extinction, on the Isle of Portland in Dorset. The bell will sit on top. It has the rarely bestowed official endorsement of the **Royal Society**.

The MEMO Project, in the words of the project's principal advisor, **Tim Smit, director of the Eden Project**, is not a building, not a church, not quite a monument – it's "all of those things, bringing together sculptures of the species who have gone extinct.

MEMO will mount the biggest bell in Europe in the middle of it... when any species goes to the wall from now on, the bell will sound and that will be a mark of what has happened."

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

Friday 22nd May 1.45 – 2.45

Miranda Richardson tolls the bell at St Paul's Cathedral
EC4M 8AD

Photographers report to the south entrance of the Cathedral (right of the big steps). Contact: Sebastian Brooke (project manager) 07815 438611 or Hannah Talbot (St Paul's) 07818 634267

At the moment no comprehensive record of the images and stories of historically extinct creatures exists in one place, in any medium. MEMO will redress the balance. It will be a circular stone enclosure carved on the inside with images of all plant and animal species known to have gone extinct in modern times.

“MEMO will be built along the UNESCO World Heritage Jurassic coastline on the island of Portland in Dorset,” said project founder Sebastian Brooke. “It is a uniquely meaningful place to build it. In the aftermath of the Great Fire of London, it was the giant ammonite fossils commonly found in Portland stone which led Wren’s architectural collaborator, the scientist Robert Hooke, to put forward the concept of extinction for the first time. Unbeknownst to Hooke, this was just as the last of the dodos were dying out in Mauritius.

“There is a certain poetry to using Portland stone, which is made up of the fossils of millions of extinct creatures and which was used to build many of London’s most famous landmarks, to build a monument that will commemorate all the species that no longer exist. The MEMO project seeks to follow in the footsteps of Wren and Hooke and bring together the sciences and the arts in the sober but magnificent purpose of commemorating the species lost in modern times.”

A remarkable groundswell of support for MEMO has already emerged in the worlds of both art and science, ranging from the local authorities in Dorset to the United Nations, from the Royal Society to the Eden Project. Philip Pullman and James Lovelock are both patrons of MEMO. The Eden Project’s Tim Smit is acting as principal advisor to MEMO and the building is being designed by sculptors Peter Randall-Page and Glynn Williams and architect David Adjaye.

- ENDS -

**For more information contact:
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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Miranda Richardson is currently appearing in “Grasses of a Thousand Colours” at The Royal Court with Wallace Shawn

MEMO FACTS:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-MEMO-Project/78945066503>

When: To open in 2012

Where: Portland

How much: £5 million to build

Significance of 2010 - 12

2010: 350th Anniversary of Royal Society

2010: focus of the ‘Countdown 2010’ - International Year of Biodiversity by UN

2012: Olympic sailing events off Portland

350th anniversary of the last sighting of live dodos on Mauritius

Patrons:

Prof James Lovelock
Philip Pullman
Sir Crispin Tickell
Lord May, former chief govt. scientist and President of the Royal Society
Sir David Read, former VP and Biological Secretary of the Royal Society
EO Wilson, Pulitzer prize winning biologist

Principal Advisor:
Tim Smit, Eden Project

Trustees:
Daniel Brooke
Peter Cruttwell
Prof Richard Fortey
Prof Sir Ghillean Prance
Maryann Woodrow

Design:
David Adjaye
Peter Randall-Page
Prof Glyn Williams

OTHER EVENTS:

22 May-21 June: ST PAULS CATHEDRAL, LONDON:

Exhibition of carvings for MEMO created at the Portland Festival of stone-carving and bell-founding. A new image - of the Great Auk which used to nest on Portland - will be carved on Mondays and Tuesdays at the Cathedral