



Press release – Thursday 3 June 2010

Rare urban artefact – an inspiration for Shakespeare's *Henry IV* – to be displayed at Shakespeare's Globe

Shakespeare's Globe acquires 1668 Boar's Head Tavern sign from the Museum of London – a semblance of arguably the most famous tavern in English Literature. This iconic stone carving arrives at its spiritual home on Bankside in time for Dominic Dromgoole's productions of Shakespeare's *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* – the plays which propelled the Boar's Head Tavern to academic fame. *Henry IV* previews at Shakespeare's Globe on Sunday 6 June and runs until 3 October.



The Boar's Head Tavern on Eastcheap, a street in the City of London, is recognised as the setting for *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* featuring one of Shakespeare's most famous and much-loved characters, Sir John Falstaff.

Esteemed actor Roger Allam, who plays Falstaff in these productions, unveiled the sign last night, days before his performance on the Globe stage as the character that frequented this legendary tavern. Roger Allam, an established RSC and National Theatre actor, co-leads with Gemma Arterton in Stephen Frears' new film *Tamara Drewe* which recently premiered at the Cannes Film Festival ahead of its 10 September UK release. Roger created the role of Javert in the original production of 'Les Miserables' 25 years ago and won the 2002 Olivier Award for Best Actor in *Privates on Parade* at the Donmar.

Dominic Dromgoole, Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe and director of *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* commented: "The acquisition of the Boar's Head Tavern stone carving is fascinating, educationally valuable and in-keeping with the themes of our 2010 theatre season. The Globe receives over 700,000 visitors each year, and we hope this display will be an engaging insight into the reality of Shakespeare's London and the imaginative creations in his work".

The original Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, built before 1537, would have been known by many people who heard the plays when they were first performed in the late 1590s. The building was destroyed by the

Great Fire of 1666, but was soon rebuilt in brick, with a carved stone bas-relief of a boar's head set above its first-floor windows. In the absence of Elizabethan and Jacobean playhouses such as the Globe, which had been pulled down in 1644, the tavern became a site of pilgrimage in London for people wishing to pay homage to Shakespeare, until the late 18th century. The sign has not been seen in public for over 180 years.

The building was demolished in 1831 when the area was redeveloped, in preparation for the rebuilding of London Bridge. However the carved stone was retained and is presented at Shakespeare's Globe by kind permission of the Museum of London. Loyal friend of Shakespeare's Globe Marcus Coles has pioneered this project and arranged for the sign to be encased within a specially commissioned display cabinet, featuring an imagined scene from the Boar's Head Tavern carved into limewood.

This is the first time that the new Globe has staged *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* – widely considered to be Shakespeare's masterpieces. The two parts of *Henry IV* mark a turning point in Shakespeare's career, revealing new depths of storytelling and realism, and portray a glorious, epic landscape of Britain. *Henry IV Part 1* previews on Sunday 6 June and *Part 2* previews on Saturday 3 July.

Notes to editors:

Images of Roger Allam unveiling the Boar's Head available on request.

The Boar's Head at Shakespeare's Globe

The Boar's Head sign comes to Shakespeare's Globe as a long-term renewable loan from the Museum of London and will be free to view after the unveiling. The sign is situated in the public reception, just opposite the Globe shop. The display that houses the Boar's Head sign was conceived and funded by Marcus Coles, designed by Den Stubbs, and constructed by Mark Gates, with carving in English limewood by Norman Gaches. The two principal characters depicted are Falstaff and Prince Hal (the future King Henry V).

***Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* at Shakespeare's Globe**

Part 1: 6 June – 2 October

Part 2: 3 July – 3 October

Shakespeare's Globe presents its first productions of Shakespeare's masterpieces *Henry IV Part 1* and *Henry IV Part 2*, directed by the theatre's Artistic Director, **Dominic Dromgoole**. An outstanding cast includes **Roger Allam** as Falstaff, **Jamie Parker** as Prince Hal, **William Gaunt** as Worcester in Part 1 and Shallow Part 2, and **Oliver Cotton** in the title role of Henry IV.

Museum of London

Museum of London together with Museum of London Docklands and Museum of London Archaeology inspires a passion for London. Located at London Wall, Museum of London tells the lively story of London from prehistoric times to the present day. The Museums are open daily 10am – 6pm and are FREE to all.

Julian Bowsher, Senior Archaeologist at Museum of London and Archaeological Supervisor during the Rose excavation is available to comment on this story. Julian also co-authored: *The Rose and the Globe – playhouses of Shakespeare's Bankside, Southwark: excavations 1988–91*, Julian Bowsher, Pat Miller.

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