

## **PINEWOOD GIVES FREE BFI MEMBERSHIP TO ALL OF ITS STAFF**

### **TO HONOUR STUDIO'S 80<sup>TH</sup> YEAR**

**London, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016:**

**Pinewood Studios** has long been regarded as a jewel in the crown of the UK's rich film heritage and as the iconic studio celebrates the start of its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, it was announced today that all full-time staff across the group will receive free membership to the **BFI** to honour the date.

Amanda Nevill, CEO of the BFI said: *"Pinewood is part of our film heritage, and at 80 years old is more active and successful than ever and plays a huge role in the creative success of the UK film industry. We are very excited that they have chosen to mark this special birthday by giving the gift of BFI Membership to every single member of their staff! We so look forward to giving them all a very special 80<sup>th</sup> years across the BFI Player, BFI Southbank and the BFI London Film Festival. Happy Birthday Pinewood!"*

Commenting on marking the celebrations, Andrew M. Smith, Corporate Affairs Director for Pinewood Group plc said: *"As we enter our 80th year, we felt it fitting to mark the occasion by giving colleagues membership of the BFI. Pinewood is a cornerstone of the film industry here in the UK and we are proud to have helped shape it."*

The BFI membership will provide staff with the best way to enjoy the special events, previews and screenings at the BFI London Film Festival, BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival and at BFI Southbank all year round with priority booking, no booking fees, exclusive programme guides and 10% off food and drink at BFI Southbank. Members receive free tickets to an exclusive events programme at BFI Southbank including BFI Screen Epiphanies and Member Picks, £1.50 off most BFI Southbank and BFI IMAX tickets, £10 savings on an annual Sight & Sound subscription and 15% off BFI Player and the BFI Shop.

For eighty years, Pinewood Studios has made dreams a reality. Billions of people across the globe, of all ages, from all walks of life have read six words on cinema or television screens: 'Made at Pinewood Studios, London, England'. From hosting the *James Bond* franchise for over half a century, to housing production of the biggest international blockbusters in recent years, including the *Star Wars* franchise, some of the most glittering careers on both sides of the camera, have been launched behind the iconic gates of Pinewood.

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## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About the BFI**

#### **BFI**

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger.

### **About Pinewood Group plc**

Pinewood boasts a total of 78 stages globally now operates across five territories offering international sales, marketing, studio development and consultancy, as well as providing stages and water facilities, post production and creative services and funding to the film, TV and games industries, in the UK (Pinewood Studios, Shepperton Studios and Pinewood Studio Wales), Canada (Pinewood Toronto Studios), Pinewood Iskandar Malaysia Studios and Pinewood Dominican Republic Studios, and has a joint venture in the US with Pinewood Atlanta Studios which will soon become the largest studio facility and media hub outside of Los Angeles. Most recently, Pinewood opened a representative office in Beijing, China in response to a growing demand in the flourishing Chinese film industry, for Pinewood's services in the fields of studio design and build, production services including post production, content development, marine services, education and training.

## The History of Pinewood Studios

The Victorian estate of Heatherden Hall in Buckinghamshire was owned by Doctor Drury Lavin in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The next incumbent world-famous cricketer K.S. Ranjitsinhji sold it to Canadian financier Lt Colonel Grant Morden, a political high flier who lavished over £300,000 (in excess of £5 million in today's money) transforming the mansion by adding a huge ballroom and Turkish bath amongst other features.

During the 1930s it became a retreat and private meeting place for politicians and diplomats. The agreement to form the Anglo-Irish agreement was signed at Heatherden Hall.

When Morden died in 1934, the estate was purchased by building tycoon Charles Boot who turned the mansion into a country club for the rich and famous however his main aim was to turn the land into a film studio. Boot officially renamed Heatherden Hall, Pinewood, in his own words, because: "...of the number of trees which grow there and because it seemed to suggest something of the American film centre in its second syllable." Charles Boot teamed up with J. Arthur Rank, the Methodist miller and millionaire to joint-finance the project in a move that ultimately led to the development of the Rank Organisation which embraced not only film production and film distribution at home and abroad, but also catering, leisure time activities and a wide field of manufacturing interests which would, at its height, employ more than 30,000 people. **The completion of building at Pinewood was fast and the Studios were opened officially on 30 September 1936** followed by frenzied production activity until the depression hit the British film industry.

The Second World War saw the Studios requisitioned by the Government for storage – its sound stages becoming home to mountains of sugar, flour and other much-needed wartime supplies. Already occupied by the Royal Mint, other important industries were soon evacuated to Pinewood, particularly Lloyd's of London who moved into the Studios just days before hostilities broke out in September 1939.

After the war, the British film industry witnessed a resurgence in fortunes and a revitalised Pinewood in particular. American production companies soon started to flock to the Studios, attracted by lower production costs, it's unique feel of being typically British yet untypically like a film studio, as well as the superior skills and facilities compared to US counterparts. Early post war classics made at Pinewood included *Great Expectations*, *Black Narcissus*, *Oliver Twist* and *Genevieve*.

Under the burden of the heavy financial pressures facing the organisation in the 1950s and the introduction of television, cheaper (to make), populist entertainment became the order of the day at Pinewood which gave rise to some of the most renowned film series in British cinema history: *The Doctor* series, the *Carry On* films as well as the antics of Norman Wisdom.

The 1960s became a boom period for the Studios, with the Americans back in town making large-scale productions. It also saw the emergence of the iconic James Bond with which Pinewood has become synonymous over the past half century. Stars who filmed at Pinewood during this time include Diana Dors, Laurence Olivier, Gregory Peck, Marilyn Monroe, Jean Simmons, Sophia Loren, Michael Caine and Elizabeth Taylor amongst others.

Lord Rank's death in 1972 coincided with a downturn for the British film industry although it continued to host big productions including *Fiddler on the Roof*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Frenzy*, Francis Ford Coppola's version of *The Great Gatsby* and Alan Parker's musical gangster spoof

*Bugsy Malone*. The Studios was near financial crisis during this decade, only to be saved by the *Superman* franchise.

During the Eighties, it was decided the studio would cease to be fully serviced and become a facility where filmmakers bring in their own labour and staff.

The early 1990s witnessed an all-time low in British film production due to unfavourable UK tax laws but as the decade progressed, Pinewood achieved a remarkable resurgence as the Studios were acquired from The Rank Group PLC by a team led by media magnates Michael Grade and Ivan Dunleavy. Lord Grade and Mr Dunleavy remain at the helm and have spearheaded the growth and global expansion of the Pinewood Group plc.

**Press contacts:**

**Elizabeth Dunk, Press Office Assistant**

[Elizabeth.dunk@bfi.org.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.dunk@bfi.org.uk)

+44 (0)207 957 8986

**Judy Wells, Head of Press and PR**

[judy.wells@bfi.org.uk](mailto:judy.wells@bfi.org.uk)

+44 (0)207 957 8919 / +44(0) 7984 180 501

**Pinewood Studios Group**

**Julia Jones, Communications Manager**

[Julia.Jones@pinewoodgroup.com](mailto:Julia.Jones@pinewoodgroup.com)

DDI: +44 1753785302 | Mob: +44 7702 561411