

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday 14 April 2010

Loughborough in the spotlight as CEMETERY JUNCTION hits the big screen

CEMETERY JUNCTION, the first feature film from award-winning writing/directing/acting duo Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant, is released today in UK cinemas – and the film will shine a spotlight on its two Loughborough locations, the Great Central Railway and John Taylor & Co Bell Foundry.

CEMETERY JUNCTION, set in 1970s Britain, tells the story of three blue-collar friends from Reading who spend their days joking, drinking and chasing girls, and explores the universal theme of feeling trapped in a small town and dreaming of escape. The production shot on location in Loughborough after receiving support to find locations and facilities, and secure filming permissions, from East Midlands Screen Agency EM Media.

The Great Central Railway was used as the 'Cemetery Junction' of the film's title; its authentic interiors and exteriors fitting perfectly with the filmmakers' vision of a 1970s provincial station. The John Taylor & Co Bell Foundry appears in the film as the workplace of Ricky Gervais' character, Len Taylor, and its industrial interiors feature in the film's promotional images. But it's not only Loughborough's buildings which are showcased in the film – many locals were also employed as extras on the production!

CEMETERY JUNCTION producers Sue Baden-Powell and Charlie Hanson were blown away by the film's Loughborough locations. Of the Great Central Railway, one of the few private railway stations in the country and a favourite with filmmakers, they said, "It is beautifully preserved." The producers described the John Taylor & Co Bell Foundry as a "unique historic working environment" with "very supportive" local staff enabled the production to "create the right atmosphere".

Being a location in a feature film can result in increased tourism and visitor numbers for attractions once the film is released in cinemas. A report commissioned by the UK Film Council, EM Media and others in 2007, cemented what many had already assumed; that film and television plays a significant and positive role in attracting visitors to a region or an attraction, and that this effect can be long-lasting.

In July 2009 EM Media and Leicester Shire Promotions launched the East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative at Great Central Railway. The Initiative aims to bring together local authorities and tourism bodies from across the region to work with EM Media to guarantee producers a positive filming experience in the East Midlands, and thereby secure repeat business from production companies shooting in the region. CEMETERY JUNCTION was the first feature film to benefit from the Film Friendly Initiative's more joined-up way of working, which enabled road closures and other permissions to be sought in a timely and effective manner, and this led to the Initiative's launch at the Great Central Railway just a month after CEMETERY JUNCTION had used the location.

Debbie Williams, Chief Executive of EM Media comments:

"EM Media was thrilled the producers chose Leicestershire as a key filming destination. Filming activity brings a significant economic boost to the local economy and can raise the profile of the region considerably. We hope that the Film Friendly Initiative will continue to work together to encourage more productions to film in our region and to maximise the longer-term opportunities filming brings".

Martin Peters, Chief Executive of Leicester Shire Promotions comments:

"This film places two historic Leicestershire attractions in the national spotlight. Great Central Railway, in particular, has a proud tradition of featuring as a location in high profile TV shows and movies. We will be looking to help the attractions capitalise on their profile in CEMETERY JUNCTION by increasing the number of overnight stay visitors inspired to see the locations featured in the film for themselves."

Kate Tilley from the Great Central Railway comments:

"We are very excited about the film finally being released. The railway was thrilled to be chosen as a location for the film, which led to other local places being selected to appear as well. We're sure the success of the film will bring more visitors to the area."

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Notes to editors:

About EM Media

EM Media is the Screen Agency for the East Midlands region of England. The agency secures finance, nurtures talent, invests in success and stimulates growth and innovation across the digital content sector.

EM Media has invested in the development and production of more than 60 British feature films. These include: Jim Loach's *Oranges and Sunshine*, Nick Whitfield's *Skeletons*, Karl Golden's *Pelican Blood*,

Justin Molotnikov's *Crying With Laughter*, Samantha Morton's *The Unloved*, Brian Percival's *A Boy Called Dad*, Alexis Dos Santos's *Unmade Beds*, Nicolas Winding Refn's *Bronson*, Kenny Glenaan's *Summer*, Duane Hopkins' *Better Things*, Steven Sheil's *Mum and Dad*, Jeanie Finlay's *Goth Cruise*, Shane Meadows' award-winning *This Is England* and Anton Corbijn's award-winning *Control*.

EM Media has co-financed the first six films from Warp X, the low-budget digital studio including *Bunny & the Bull*, *She*, *A Chinese* and *All Tomorrow's Parties*.

EM Media has also financed games and virtual worlds including the soon to be launched *Space Ark and Hunter's World*, as well as *mixm8*, *Beauty Salon*, *Geon: Emotions*, *Bugs of War*, *Manifest* and *Spell Souls*.

Visit www.em-media.org.uk.

About Leicester Shire Promotions

Leicester Shire Promotions is a private, not-for-profit company formed in July 2003 as a partnership between Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and East Midlands Development Agency. The company is the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) responsible for promoting Leicester and Leicestershire to visitors, based on a coordinated place marketing strategy that focuses on destination leadership and coordination, attracting and visitors, services for and visitors, and services for the tourism industry. For more information, please visit www.goleicestershire.com or follow us on Twitter at http://twitter.com/l_p_l

