

27 June 2011

The Friends of The National Archives present an evening lecture
The Life and Work of Mervyn Peake



The National Archives is marking the centenary of the birth of Mervyn Peake (1911-1968), author of the *Gormenghast* trilogy, with an illustrated talk, *The Life and Work of Mervyn Peake*.

Sponsored by The Friends of The National Archives, the talk will be presented by Sebastian Peake, Mervyn Peake's son and will focus on his father's remarkable life as a prolific writer and artist. There will also be an opportunity to view a display of all 16 original Mervyn Peake wartime artworks held at The National Archives.

Juliette Johnstone, Museum Coordinator said: "*The talk is an opportunity to celebrate the life and work of an extraordinary individual as well as to showcase some of the fascinating original artworks held here*".

The man and his work

During a period of 30 years, Mervyn Peake produced four novels including the *Gormenghast* trilogy and *Mr Pye*, (both of which were later turned into television adaptations), over 250 poems, several short stories and 10 plays. In 2008 *The Times* featured Peake on their list of 'The 50 greatest British writers since 1945'. As an artist, he also created many portraits in a variety of media and illustrated 24 books including *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Treasure Island*. The **National Portrait Gallery**, the **British Library** and the **Imperial War Museum** are among the many institutions that have exhibited Peake's work.

Peake's artworks at The National Archives

During the Second World War, Mervyn Peake came up with a novel idea for a series of artworks – a collection of pictures that Hitler might have produced as an artist. The Ministry of Information bought the work with the intention of publishing propaganda booklets. These however were never produced and 16 of the series were later transferred to The National Archives. This collection of original artworks, held within the record series **INF 3**, has never been published in its entirety or exhibited publically as a whole.

Booking information

The Life and Work of Mervyn Peake

Where: The National Archives, Kew

When: Wednesday 6 July 2011, 6pm

Admission: £5.00 each or £3.00 for Friends of The National Archives and Friends of The Imperial War Museum

To reserve tickets for collection and payment on the night please email:

friends-tna@nationalarchives.gov.uk or telephone +44 (0)20 8876 3444 x 2046

The following books are available from our [bookshop](#) onsite and online:

- *Peake's Progress - Selected Short Stories & Poems* by Mervyn Peake, edited by Maeve Gilmore
- *Mervyn Peake: The Man & His Art*, compiled by Sebastian Peake & Alison Eldred
- *Mervyn Peake's Vast Alchemies: The Illustrated Biography* by G. Peter Winnington

The bookshop will be open during the evening and all attendees will be eligible for 20% discount off Mervyn Peake merchandise.

From 19 July until the end of the year, a selection of the artworks will be exhibited in the free onsite Museum at **The National Archives**.