



ZOG ZOOMS INTO WARWICK CASTLE IN 2021

- Up to 30% off 2021 stays with early bookings made before 31st January



Monday 14 December 2020: Children around the world know and love Zog, created by award-winning author Julia Donaldson and brought to life by Axel Scheffler's irresistible illustrations. From early 2021, the lovable young dragon will be the star of a new 3D interactive trail at Warwick Castle, where guests can also enjoy a unique sleepover in the Castle grounds thanks to an early bird booking offer of up to 30% off stays in 2021*.

Zog will be crash landing at Warwick Castle just in time for the February half-term holidays with a delightful interactive trail and a whole host of activities planned to help children of all ages to learn new skills, just like he did at Dragon School. The trail will be available every day until 5th September, so there's plenty of time over the course of the year to visit and earn a golden star.

While Zog may have struggled to master the essential dragon arts of flying, roaring and breathing fire, he'll apply his new skills to help children with five tasks that mirror his own lessons. Highlights along the trail include soaring over the top of the Castle without actually leaving the ground, testing out the Roar-o-meter to find out whether you're loud enough for a dragon and learning how to capture a princess. Children will collect a stamp for every task they complete. After joining in with the Sir Gadabout Knight Training School as a final challenge, Zog will be there for a meet-and-greet where children can collect golden stars and pose for a souvenir storybook photo.

Tickets to experience the exciting new trail at Warwick Castle are now on sale at www.warwickcastle.com. As there is easily too much to fit into one day, early birds can catch a great deal on short breaks with up to 30% off stays in 2021*. Spend the *knight* in a cosy Woodland Lodge and explore the Castle's towers, ramparts, attractions and spectacular shows during the day. Dine in the Banqueting Hall at the Knight's Village and enjoy themed entertainment.

Working in close collaboration with Magic Light Pictures, the multi-Oscar-nominated and BAFTA award-winning production company behind the animated adaptations, Warwick Castle's trail will enable children to step into Zog's world and live the story for themselves.

The original storybook Zog was published in 2010, and by 2015 it had sold over one million copies with publication in 19 languages. In 2016, the companion book '*Zog and the Flying Doctors*' was published to great acclaim. On Christmas Day 2020 it will be BBC One's flagship children's animation as a companion title to the Zog film first broadcast at Christmas 2018 (also being shown this Christmas Day, on BBC 1 at 11.25am). Tickets to meet Zog and step into his world at the interactive trail make the perfect pairing as an extra gift this Christmas, and a real treat to look forward to later in the year.

Liam Bartlett, Operations Director for Warwick Castle, says: "We're thrilled that Zog is flying in to Warwick Castle - it's going to be roar-some! The interactive trail is great for kids of all ages and supports the key messaging from the storybook itself around tenacity, persistence and rising to the challenge. It's a fantastic addition to the Warwick Castle experience and shows once again why we're a leading attraction for families from across the UK and beyond."

All attractions at Warwick Castle have been organised with guest safety as priority, with compulsory advance booking for timed slots and strict capacity limits to ensure that everyone can socially distance as well as temperature checks on arrival and plentiful sanitising stations.

-Ends-

Note to editors

The Zog interactive trail launches at Warwick Castle from 13 February 2021 and is included with all standard entry tickets and short breaks.

* Early booking offer of up to 30% off 2021 short breaks available for bookings made between 21st December and 31st January 2021.

Zog wasn't the first Donaldson and Scheffler picture book to be adapted for Christmas Day on BBC One – a 27-minute film based on the duo's highly-successful book *The Gruffalo* aired on 25th December in 2009, starring Robbie Coltrane, James Corden, Helena Bonham Carter and Rob Brydon.

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Warwick Castle

Warwick Castle is easily accessible from Junction 15 of the M40, just 40 minutes from Birmingham and 1 hour 40 minutes from London. Warwick Castle is easy to reach by train from London Marylebone in only 86 minutes. The Castle, set in 64 acres of grounds designed by Capability Brown, rests on the banks of the River Avon at the heart of historic Warwick.

About Merlin Entertainments plc

Merlin Entertainments plc is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As Europe's Number 1 and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin now operates over 130 attractions, 19 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 25 countries and across 4 continents. Merlin's purpose is to deliver memorable experiences to its 67 million guests around the world, through its iconic brands and multiple attraction formats, and the commitment and passion of its c.28,000 employees (peak season).

See www.merlinentertainments.biz for more information. Follow on Twitter @MerlinEntsNews.

About Magic Light Pictures

Magic Light Pictures is an award-winning brand-building company with a strong background in production, creating rich and imaginative experiences for families worldwide.

The company, founded in 2003, directly manages production, licensing, global distribution and marketing. The company balances its brand-building work with film making of the highest quality.

Magic Light's key brand is *The Gruffalo*, from the best-selling picture books by author Julia Donaldson and illustrator Axel Scheffler. Magic Light produced the Oscar and BAFTA-nominated half-hour animated films, *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child*, and has sold them to over 180 broadcasters worldwide. Magic Light also runs a cross-category international merchandising programme for *The Gruffalo* brand, with over 80 licensees and hundreds of products that capture the charm of the original books. Magic Light has produced *Room on the Broom*, *Stick Man*, *The Highway Rat*, *Zog*, *The Snail and the Whale* and *Zog and the Flying Doctors* films – which have proved to be award winning half-hour classics that are as loved as *The Gruffalo*.

In 2016 Magic Light produced two half-hours based on Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes*. They were watched by 9.3million viewers and have won numerous awards including a BAFTA for Best Animation.

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