



PENSHURST PLACE AND GARDENS

'The Great Fire' comes to Penshurst Place & Gardens

Kent historic home to feature in major new ITV1 historical drama to be broadcast

at 9pm on Thursday 16th October 2014



The first of a major new four-part historical drama shot at Penshurst Place and Gardens earlier this year is to be shown on ITV1 next week starting on Thursday evening, 16 October at 9pm.

Penshurst Place & Gardens will feature as the setting for the Palace of Whitehall in all four episodes of ***The Great Fire**** with notable actors including **Andrew Buchan, Jack Huston, Rose Leslie, Daniel Mays, Charles Dance, Perdita Weeks, Oliver Jackson-Cohen** and **Antonia Clarke** appearing in the drama filmed at the Kent ancestral home on 12th – 15th March.

Built in 1341 and described as 'the most perfect example of a defended manor house', Penshurst Place regularly attracts film scouts looking for historical architecture and authentic interiors. Used as a film location earlier this year for the historical drama ***Wolf Hall***, to be broadcast in 2015, Penshurst Place has also featured in ***Merlin, The Other Boleyn Girl*** and ***Anne of The Thousand Days*** while the Long Gallery provided the floor creaks to sound recordists from the ***Harry Potter*** film series.

Ben Thomas, General Manager of Penshurst Place says, 'We were delighted when Penshurst Place was chosen as a filming location for this wonderful production. The property has remained remarkably unchanged throughout the centuries and was already more than 300 years old by the time the fire of London occurred.'

Using later additions to the house and gardens as a historical backdrop for The Great Fire provided an authenticity to this wonderful drama that is hard to find.'

The drama tells the story of humble baker Thomas Farriner and his fabled involvement in The Great Fire of London. Andrew Buchan (Broadchurch, Garrow's Law, Nowhere Boy) plays the role of Thomas in the 4 x 60 minute drama, produced by Ecosse Films, and written by successful novelist Tom Bradby, ITN's Political Editor.

Inspired by the historical events of 1666 and with the decadent backdrop of King Charles II's court, The Great Fire focuses on the circumstances which led to the catastrophic fire, Thomas Farriner's family life at the bakery in Pudding Lane, the playboy King's extravagant lifestyle, and Farriner's complex relationship with his fictional sister in law, Sarah played by **Rose Leslie** (Utopia, Game of Thrones, Downton Abbey).

The Great Fire will unfold over four consecutive days as the fire indiscriminately takes hold of the city and the people desperately attempt to overcome the flames. The episodes will capture the most prosperous city of its age as fire rages and engulfs dwellings and businesses like the bakery on Pudding Lane. Terrified and bewildered, the people are thrown into chaos, and with each day they become increasingly desperate to seek safety away from the city.

Douglas Rae, executive producer (along with Lucy Bedford) from Ecosse Films says, "In 1666 London was the greatest city in the world with a population of 300,000. In just four days The Great Fire destroyed nearly half the city and threatened the monarchy. It's a fascinating premise for a drama and creates the perfect backdrop for Tom Bradby to be at his most creative."

Filming took place in Spring 2014 in Kent, Surrey, Oxfordshire and central London, when the sights and sounds of Pudding Lane, the Palace of Whitehall, Pepy's dwelling, Fish Street Hill, Newgate Prison, Moorfields, and the River Thames were recreated for the drama. Pyrotechnics and special effects, as opposed to CGI, were used to create the fire sequences as London burns.

To read more and view a trailer about the making of The Great Fire see

<https://itvstudios.com/programmes/the-great-fire--2>

* Penshurst Place features in the following episodes:

Episode 1 - Whitehall summer garden path, Charles II with James, Duke of York

Episode 1 - Whitehall Gardens - Charles II and Samuel Pepys play Pall Mall

Episode 2 - Whitehall Courtyard - Charles II with James, Duke of York

Episode 2 - Whitehall Summer Garden Path - Charles II, The Queen and Samuel Pepys

Episode 3 - Whitehall Courtyard - James, Duke of York rides out to fight the fire

Episode 4 - Whitehall Courtyard - Charles II rides out



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Episode 4 - Whitehall Formal Gardens - Samuel Pepys enters an almost deserted palace

Episode 4 - Whitehall - Formal Gardens - Samuel Pepys and Thomas Farriner hurry through empty gardens

Episode 4 - Whitehall Gates - Thomas and Sarah fall into each others arms

About The Great Fire - casting and production notes

Andrew Buchan (Broadchurch, Garrow's Law, Nowhere Boy) plays in the role of Thomas Farriner. Jack Huston (American Hustle, Boardwalk Empire, Parade's End) plays the role of King Charles II and Diarist Samuel Pepys, a close confidante of the King who dared to tell him "he was consumed by the pursuit of pleasure", is portrayed by Daniel Mays (Mrs Biggs, Treasure Island, Public Enemies). Pepys wife Elizabeth is played by Perdita Weeks (The Invisible Woman, Flight of the Storks).

Also starring is Oliver Jackson-Cohen (Dracula, Mr Selfridge, World Without End) as the King's brother, James Duke of York, Andrew Tiernan (Ripper Street, Foyle's War, Prisoner's Wives) as prisoner Vincent, a forgotten soul languishing in Newgate prison, and Antonia Clarke (Lightfields, A Mother's Son) as Frances Stewart who famously captured the King's heart.

Other key roles include Lord Denton, an emissary of the King's, played by Charles Dance (Game of Thrones, Secret State, Strike Back) whilst the Duke of Hanford, the most powerful Catholic nobleman in the land is played by David Schofield (Da Vinci's Demons, Land Girls, The Shadow Line) and Sonya Cassidy (Vera, The Paradise, Endeavour) stars as The Queen.

Douglas Rae (Fleming, Mistresses, My Boy Jack) and Lucy Bedford (Mistresses, All About George, Lie with Me) are the executive producers for Ecosse Films. The producer is Gina Cronk (The White Queen, Tracy Beaker Returns, Wolfblood) and the director is Jon Jones (Lawless, Rogue, Mr Selfridge).

Tom Bradby (Shadow Dancer – film/novel, Blood Money, The God of Chaos - novels) writes the first three episodes whilst episode four is co-written by Tom Bradby, Chris Hurford (Doc Martin, Ashes to Ashes) and Tom Butterworth (Doc Martin, Ashes to Ashes).

ITV Studios Global Entertainment will distribute The Great Fire worldwide.