

Dear Friends,

Since the launch of our campaign in autumn 2008, we have received responses from people all over the world, and we would like to express our thanks to everyone for their support. We would particularly like to thank Kathy Murrell for organising a very successful fundraising evening last July. The event, which took place in a kind friend's private home in Blackheath, featured readings by our patron Prunella Scales and her husband Timothy West, to whom we also extend heartfelt thanks.

The historic ties between politics and literature are as strong as ever in the former Soviet Union, and as the latest political power battle unfolds in Ukraine prior to presidential elections in January, the staff at the Chekhov House-Museum in Yalta are pinning their hopes on a change of government. The Museum is still very much at the mercy of the Ukrainian authorities, and its bureaucratic obstructions in particular. A brief article about our campaign appeared last year in *Icon*, the newsletter of the Institute for Conservation, prompting much-appreciated offers of help from specialists. Unfortunately, however, the Crimean Ministry of Culture diverted the Museum's request to engage the services of foreign conservators to Kiev: the Museum staff are still waiting for a reply.

In April, an attempt was made to privatize part of Chekhov's dacha at Gurzuf, which is located a few miles from Yalta. Only through the efforts of the House-Museum's director, Alla Golovacheva, and international attention was the threat averted. Bureaucratic obstacles also mean that we can no longer raise money for minor repairs at the house. All our energies are therefore now concentrated on raising the full sum required to complete urgent repairs to the exterior of the house, which includes repairs to the facade, fire protection measures, masonry and painting work, repairs to the terrace, balcony strengthening, repairs to the stairs and drainage work. Due to inflation, the original estimate for exterior repairs, based on the survey done in January 2009 by the conservation institute in Simferopol, now stands at €44 000. This does not include provision for any of the renovation work needed in the garden, or the annexe, which is also in serious need of renovation.

Events for 2010:

A Jubilee for Chekhov, 18 – 23 January 2010

A week of special Chekhov Events at the Hampstead Theatre to celebrate his 150th birthday, featuring readings and discussions by noted actors and writers. Further details available on our website.

Anniversary Tour to Yalta, 26 - 31 May 2010

Together with Exeter International, the Anton Chekhov Foundation invites you to come on a specially designed anniversary tour of Chekhov's Ukraine in May 2006, which will be led by Rosamund Bartlett. The chief destination is, of course, Yalta and its environs.

For more details, please, refer to www.exeterinternational.co.uk/chekhov.html.

We will post other Chekhov events on our website when we become aware of them. If you are holding an anniversary event of your own, please let us know, so that we can advertise it.

We hope we may look forward to celebrating Chekhov's anniversary with you in 2010!

Rosamund, Elena, Alexander

