Goodness gracious, Emil in Lönneberga is 50 years old!

Emil in Lönneberga may never grow older than around 5-6 years, but it is actually 50 years since Astrid Lindgren's first book about the lovable little rascal was published. Next to Pippi Longstocking Emil may be Lindgren's most instantly recognisable creation. Today more than 35 million copies of the Emil books have been sold, in 52 different languages! Usually featuring the marvellous original illustrations by Björn Berg.

“There is little doubt that Emil was the literary child closest to her own heart”, says Karin Nyman, Astrid Lindgren’s daughter. “Creating Emil allowed my mother to revisit the people and environments of her childhood Småland”.

Following the mischief makers official birthday on May 23rd the celebrations will continue all year long. On May 25th Skansen, Stockholm’s popular open air museum, will throw a birthday party with plenty of games, theatre, market activities, cakes and naughtiness.

On June 16th Astrid Lindgren’s World, the award winning theme park, opens its new setting Katthult, which occupies an area of 22,000 square metres.

“The 95 million SEK we are investing in the new Katthult area is the biggest investment we have ever made,” says Mikael Ahlerup, MD, Astrid Lindgren’s World. “In our attempts to bring stories to life, it feels important to be able to show a farm and the Småland farmers’ countryside, the way it looked in Emil’s day and when Astrid Lindgren grew up”, continues Mikael Ahlerup. “It feels important, not least today, when many children grow up in a town environment and may not go to the country very often.”

Christmas 2013 will see the Nordic theatrical premiere of the new animated family feature film THAT BOY EMIL, directed by critically acclaimed Per Åhlin, previously behind classic Swedish films as KARL BERTIL JONSSONS JULAFTON and DUNDERKLUMPEN. The film is produced by Lars Blomgren at Filmstance International, the production company behind the internationally successful tv-series THE BRIDGE (BAFTA-nominated), in co-production with PennFilm, Saltkråkan, Bildmakarna Berg, SVT, Svensk Filmindustri and ZDF and is supported by The Swedish FilmInstitute and Nordic Film and TV Fund.

“Not just anyone is capable of transferring Björn Berg’s pictures to animated film, and we deeply appreciate the care that the filmmakers take with every image”, says Maja Berg Lindelöw, MD at Bildmakarna Berg and daughter of illustrator Björn Berg.

Meanwhile Svensk Film AB is set to re-launch the digitally restored live-action feature films from the 70’s. The live-action films had close to 3 million admissions in the Nordics and have to date sold over 1 million DVDs.

International publishers are joining Swedish publisher Rabén & Sjögren in celebrating Emil, with new lavish anniversary editions available in bookstores. The year will also see a number of exhibitions based around Emil in Stockholm, Vimmerby, Mora and Berlin.

In addition to Saltkråkan and Bildmakarna Berg, who are responsible for the copyright of the character and the illustrations of Emil, the anniversary partners include Rabén & Sjögren, Astrid Lindgren’s World, Micki Leksaker, Svensk Filmindustri, Årytrays and Rörstrand.
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“You can’t plan mischief,” said Emil, “it just happens.” And you don’t know it is mischief until it has happened.” EMIL’S LITTLE SISTER, 1982