



MEDIA RELEASE

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THE SATURDAYS LIGHT UP OXFORD STREET AS CHRISTMAS KICKS OFF IN THE WEST END

Tuesday 1 November 2011

On Tuesday, 1 November at 6.18pm, the world-famous Oxford Street Christmas lights were switched on in front of Marks & Spencer's Marble Arch store by chart topping girl-group, **The Saturdays**. Following in the footsteps of **Leona Lewis, Westlife, The Sugababes and the Spice Girls**, 10,000 West End shoppers descended onto Oxford Street to watch Christmas officially unveiled in the West End.

Despite decorations being on sale across London since July, the festive season only really kicks off when the world famous Oxford Street Christmas Lights are turned on. An event now in its 52nd year, and funded by over 200 Oxford Street retailers, the switch-on was presented by Heart 106.2's Toby Anstis. A whole raft of entertainment included performances from sister-duo, The Pierces, and the cast of GHOST The Musical.

Jace Tyrrell of New West End Company the organisers of the event says, "The countdown is on and with 54 shopping days until Christmas day. Oxford Street is set attract millions of visitors over the next eight weeks and the 200 flagship stores will be pulling out all the stops to ensure that visitors get the most out of their time in the West End."





This year's mile long scheme has been designed and installed by Piggots, a 200-year old British company that has been providing innovative street decorations to the West End since the 1950's. Including ten shooting stars, the scheme is made up of 210,000 carbon neutral LED bulbs which use 75% less energy than conventional bulbs.

Steve Rowe, Director of Retail M&S, says, "Turning on the Oxford Street Christmas Lights marks the start of the festive season, and M&S was really proud to be hosting this year's celebrations – it's been a spectacular experience."

Mollie King of The Saturdays, says; "For us Christmas is all about shopping on Oxford Street. This is such an exciting event for us to be part of!"

Cllr Colin Barrow, Westminster City Council Leader, says: "We are delighted to be a big supporter in getting this seasonal tourist attraction up and running every year. Business in the capital always benefits from an influx of tourists and keen shoppers who are eager to get into the Christmas spirit – and we hope this year will be no different.

"Westminster council is committed to ensuring that businesses can get the best out of the city and, importantly, out of its millions of visitors."

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

More Information on New West End Company:

New West End Company is a company dedicated to driving forward London's West End as the world's top shopping destination. It is supported and run by major retailers and property owners in Bond Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street.

New West End Company ensures the ongoing commercial success of the area by promoting the district, delivering street management services and funding public realm projects to improve the shopping





environment. It is a leading partner in the biggest regeneration programme of London's West End in its history. Find out more at www.newwestend.com

London's West End is the world's top shopping destination, with a world-class mix of 600 shops, 40 renowned theatres, 30 museums and galleries, 17 Michelin star restaurants and 7 tranquil green spaces.

There are 200 million visits to London's West End each year. Of these visitors 25% are from overseas and a further 21% are from outside of London.

