

DAILY VARIETY

February 12, 2009

L.A. preps BritWeek

By **BOBBIE WHITEMAN**

BritWeek, the 17-day celebration of Blighty's connection with California, will hit Los Angeles April 21.

The packed program includes a BAFTA/LA comedy festival, a filmmakers forum for industryites from L.A. and the U.K. working in each others' countries, plus fashion and food events as well as a celebrity soccer match pitting Brits against the rest of the world and an England vs. Australia cricket match.

Now in its third year, the event kicks off with a gala dinner honoring former prime minister Tony Blair and benefiting Malaria No More, BritWeek's charity for 2009, which works to protect children in Africa from the deadly disease.

"We Brits love Los Angeles and we believe in it," BritWeek co-founder Nigel Lythgoe said.

"Times are tough, but we are here to stay and in a big way. BritWeek carries a serious message wrapped in a wonderful celebration."

British Consul General Bob Peirce, who chairs BritWeek and will host a VIP reception, added that the event had grown quickly "because there is so much to celebrate in the British relationship with Southern California. We are the biggest foreign investors, our luxury brands from cars to clothes are part of the lifestyle, and our entertainers are right at the top in television, film and music."

Go to Britweek.org to check out the events.