

the reading agency

Reading Partners 2010 Highlights

Building word of mouth through reading groups

A lot of Reading Partners' work is with the growing network of Readers' Groups. They are proving a very effective way of publishers getting direct reader input, reviews and feedback to inform their planning for joint reading promotions.

New Thinking from Faber is a campaign focusing on the content from their non-fiction list. It will encompass six key areas of their non-fiction publishing. Reading Partners is involving libraries in 3 ways:

- **Setting up specialist reading groups** to read and review books. The specialist reading group members will act as champions for their chosen books, helping to generate interest amongst other readers.
- **New Thinking Theme of the Month:** Faber will allocate a theme to a month for six months and will produce posters, bookmarks, leaflets and shelf-talkers for a nationwide library promotion. These would be used by libraries to build interest and persuade reading groups try some of the titles.
- **Themed Events:** Reading Partners will help to organize six themed events in libraries with established links with universities around the theme of the month.

Hodder - Inspired by an article in The New York Times, **Natasha Solomons** is trying to break the world record for most events done in a year! Natasha's debut novel *Mr Rosenblum's List* is a rather lovely celebration of all things English and especially the countryside. We are helping to make the book a success by getting all library authorities in the South West region behind this initiative. Natasha will give a short talk about the inspirations for the book (with some pictures), discuss the writing process, or simply drink tea and have a chat.

In an exciting new partnership, we are delighted to be working with **Asia House** to promote a greater understanding of Asian cultures through literature. We are offering 6 London-based reading groups an opportunity to read and review a title that was featured at the Asia House Literature Festival in May. The reader intelligence gathered will be used by editorial and marketing.

Penguin - In an **exclusive promotion** involving 50 libraries, over 500 readers will read and review *The Help* by **Kathryn Stockett**. *The Help* is about how women, whether they are mothers or daughters, the help or the boss, relate to each other. It's about the emotions of domestic life: pride, competition on the cooking and home front. Participating libraries received free sets to read and talk about, posters and downloadable reading guides.

"A huge THANK YOU to Penguin for sending me 10 free copies of 'The Help' by Kathryn Stockett. Our reading group that meets in the library called the 'MK Borrowers' were the first reading group to discuss this book. It generated a fantastic discussion, and I was amazed to find that everybody voted that they would recommend it to others. (I'm not sure this has ever happened before in the five years that we have been going!) I went round telling everyone at work that they must read it. We added the set of books to our reading group collection of stock, and it is now with the 'Reading Supremes' reading group who will discuss it next month. I'm sure this is one title that will be booked up well into 2011! Thank you very much. I appreciate the publisher's generosity. The photos of the display, reading group and reviews will be appear on our facebook page." **Catherine While, Librarian, Milton Keynes.**

Themed panel events reaching new audiences

Headline will be publishing *What's Your Bright Idea?* by **Tim Campbell**, winner of the first UK series of *The Apprentice*. Business City Library and Crawley Library will host a workshop-style event, including different sessions on how to get a business off the ground and online starter tips. Tim will provide inspiration as well as practical advice. Aimed at 16–30 year olds, it will appeal not only to graduates, but to those looking to pursue a new career path. In the current economic climate, this is the ideal time to provide readers with a forum to discuss business ideas, and to introduce them to authors who can offer expert advice.

Headline Historical Fiction themed events involving three debut historical novelists who will talk about the enduring appeal of historical fiction and how they breathe life into their chosen periods.

Little Brown, Pan Macmillan and Transworld publishers will be planning a series of **Girls' Night In** events in major city libraries across the UK. The hugely popular format is an ideal way of programming two or three commercial women's fiction writers, which appeal to intergenerational audiences. We will encourage libraries to get local businesses involved such as, beauty salons offering manicures, local chocolate shops, clothes shops and jewellery designers, to make it truly a Girls Night In and the antidote to all of the men watching the World Cup!

Headline Crime Panel events - The first is a **true crime** panel event with four authors who will talk about the glitz and grit of the real life crime world – from cops and robbers, to the truth about life behind bars to the real life story of one the biggest heists in history. The second is **spies, surveillance and politics** panel event talking about the world of modern espionage from the Cold War to the war on terror, as well as politics and international affairs.

Mills & Boon's search for fresh writing talent begins this June. The romance publisher will be working with libraries to host a series of creative writing workshops. Selected authors will run these workshops with the aim of teaching creative writing groups and individuals how to write a Mills & Boon romance, as well as encouraging writers to take part in Mills & Boon's nationwide search to discover a new writing talent.

Penguin is 75 years old this year and we have big plans to celebrate in style! Penguin have published the Decades list – 5 of the best books from every decade from the 50s to the 80s totally repackaged and designed. We are planning a 'Decade Read Off' between 2 pairs of rival cities, using the Decades series. Two pairs of UK cities will represent each decade and libraries will become the driving force in the four cities to engage people to read the 5 books. These people will then interact in a shared dialogue on why their decade is the best for literature, and how it made a difference. The idea is that each city reads the 5 books communally and then representatives from each meet and debate the merits of one decade against the other in a town hall or mutual meeting place. We will capture this discussion online and on local radio. The Decade Read Offs will be backed by a huge media (national, regional and local) campaign to get all reading groups and the general public excited about their decade.

Transworld 'The Serial Thrillers' - Transworld have assembled a great selection of crime authors, dubbed '*The Serial Thrillers*'. Four libraries will be hosting these crime themed events with authors: Belinda Bauer, Sean Black, S.J. Bolton, Tom Cain, Christopher Fowler and John Macken. Transworld will support the events with showcards, flyers and local publicity.