

14 April 2008

Major publishers launch cross-country library-author programme for National Year of Reading

A huge *Reader Meets Writer* programme including some of the UK's best-known authors and covering all of the 149 library authorities in England will be announced on 15 April 2008 at the London Book Fair.

The programme is part of the National Year of Reading, and has been created by Reading Partners, the partnership consortium which is transforming the way public libraries and adult publishers work together.

- 50 high profile author events will take place in library venues across the country. Kate Mosse will be in Lambeth, Derbyshire and Sutton; Hanif Kureishi appears in Leicester; Iain Banks in Gateshead, Alexander McCall Smith in Warwickshire, Mavis Cheek in Kent and Cumbria and Clare Francis in Brighton. (For more information visit: www.yearofreading.org.uk.)
- Every library authority in England will be paired with a local author, covering major cities and far-flung locations alike.

„This programme ushers in a new era. Publishers now understand the importance of libraries' grassroots contact with local readers, and that they can attract huge audiences for author events. In the National Year of Reading publishers are committing to pushing things forward in a big way and to drawing a new map of reader/writer contact,“ says Miranda McKearney, Director of The Reading Agency.

Local author pairings

- The 149 authors and libraries will be working together in very different ways. Some will hold a one-off event, whilst others will develop ongoing residency relationships throughout the National Year of Reading with a range of activities.
- Many will help with the National Year of Reading's library membership campaign, which launches at the end of April and includes *Join Your Library Day* on 26 April.

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- To help libraries with planning for the *Reader Meets Writer* programme, The Reading Agency is launching a toolkit for library staff at the London Book Fair. This has ideas for author events of all kinds, such as *Girls Night In*, *Book Idol*, or *Authors On The Day's News*. The toolkit advises on devising an event based on the type of author and audience, and gives tips to help libraries, authors and publishers get what they want from an event.

A building partnership

- Reading Partner publishers are offering book trailers for plasma screen in libraries, designing author promotions exclusive to libraries and distributing sample chapters from first authors to library linked reading groups.

Reading Partners' ambitious *Reader Meets Writer* programme shows the exciting, interactive reading service that public libraries can offer when working with partners like the book trade. Publishers now see libraries as key places to connect readers to writers in innovative and productive ways.

Reading Partners is led by The Reading Agency, the independent charity working to get more reading to more people. It involves the whole UK public library network and ten major publishers: Bloomsbury, Faber, Hachette Livre, HarperCollins, Harlequin Mills and Boon, Little Brown, Pan MacMillan, Penguin Random House and the Independent Publishers' Guild.

As the *Reader Meets Writer* programme is announced, Reading Partners are also releasing a report on activity in 2007. It shows a building momentum to connect readers to writers through libraries. 80 events were tracked; they generated total audiences of 7,200 and book sales of £25,600. For example, Sophie Kinsella in Birmingham and Constance Briscoe in Newham reached huge and very diverse audiences. 450 people went to an Armistead Maupin event in Liverpool, and Glasgow's library event with Christopher Brookmyre was described as the author's best book launch to date. Librarians generated new teenage audiences for Nick Hornby's new book, and a library tour by Jeffery Deaver delivered far bigger audiences and book sales than bookshop events. In addition to such events, both tracked and untracked, libraries are increasingly contacting Reading Partners publishers directly about promotions they offer via a rolling Reading Partners calendar.

- The author/reader toolkit and 2007 Reading Partners report are available via The Reading Agency's website: www.readingagency.org.uk or by contacting Sandeep Mahal: sandeep.mahal@readingagency.org.uk or 0871 223 2042.

For more information please contact Debbie Hyde
020 7921 4310 or 07956 320 486
debbie.hyde@oasismedia.co.uk

Notes to editors

- The high profile authors taking part in library Year of Reading events include : Simon Armitage, Iain Banks, Paul Barber, Mavis Cheek, John Connolly, Bernadine Evaristo, Clare Francis, Patrick Gale, Mike Gayle, Linda Grant, Alex Gray, Moshin Hamid, Joanne Harris, Peter James, Lloyd Jones, Hanif Kureishi, Nikita Lalwani, Penelope Lively, Kathy Lette, Kate Long, Alexander McCall Smith, Andrew Millar, Kate Mosse, JoJo Moyes, John O'Farrell, Adele Parks, Jodi Picoult, Rose Prince, Laurence Rees and Sathnam Sanghera. More details about these events, together with a list of the authors paired with the 149 English library authorities are available from Sandeep Mahal: sandeep.mahal@readingagency.org.uk or 0871 223 2042. They will both also be available shortly on The Reading Agency's website.
- For more general information about The Reading Agency and its work, please visit: www.readingagency.org.uk
- The 2008 National Year of Reading is a year-long celebration of reading in all its forms. It aims to build a greater national passion for reading . for children, families and adult learners alike. The Year will encourage people to read in businesses, homes and communities around the country, providing new opportunities to read and helping people to access help and support through schools and libraries. To get involved and sign up to National Year of Reading activities in your area, log on to: www.yearofreading.org.uk

It's time to stop reading. It's time to get someone else to start.