

## PLR LAUNCHES NEW ADVOCACY BOOKLET INVITING WRITERS TO TALK



Today sees the launch of a new PLR advocacy booklet, *Writers Talk*, with contributions from some of the UK's top writers and journalists.

The PLR Act of 1979 gives authors a legal right to receive payment from government for loans of their books from public libraries.

*"For nearly 30 years the PLR scheme has supported authors,"* explains PLR Registrar, Jim Parker. *"We are one of the rights that authors hold and hold very dear. When you consider that a typical writer earns 33% less than the national average wage, you begin to understand why remuneration from PLR, together with copyright and intellectual property rights, form such a vital part of authors' core income."*

*Writers' Talk* includes a review by the Registrar of the main PLR developments over the last year. It also features the views of authors from a recent survey on how the scheme is working, together with interesting evidence from an Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS) survey of authors' earnings, and the recently published report on the value of the creative industries commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Writers who talk include award winning crime novelist and scriptwriter, Simon Brett, who is PLR Advisory Committee chair and contributes the foreword.

No new booklet on the value of PLR and authors' rights would be complete without a contribution from Maureen Duffy. A poet, novelist and literary biographer, Duffy has campaigned tirelessly for authors' rights for four decades and was instrumental in the setting up of both PLR and ALCS. She takes us through the history of UK authors' rights over the last 300 years.

Publishing commentator and journalist, Danuta Kean, explores the daunting reality of becoming a published writer and gives us a somewhat depressing overview of the economics of writing, publishing and retail.

And as writers face digitisation, Barry Turner, PLR Advisory Committee member, writer and chair of the National Academy of Writing, looks at the opportunities and challenges for both PLR and writers in this fast moving environment.

*"Things have changed a great deal for writers over the last three decades,"* comments Advisory Committee chair, Simon Brett. *"The PLR scheme and other systems by which rightsholders are remunerated for the use of their works need to be able to adapt to these changes to ensure a fair return for authors. Our creative industries are booming thanks in a large part to our writers – where would we be without them?"*

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**Continued...**



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*Writers Talk* is also available on the PLR website ([www.plr.uk.com](http://www.plr.uk.com)). Printed copies can be ordered from the PLR office – please contact Susan Ridge above.

## **Editors' Notes**

1. PLR was established by Act of Parliament in 1979. It gives authors the legal right to receive remuneration from government for the public's use of their work through the public library system.
2. PLR is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). PLR's funding from DCMS stood at £7.65 million for 2006/7.
3. In February 2007 - relating to book loans during the period July 2005-June 2006 - PLR distributed £6.81 million to 23,866 authors at a record rate per loan of 5.98 pence.
4. Authors are eligible for payment if their PLR earnings reach a minimum of £1. There is a maximum payment threshold of £6,600 for the top-lending authors. 262 authors received the maximum payment in February 2007.
5. Since its inception in 1979, PLR has distributed over £101 million to authors.
6. Author Simon Brett is currently Chair of the PLR Advisory Committee. Previous chairs have included writers Clare Francis and Michael Holroyd.
7. Authors living in other European Union countries also qualify for payment from the UK scheme for loans of their books from public libraries in the UK. Authors living in Ireland are the principal beneficiaries. British authors currently qualify for payment from PLR schemes in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.