

11 February 2005



## 'BORROWERS RECOMMEND'

### READING PROMOTION EXPERIMENTS WITH NEW BOOK MARKETING APPROACH

*"Working with public libraries offers publishers a new way of marketing books, reaching out directly to a ready made audience of book lovers to whom we've not spoken before. We've discovered (and it seems so obvious now!) that not only are library users receptive to our wonderful books, but they are also happy to be seduced by the new, fresh voices at work today. Although loyal to established writers, library borrowers are also willing to try the unfamiliar and experiment with a vast range of great writing"* **Joanna Prior, Penguin**

This February a new book promotion hits libraries across the UK. **Borrowers Recommend** comes from a consortium of publishers and libraries called **Reading Partners**. The consortium aims to revolutionise the way the two sectors to work together, exploring how to market books differently, amplify the reader's voice and expand the audience for reading.

*Borrowers Recommend* capitalizes on the eclectic tastes of the great reading public. As complaints multiply against the homogenization of the book trade – the same books promoted at the front of all bookshops; the bestseller lists dominated by a familiar role-call of brand name writers - this is a promotion that draws on the reading experience of the voracious book borrowers of the nation. Using data provided by Public Lending Right, *Borrowers Recommend* is selection of 21 books that have been enjoyed by readers in the UK last year.

The launch of **Borrowers Recommend** coincides with Public Lending Right's announcement of the nation's book borrowing figures for 2003-04. Chosen by a group of publishers and reader development workers, the books represent some of the best issuing titles by emerging writers highlighted by the PLR figures. All of the books have been borrowed in their thousands. The 21 books (listed below) offer a broad range of reading. From the SAS thriller, to current affairs and love affairs; from mystery to history, from chick lit to lad lit and lit fic, *Borrowers Recommend* aims to suit all tastes – and perhaps challenge some preconceptions.

*"It's time to stop artificially classifying readers as either borrowers or buyers,"* says Miranda McKearney of The Reading Agency, who chairs Reading Partners. *"Bookshops and libraries are all part of the same reading universe and it's in all our interests to work more closely with readers, and with each other. Borrowers Recommend celebrates and builds authority for libraries' powerful contact with readers"*.

The experimental 2005 promotion is a pilot taken up by over half the UK's 208 library authorities. In 2006 Reading Partners hopes to take *Borrowers Recommend* into the book trade, promoting both emerging writers and the role libraries play to high street book buyers, responding directly to the correlation between book buying and borrowing highlighted in the 2000 research, *Reading the Situation*. The promotion will be an annual event in libraries.

**Reading Partners** is a two-year pilot, led by the Reading Agency, and involving seven leading UK publishers: Bloomsbury, Faber, HarperCollins, Harlequin Mills & Boon, Penguin, Random House and Time Warner.

*"'Borrowers Recommend' is the first outward and visible sign of the new working partnership between publishers and libraries which acknowledges our common aim of promoting reading and good books. The campaign is loud, and it's visible, and I hope very much that it is just the start of a constructive and fruitful 4-cornered working relationship between libraries, bookshops, readers and publishers"*. **Clare Harington, Random House**

Ends/11/02/05

## Editors' Notes

1. "Borrowers Recommend" includes the following titles and authors:

<i>The Future Homemakers of America</i>	Laurie Graham
<i>After Ever After</i>	Rowan Coleman
<i>Don't Look Back</i>	Karin Fossum
<i>Rumours of War</i>	Allan Mallinson
<i>The Soul Catcher</i>	Alex Kava
<i>City Cinderella</i>	Catherine George
<i>A Very Unusual Governess</i>	Sylvia Andrew
<i>The Hostage</i>	Duncan Falconer
<i>Don't Even Think About It</i>	Lauren Henderson
<i>Lazy Ways to Make A Living</i>	Abigail Bosanko
<i>Story of My Father</i>	Sue Miller
<i>If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things</i>	Jon McGregor
<i>Aberystwyth Mon Amour</i>	Malcolm Pryce
<i>Rifles</i>	Mark Urban
<i>A Married Woman</i>	Manju Kapur
<i>Bunker 13</i>	Aniruddha Bahal
<i>Spencer's List</i>	Lissa Evans
<i>The White Stuff</i>	Simon Armitage
<i>Revolution Day</i>	Rageh Omaar
<i>The Speckled People</i>	Hugo Hamilton
<i>One Last Breath</i>	Stephen Booth
2. The Reading Agency is a development agency working to revolutionise the way libraries work with readers and partners. It has created the **Reading Partners** consortium as part of a drive to create a more vibrant reading scene in libraries. Some of the funding for the work has come from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, as part of the action plan to drive forward the government's new library strategy, Framework for the Future.
3. Public Lending Right announces the nation's most borrowed authors and books on Friday, 11 February. Media contact: for further information please call Becca Wyatt or Caroline Sanderson (contact details above). Details are also available at [www.plr.uk.com](http://www.plr.uk.com)

PLR was established by an 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 service. Since 1979 PLR has distributed £89 million to the nation's authors and rights-holders. In 2005 (relating to book loans between July 2003 & June 2004) PLR will distribute £6.55 million to 18,686 authors at a record rate per loan of 5.26 pence.

