

6 February 2009

## **JAMES PATTERSON IS UK'S MOST BORROWED AUTHOR**

### **With Over 1.5 Million Library Loans**

Prolific US writer James Patterson has retained his position as the UK's most borrowed author for a second year. According to the latest annual figures on library lending released by Public Lending Right (PLR) today, titles by James Patterson were lent over 1.5 million times between July 2007 and June 2008. He is one of only four writers to clock up over a million loans this year.

Commenting on today's announcement, James Patterson says:

*"I'm absolutely delighted to be the most borrowed author in UK libraries for the second year running. I've done much work here in the US with the National Library Association and firmly believe libraries are an integral part of any community and essential in really helping to share and to spread the joy of reading great books. It's great to know my stories are so popular with the UK audience and hope library borrowers look forward to being thoroughly entertained in 2009."*

Former advertising executive James Patterson is the author of over fifty novels, and with the help of co-writers now produces up to eight books each year. Described in a *Time* magazine profile as the 'man who can't miss', his pacey novels have sold over 150 million copies worldwide. Perhaps best known for his books featuring black homicide detective and single father Alex Cross, Patterson is also the creator of a series for young adults entitled *Daniel X*. Passionate about getting boys hooked on books from a young age, James Patterson will make a rare visit to the UK from 20-24 April 2009 to launch his Extreme Reading Challenge, an initiative designed to encourage dads and male carers to read with their children.

Aside from previous champion lender Jacqueline Wilson who takes 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Patterson's nearest adult fiction rivals are novelists Nora Roberts (4<sup>th</sup>), Josephine Cox (7<sup>th</sup>) and Danielle Steel (8<sup>th</sup>).

Children's, young adult and educational books represent around 30% of all books borrowed nationally, and the PLR data reflects this, with six children's writers in the Top 10. They are Jacqueline Wilson (2<sup>nd</sup>); Daisy Meadows, creator of the Rainbow Magic series (3<sup>rd</sup>); Francesca Simon, creator of Horrid Henry (5<sup>th</sup>); Mick Inkpen (6<sup>th</sup>); Janet & Allan Ahlberg (9<sup>th</sup>) and Ian Whybrow (10<sup>th</sup>).

The Number One most popular individual title overall is JK Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. The popularity of Richard & Judy's Book Club recommendations is also clear as they take five places in the UK Top 10. In second place behind *Harry Potter* is Kate Morton's *The House at Riverton* followed by *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards (3<sup>rd</sup>); *Relentless* by Simon Kernick (4<sup>th</sup>); *The Other Side of the Bridge* by Mary Lawson (5<sup>th</sup>) and *The Savage Garden* by Mark Mills (8<sup>th</sup>).

### **1979-2009: PLR Celebrates 30 Years**

Over the last three decades writers have become increasingly dependent on their annual PLR payments and in spite of reduced funding in 2008, PLR has managed to maintain this year's rate per loan at 5.98 pence.

It is no surprise that PLR is so important to authors. As the price of books has dropped on the high street, the average writer has seen both advances and royalties dwindle. By 2007 the average writer's earnings had dropped to less than 25% of the national average wage with the top 10% of writers earning more than 50% of the total income available to writers. PLR is a source of income that writers do not share with publishers or agents; it does not discriminate according to sales figures or celebrity status. Its principles have not changed in 30 years, and the income it provides for writers is needed now more than ever.

## **Analysis of National Reading Trends**

PLR's sophisticated data analysis system (LEWIS) offers public libraries a vital tool to support effective and efficient business decisions. The data is also potentially relevant to other cultural sector decision-makers, the reading industries and publishers. The analysis gives a comprehensive picture of national reading trends, changes in our national and regional reading habits and a fascinating insight into our preferences, pastimes and obsessions.

**Ends/06/02/09**

### **Media contacts - for further information please call:**

Becca Wyatt on 01403 780383 email: [rebecca.wyatt@virgin.net](mailto:rebecca.wyatt@virgin.net)

(Mobile out of hours contact: Becca Wyatt on 07801 061 420)

Caroline Sanderson on 01453 759889 email: [carosande@aol.com](mailto:carosande@aol.com)

Or Susan Ridge at the Public Lending Right office on 01642 604699

### **Editors' Notes**

1. 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 system.
2. PLR is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Funding for 2008/09 stands at £7.43 million. Following the government's recent Comprehensive Spending Review, PLR's funding for 2008-11 is as follows: 2008/09 (£7.43 million), 2009/10 (£7.58 million) and 2010/11 (£7.68 million).
3. The UK writing economy: a typical writer has seen their income drop by £3000 pa since 2000; a typical writer earns 33% less than the national average wage; the top 10% of writers earn 50% of total income (cf other equally skilled professions where the bottom 50% earn almost 40% of total income); nearly 80% of authors need a second job to survive; in 2004 the publishing industry exports contributed £1.5 billion to the economy; the creative industries currently contribute 8% of GDP. (Source: ALCS *What Are Words Worth?* & the DCMS commissioned report *Staying Ahead the Economic Performance of the UK's Creative Industries*)
4. In February 2009 - relating to book loans during the period July 2007-June 2008 - PLR is distributing £6.63 million to 23,773 authors at a rate per loan of 5.98 pence.
5. 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. This year 232 authors will receive the maximum payment. In a recent survey of PLR's top earners, 80% specified that their annual PLR payment is core to their income.

6. Since its inception in 1979, PLR has distributed over £113 million to authors.
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 France, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. Payments are distributed by the Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS).
8. James Patterson's *Daniel X* is his new young adult series [www.daniel-x.co.uk](http://www.daniel-x.co.uk)
9. The James Patterson Extreme Reading Challenge is part of Reading Champions, an initiative delivered by the National Literacy Trust on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families. It uses the motivational power of male reading role models to inspire other boys and men to read more. See [www.readingchampions.org.uk](http://www.readingchampions.org.uk). The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that changes lives through literacy. See [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk).

