

6 February 2009

30 'PEARLS' ABOUT PLR

Did you know that.....?

THE ACT

1. There were eight attempts to pass a PLR Bill over a 28 year period. At the ninth attempt in 1979 PLR finally entered the statute books.
2. Michael Foot regarded the PLR Act as his greatest political achievement. It was the last bill the Labour government passed before being defeated by the Conservatives in 1979 under Mrs Thatcher.

THE REGISTRAR

3. Under the 1979 PLR Act, the Registrar of PLR has the legal status of a '*corporation sole*'. Others who hold this legal status include the Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury.
4. PLR has only had two Registrars since its inception – John Sumsion, formerly Sales Director with K Shoes; Dr James Parker, formerly employed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission where he had responsibility for the National Register of Archives.

PLR: WORLDWIDE

5. The first recorded reference to PLR for authors was in 1918 when a Danish writer asked for 5 Danish öre for each time her books were lent out.
6. The first country to set up a PLR system was Denmark in 1946.
7. 28 countries have PLR systems internationally, including Israel, Greenland and Luxembourg.

PLR: EUROPE

8. Under European law every EU Member State must set up a PLR scheme: currently 20 have taken this step, leaving seven states still to act.
9. European authors whose books are borrowed from public libraries in the UK qualify for payment. The Austrian, French, German and Dutch PLR systems reciprocate with payments to British authors.

FACTS & FIGURES

10. PLR collects loans data from over 1,000 UK public library branches each year on which to base its payment calculations.
11. If a registered author loses touch with PLR, payments will be held for up to six years after which the money goes back into the PLR Fund.
12. PLR's online system is used by 70% of authors registering with PLR for the first time.
13. 40,000 authors have registered for PLR since its inception.
14. PLR has distributed £113 million in payments to authors over three decades.
15. PLR is a right that an author does not share with publishers or agents.
16. Unlike copyright, authors must register their books in order to qualify for payment.
17. The right to PLR continues for 70 years after an author's death.
18. The youngest author registered for PLR is 15 years old.

CATHERINE COOKSON

19. Catherine Cookson was the first writer to take the coveted title of Most Borrowed Author in the UK when the first PLR payments were made in 1983.
20. At the peak of her popularity in the early 1980s Catherine Cookson's books were borrowed 6.4 million times equating to 1% of total UK loans (649 million).
21. The highest number of book loans for a single title in one year was recorded by Catherine Cookson for *The Year of the Virgins* in 1993-94. The book was borrowed 177,000 times.

SHAKESPEARE

22. If Shakespeare were alive today in 2009 he would have earned £4,685 from PLR for 2007/8.

NOW & THEN....

23. The Most Borrowed Adult Fiction title in the year records began (1982/83) was Catherine Cookson's *Tilly Trotter Widowed*. In 2007/08 it is Kate Morton's *The House at Riverton*.
24. The Most Borrowed children's fiction title in the year records began (1984/85) was Eric Carle: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and in 2007/08 it is JK Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.
25. The Most Borrowed Classic title in the year records began (1992-93) was JR Tolkien: *Lord of the Rings*. In 2007/08 it is JD Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*.
26. The Most Borrowed Non-Fiction title in the year records began (1991-92) was Hannah Hauxwell's *Daughter of the Dales*. In 2007/08 it is James Martin's *The Meaning of the 21st Century*.
27. The first ever book to be registered for PLR was *All Her Lovely Companions* by Stella Phillips. According to PLR's records of library loans it was still being borrowed in 2007/8.
28. The following books first published in 1979 (the same year that the PLR Act was passed) are still being borrowed 30 years on:
 - Jeffrey Archer, *Kane and Abel*
 - Barbara Taylor Bradford, *A Woman of Substance*
 - Catherine Cookson, *The Man Who Cried*
 - Roald Dahl, *Tales of the Unexpected*
 - Dick Francis, *Whip Hand*
 - Antonia Fraser, *King Charles II*
 - Stephen King, *The Dead Zone*
 - Robert Ludlum, *The Matarese Circle*
 - Ruth Rendell, *Make Death Love Me*
 - Jessica Stirling, *The Deep Well at Noon*
29. There have only been three top lending authors since PLR records began:
 - Catherine Cookson (1982-2002)
 - Dame Jacqueline Wilson (2002-2006)
 - James Patterson (2006 – present)
30. JK Rowling entered the top 10 Most Borrowed Titles list (adult & children's combined) for the first time in 2000/01. In 2007/08, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is the UK's most borrowed title.

