

Bestselling author Tracy Chevalier visits Teesside to mark Public Lending Right's 30th anniversary

PLR, the right that authors have to receive a payment from government every time their books are lent out by public libraries, is 30 years old. The right was established by Act of Parliament in 1979 after many years of campaigning by authors.

Tracy Chevalier, author of international bestseller *Girl with a Pearl Earring* which was made into a film starring Colin Firth and Scarlett Johansson, will be joined by other popular authors including children's writer Anne Fine (author of *Madame Doubtfire*) and Philippa Gregory (author of current bestseller *The Other Boleyn Girl*) to mark PLR's 30th anniversary. Retired local writer Stella Phillips, the first author in the UK to register for PLR when the Scheme began, will also join the celebrations.

Stockton Library Service has generously made available the splendid new **Thornaby Central Library** as the venue for the party which takes place on **Tuesday 30 June, 7.30pm – 9.30pm**.

The PLR Scheme is managed by the Registrar of PLR and his team from offices in Teesside. Payments are made to authors across the UK and the whole of Europe in line with how often their books are borrowed from public libraries here. Authors register their books with the PLR office and the Registrar collects computerised book loans data from a representative sample of public libraries across the UK. This year over 24,000 authors received a payment from PLR.

For authors, PLR has been one of the great success stories of recent times. Many rely on their annual PLR payment as core income that helps them continue writing. They also like its fairness (no-one can earn more than £6,600, freeing up £1 million for redistribution to less successful authors) and the feedback it provides on how often their books are borrowed.

Children's author, John Cunliffe, creator of Postman Pat, writes:

A lonely writer at my desk, I feel that there is really someone out there reading and enjoying my books when that PLR listing comes just at the time of year when my spirits are likely to be at their lowest, with a lovely cheque to reinforce the message.

PLR is proud of its North-East connections. The PLR Scheme has always had its headquarters in Teesside. The Stockton-based office has now established itself as a centre of international best practice and has helped countries such as Ireland, Slovenia and Estonia set up their own systems.

Media contacts - for further information please contact Susan Ridge at the Public Lending Right office on 01642 604699 or email: susan.ridge@plr.uk.com



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). Funding for 2009/10 stands at £7.5 million.
3. The UK writing economy: a typical writer has seen their income drop by £3,000 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 distributed £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 are more than £1. There is a maximum payment threshold of £6,600 for the top-lending authors. This year 232 authors received 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.