

**Welcome to The Reading Agency's first newsletter. We're a new charity, working to inspire and support libraries in creating the best possible access to books and reading for everyone. We've been created by merging three existing library development agencies:**

- LaunchPad
- Well Worth Reading
- The Reading Partnership

## 1. OUR VISION

The Reading Agency believes that reading has infinite potential for making life richer, and our vision is to inspire a reading nation. Since libraries are the most democratic way of getting reading to people, we plan to work through libraries and other partners to achieve this vision.

At the end of this newsletter there's more information on our constitution, our board, funding and staffing.

## 2. WHAT WE'LL BE DOING

**INNOVATING** *opening up new ways of working with readers and new routes to finding them through partnerships, research and pilot models.*

Two examples of pilot models based on partnerships are:

- **YouthBOOX**, which creates new approach routes to reading for socially-excluded young people by building partnerships between libraries and youth services.
- **Books Connect**, which is experimenting with reading-inspired partnerships between arts, libraries and museums.

**RAISING STANDARDS FOR THE LONG TERM** *working to affect permanent change - supporting libraries in raising standards and sharing best practice through national promotions, training, toolkits and audit frameworks.*

- **Their Reading Futures**, for example, is a radical programme to refresh and redefine libraries' work with children through on-line training and the development of a new tool for planning and evaluating library services.
- **National promotions** include BOOX for teenagers and the summer reading challenge. Other training includes partnership working with basic skills providers and a new course on marketing.

**ADVOCACY** *changing the way influencers see the importance and potential of libraries' work with readers.*

We'll be producing evidence and arguments to show how libraries' work with readers contributes to key policy areas, and training librarians in how to ensure that the work they do is widely recognized.

## 3. LIBRARIES CHANGE LIVES AWARD

On June 26 Baroness Blackstone announced that our **Big Book Share** programme had won the 10<sup>th</sup> Libraries Change Lives Award. Great news!

This is a family reading project, aiming to enable fathers, grandfathers and uncles to contribute to children's reading development and do so with increasing confidence and skill. It is being piloted in HMP Nottingham, supported by an intriguing range of partners – as well as the prison, there's Marks & Spencers, Nottingham City Library Service and East Midlands Arts. The project is part of LaunchPad's Reaching Parents programme, and links to similar schemes around the country to share good practice.

Resources from the scheme will be rolled out in the autumn, and we hope to get funding for a much bigger programme, including longitudinal research into the impact of this work.

## 4. DATE NOT TO MISS

**7 November 2002, Nottingham:** Books Connect Conference.

Books Connect is an East Midlands pilot exploring how libraries, arts and museums can work together to involve and inspire readers. The conference passes on some of the lessons learnt, explores good working practice and looks at some of the issues involved in partnership working. It sees the launch of *Creating Partnerships*, a tool kit containing advocacy evidence, models and guidelines and a complete evaluation package.

### To book contact:

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## 5. ORANGE FUNDING FOR CHILDREN'S READING GROUPS IN SCOTLAND

Orange have been delighted by the success of **Chatterbooks**, the network of children's reading groups for 4-12 year olds set up in partnership with LaunchPad. They now want to roll the scheme out to Scotland, and we are exploring the best ways of doing this. Chatterbooks is proving to be one of those win-win partnerships, reaching children with really motivating materials and activities, and supporting library services in meeting different targets, including ones related to social inclusion, to Best Value and building partnerships with the formal education sector.

## 6. NEW WORK

### Hamlyn funding for two new programmes

Recently we have been delighted to be awarded funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for two new programmes:

- **Developing Reading Communities** is a partnership with Education Extra. It explores how children in deprived communities can access reading clubs in secondary schools, and builds models of the way schools can link these children much more powerfully to public library resources for additional inspiration and encouragement.
- **YouthBOOX: Moving On** will combine reader development and basic skills support to inspire and empower socially excluded young people. We'll be working in partnership with the National Youth Agency and the Basic Skills Agency. The programme starts in September, working in five local projects and focusing on young people with lower reading abilities. It promotes good practice, produces new resources and brings a wide range of players together including publishers to draw on the lessons from the projects.

Our local partners are Shropshire Libraries and Youth Service; Richmond Libraries and Youth Service; Cramlington School; Kensington and Chelsea Libraries and Youth Service and Essex Youth Offending Team and Library Service.

### Libraries and Creative Reading in Crime-cutting Agenda

The Reading Agency has just been awarded up to £300,000 to run diversionary summer activities in 2002 for young people in targeted

local authority crime hotspot areas. This is part of the Government's Summer Splash/Splash Extra arts and sports crime-cutting initiative. The funding for The Reading Agency and other arts initiatives has come from the New Opportunities Fund, and is being administered by the Youth Justice Board and the Arts Council of England.

The Splash programmes are working primarily with those at risk of offending, rather than offenders, and previous Summer Splash programmes have shown dramatic evidence that inspiring and imaginative work through arts and sports can be effective in the overall drive to reduce crime levels. This type of work can also have a lasting impact on the lives of the young people involved, as has been seen in The Reading Agency's work over the last four years through the YouthBOOX work it has been doing with the National Youth Agency.

For Splash Extra, The Reading Agency is acting as a national co-ordinating agency, creating relationships at national level that will provide a helpful framework for local partnership working between libraries and the youth services and youth offending teams. The Agency will be working with approximately fifteen library authorities across the country to support a range of reading-inspired, interactive arts events. The aims of the programme include crime reduction, addressing literacy targets and, of course, the opening up of a whole new world of creative imagination to young people whose homes are book-free zones and who think that reading is "not for them".

## 7. NEW RESOURCES AND TRAINING

The Reading Agency produces a whole range of national promotions and training. Here's news of three.

### Off Route

Last year we trialled a new promotional device using an adult reading trail, demonstrated by celebrity writers who do the same trail as general readers. The trail takes the form of quirky, fun personal challenges which move readers (including celebrities) into new reading territory. It was in such demand that we'll be offering the promotion again, but with different writers. You can use Off Route to market your reader services to lapsed users, and many library authorities are using it as a major summer reading promotion.

### Schools Teenage Reading Course

We are introducing new training for schools in how to involve and inspire teenage readers.

It looks at how to encourage wider reading and a whole school reading ethos; promoting sharing of reading between adults and young people, and between young people themselves; validating all kinds of readers; inspiring reading activities; accessible reading material; a promotional calendar and links with public libraries.

### Marketing Training

The recent Audit Commission report highlights how important it is for libraries to use marketing to reach and retain audiences. Reader development is a key area where an understanding of marketing principles can be critical to success, and we have introduced a new course to help equip librarians with the skills needed to communicate with a sophisticated public. The course provides a guide to marketing principles. It covers targeting customers and examples of good practice, the value of marketing, marketing plans and how to apply the theory to your own work.

## 8. DCMS WOLFSON PROGRAMMES

The Reading Agency is involved in four of the current sixteen programmes funded by the Wolfson/Department of Culture Media and Sport's reader development fund. These are:

- **Their Reading Futures:** described by one delegate on the training as "*the best thing that's happened to children's librarianship in years*". TRF is a radical programme to reinvigorate libraries' work with young readers – it supports better planning through an outcomes based audit framework and training in the core skills needed to support young readers. On-line training will be available from late summer onwards.
- **The Vital Link:** exploring the special role libraries can play in tackling poor basic reading skills. We're working in partnership with the National Literacy Trust, the Basic Skills Agency, the National Reading Campaign, Sheffield University and nine local authority partners. Here are some of the basic skills students it has reached:  
*'It was easy to read and made me think about people'* **The Big Book of Scandal** by Jonathan Vorkin

*'I like the book because it was short stories on each page'* **The Family Pack** by John Hegley

*'I liked it because it is encouraging me in my life and sorting things out'* **101 Poems to Keep You Sane** Ed. Daisy Goodwin

Visit [www.literacytrust.org.uk/vitalink](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/vitalink) to find out more. The programme will produce nationally available training for library and basic skills staff and First Choice, a reading promotion for new and less confident readers. Plus a toolkit with templates for stock selection criteria, training guidance, evaluation measures and replicable models of how reader development can support people with low literacy levels.

- **YouthBOOX:** Go to [www.boox.org.uk](http://www.boox.org.uk) for more details
- **Books & Business:** See [booksandbusiness.org.uk](http://booksandbusiness.org.uk)

## 9. MORE READING AGENCY BACKGROUND

### Our constitution, ethos and funding

The Reading Agency is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Our ethos aligns us with public sector values. We take a pro-active, creative approach to our work, believing we can effect change faster by working alongside, but not in, local authorities.

We are committed to working in partnership with organizations outside the public library network, believing that to create vibrant readers' services and reach new people, libraries need to be thinking outside the box, working with new partners and exploring new approaches.

Our funding marks a ground-breaking alliance of arts, library and government bodies coming together in support of reading and signals a growing recognition of the importance of libraries' reader development work. The Reading Agency will receive revenue funding the Arts Council of England, Southern and South East Arts and The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). Resource, the Council for Libraries, Museums and Archives, will be providing project funding for two years covering work on advocacy, partnerships and research.

### Partnerships With The Library Network

We work in partnership with the main library networking bodies including the Society of Chief Librarians, CILIP and ASCEL – the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians.

## Representation On Other Bodies

The Reading Agency is a member of the Policy Stakeholders Group advising DCMS on its review of public library services.

We are also represented on the Think Tank for Resource's Inspiring Learning Framework.

## Our Board

The Reading Agency will be getting off to an excellent start with a strong board, drawn largely from the trustees of the bodies being merged:

- Chair: Martin Molloy, Director of Libraries and Heritage, Derbyshire County Council and President of the Society of Chief Librarians
- Vice Chair: Viv Griffiths, recently retired Acting Director, Leisure and Culture, Birmingham City Council. Board member, Resource
- Honor Wilson Fletcher, Director of Marketing and Sales, Hodder Children's Books
- Liz Attenborough, former Director of the National Year of Reading
- Liz Warnes, Partner, Arthur Andersen
- Catherine Johnson, writer and literature development worker
- Neil McClelland, Director, National Literacy Trust
- Nicolette Jones, journalist
- Richard Osmond, former Director of Personnel, the Post Office
- Sue Houghton, County Librarian, West Sussex Libraries
- Martin Wright, ex Finance Director of the Library Association is the Company Secretary.

The board will also be joined by four observers: Gary McKeone, Director of Literature of the Arts Council of England; Sue Brown, Director of Member Services at CILIP; Kieran Phelan, Literature Officer for Southern and South East Arts; Sue Wilkinson, Director of Learning and Access at Resource.

## 10. HERTFORDSHIRE SECONDMENT

Signaling the agency's close links with public libraries, Hertfordshire Libraries are demonstrating their commitment to the work of the Reading Agency by supplying a member of staff – Penny Shapland - on a secondment basis to act as the agency's Head of Resources.

## 11. KEY WORKERS

A core management team will support the work of the agency. This includes Miranda McKearney, Director, Penny Shapland who is Head of Resources and Maureen McCulloch who leads on finance.

A development team will work on developing new areas, like health and Creative Partnerships projects. This team includes Debbie Hicks – a founder member of The Reading Partnership - and Anne Sarrag – a founder member of LaunchPad. Other members are Ruth Harrison, Tricia Kings, David Kendall and Jerry Hurst.

Finally, a project, training and communications team will run a range of programmes and courses. This includes Lynne Taylor, Becca Wyatt, Jim Shean, Anne Caldwell, Mel Gibson, Rob and Bronwen Hunter, Viv Brett and Sue Stewart.

## 12. WEBSITE

Our website will go live later in July. Do visit us at [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk).

## 13. TO END

In **Their Reading Futures** we have been using Richard Peck's wonderful poem, Why I Read. Here's an extract:

I read because one life isn't enough, and in the pages of a book I can be anybody;

I read because the words that build the story become mine, to build my life;

I read not for happy endings but for new beginnings; I'm just beginning myself and wouldn't mind a map

## 14. CONTACT DETAILS

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