

This is a special edition of our eletter to pass on news of the work we'll be doing as part of Resource's action plan for the government's new library strategy, Framework for the Future. At the same time, we have some great news about the World Book Day Online Festival, plans for the BBC's Big Read and an announcement to make about the theme of next year's Summer Reading Challenge

1. BBC BIG READ

The first programme of the final phase of the Big Read series was screened on Saturday 18 October, with Clive Anderson counting down The Big Read Top 100 from numbers 100 to 22, before revealing the most popular 21 novels in random order.

He will now present seven weekly programmes, each featuring three novels from the shortlist. Over the course of the series, the 21 works of fiction, each championed by a celebrity advocate, will compete for the public's votes. Anderson will then summarise the arguments and follow the voting as the books vie for the title of the Nation's Favourite Book.

The TV marketing campaign kicked off on Saturday 4 October with trails featuring animated bookworms talking about their love of books, the first installment in a major high-profile campaign which will support the entire series over the coming months, both on TV, radio and on outdoor poster sites.

Libraries are motoring

As the momentum builds towards the final phase of the Big Read, libraries are doing an amazingly diverse and inspiring range of work around the initiative. From outreach work with truckers in M1 roadside cafes to Big Read readers in residence at county shows; from video compilations of readers sitting in special Big Read chairs to mobile libraries targeting commuters at stations...it's all happening!

Special focus week

The week beginning 1 December has been designated a special library focus week by the BBC's Big Read team. It's a fabulous opportunity for libraries to pull all their Big Read work together, consolidate relationships with BBC local broadcasters (who are being asked to give library activity a special focus that week), a chance for the public sector to celebrate, get noticed and have fun with readers!

Under the umbrella concept of *creating the biggest readers' group*, we will be including any

activity which involves readers talking together about The Big Read. That could be an actual readers' group, but anything that connects readers counts - reading chains, web chats, events...

We're asking libraries to programme Big Read events, large and small, any day during the week of 1 December. If you're involved, this may just be a case of focusing an existing activity you already have planned on the Big Read or rescheduling activity for the w/b 1 December.

We'll shortly be passing on libraries' imaginative plans through a special guide with ideas for what to do. So far libraries are planning everything from voting predictor boards to Big Read Christmas trees, from extra reading group meetings to huge regional gatherings of people from groups.

Issue Figures for Big Read Titles

We've just received an interim report from the Office of Public Lending Right on the number of issues of a sample of Big Read titles during July and August. They show huge increases in loans of some of the Top 100 titles.

For example, one edition of *The Count of Monte Cristo* had issues up by 3200%, and a *Lord of the Flies* edition was up by 2100%.

2. WORLD BOOK DAY ONLINE FESTIVAL

We've recently had the excellent news that the Arts Council of England has agreed to fund the 2004 World Book Day Online Festival, to happen on Thursday 4 March 2004, with all the material being archived for future use.

The Arts Council grant will fund the largest-ever Online Festival - a day-long series of specially-made films about, and online chats with, internationally-known authors plus opportunities for readers to interact with one another, all at www.worldbookdayfestival.com

The Festival is a perfect example of the new library offer to the nation - a magic mix of reading, IT and social/community experiences all rolled into one. As in 2003, it will be delivered through the People's Network, the project that has provided people with internet access through their public library.

For the second year the Festival is being delivered through a major public/private sector partnership involving publishers, authors, The Reading Agency, Resource and CILIP. A new partner for this year is The Society of Chief Librarians.

David Young, Chair of World Book Day 2004, comments:

"I am thrilled that Arts Council England has supported the Online Festival for a second year. This is a considerable grant and vote of confidence for World Book Day and presents a great opportunity to build on last year's success and bring WBD to an even larger audience in 2004."

Gary McKeone, Literature Director of Arts Council England, says:

"We are delighted to support World Book Day. We want more and more people to get involved with literature and the Online Festival enables that to happen imaginatively. It's a terrific, library-led initiative and one that goes from strength to strength."

3. READING CHALLENGE 2004 – ANNOUNCING THE READING ROLLERCOASTER

The 2003 Summer Reading Maze was a huge success. This incentive-led reading promotion has become part and parcel of the long summer holiday for over 600,000 children UK-wide – and their parents and carers. This summer it was supported by 87% of public libraries and has been proved to build reading confidence, skills, enjoyment and motivation.

Once again we will be working with Books for Students to create the sixth summer reading challenge for 2004, the Reading Rollercoaster. All the spills and thrills of a Rollercoaster will merge to create an exciting reading journey, exploring the highs and lows, twists and turns of reading - and it's a chance for children to create their own rollercoaster circuit.

The rollercoaster metaphor can be used as a jumping-off point to explore reading different kinds of books (laughing tunnel, ghost tunnel, scary loop, etc.). Plans are under way to expand the reading maze website with more author habitats and unexpected website trickery.

4. READING MAZE EVALUATION

If you're involved in this, we're looking forward to receiving all your completed Reading Maze Questionnaires, giving us the facts and figures on take-up and participation this summer.

If you have any problems or queries (e.g. mislaid questionnaire!) please email lynne.taylor@readingagency.org.uk

5. FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

We're delighted to have been commissioned by Resource to do a range of work for Framework for the Future. Here's an outline of what we'll be doing for the rest of this financial year.

READERS' GROUP STRATEGY

A strategy to underpin the development of library led readers' groups, so that readers everywhere can benefit from belonging to a group, virtual or community based. The strategy will identify partners to support libraries' work, and make recommendations about the resources and skills libraries need. It will show how developing readers' groups delivers on national and local government priorities.

BUILDING A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

A work programme to exploit the massive potential to use reading, and libraries' creative remit, as the springboard for building a stronger relationship with the business community. This will include showcasing existing models of good practice and the development of a partnership with Arts & Business at national and regional level to open up library involvement in their Skills Bank and Mentoring programmes. Plus support for libraries including training, a toolkit and a website. Part of the work will involve an eastern region pilot, exploring how to work through new regional structures.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT/ THEIR READING FUTURES

Their Reading Futures is a major national workforce development programme for library staff working with young people. Framework funding is making further development of the programme possible, and during 2003/4 there will be a Their Reading Futures Roadshow – a new wave of face-to-face training in all nine English regions. The website will be developed further as an important distance learning tool - www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk. The main elements of the programme are: support for outcomes based planning, advocacy, core skills and practical on-line reader development training. The programme is run in partnership with the two main children's library networking bodies, ASCEL and YLG, who play a critical role in supporting and involving library staff.

POLICY AUDIT ON LIBRARY SERVICES FOR TEENAGERS

An audit of recent developments affecting library services to young people, including new policies and funding streams, and pilot models such as YouthBOOX. The audit will investigate the potential of linking libraries' reader development work more closely to the youth sector, the active participation agenda and the integration of reading and information provision.

The work will be done in partnership with ASCEL and YLG. It will identify the common ground between libraries and other key agencies and make recommendations which help library authorities prioritise activities and interventions. It will work towards building a greater understanding of the potential of libraries to deliver against key government agendas for young people.

DEVELOP AND EXTEND HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Summer Reading Challenge: 2004 website

The development of new online creative reading resources for children taking part in libraries' annual summer reading challenge. These will build on the 2003 pilot Reading Maze website (www.readingmaze.org.uk) and use cutting edge interactive technology to give children the chance to explore the world of writers and illustrators through a series of interactive panoramas, encountering stimuli for their own creative reading, writing and art.

Positive Activities for Young People

PAYP is a new three year multi-million pound holiday activities programme for young people at risk of offending. It is funded by Government and the National Lottery and offers libraries a major opportunity to keep up the momentum from last year's successful Splash Extra programme, building partnerships with youth services and youth offending teams. We are acting as the liaison point with government and working to support libraries in bidding for funding to deliver exciting reader development programmes to socially excluded young people. Work includes the dissemination of case studies, advocacy material, and "how to" templates.

PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY: BOOK TRADE/ BROADCAST / BOOKS CONNECT

As part of the Framework's drive to "provide stimulating and contemporary reading experiences for adults" we will be reviewing

some of the major national partnerships of 2000-2003 (like World Book Day, the Orange Prize and the BBC Big Read), and working out how to get the best out of them for local readers. The review will also scope other possible partnerships.

A development package will be linked to this review, aiming to strengthen at national level libraries' partnerships with broadcasters and publishers. There will also be a programme to showcase the potential of Books Connect, a pilot East Midlands partnership programme which brings together arts, museums, archives and libraries to create new, multi-dimensional experiences for readers.

BASIC LITERACY SKILLS/ THE VITAL LINK

The Vital Link is a national programme run by The Reading Agency and the National Literacy Trust. It aims to harness the full force of libraries' reader development work to support and motivate adults working to improve their literacy skills. It also aims to maximize libraries' contribution to hitting the government's basic literacy skills targets for 2007 and beyond.

Framework funding will support a multi-layered programme including training, resources, and the development of models of good practice; an advocacy campaign focused on government departments and funding agencies; a contact programme with publishers; a fundraising programme to support libraries in unlocking local and regional funding.

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

An advocacy and partnership building campaign to open the eyes of Creative Partnership schemes to the exciting potential of creative reading and library partnerships. Designed to make new connections between schools, school library services and public libraries to open up new possibilities for children of working with writers, publishers, illustrators, cartoonists etc.

6. CONTACT DETAILS

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