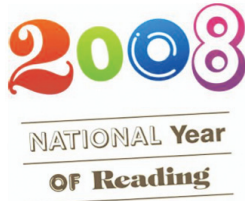


# Libraries and authors join up for NYR

A huge Reader Meets Writer programme has been launched as part of the National Year of Reading.

Created by Reading Partners, which brings public libraries into partnership with adult publishers, 50 high-profile author events will take place in libraries across the country. Kate Mosse will be in Lambeth, Derbyshire and Sutton; Hanif Kureishi appears in Leicester; Iain Banks in Gateshead; Alexander McCall Smith in Warwickshire; Mavis Cheek in Kent and Cumbria; and Clare Francis in Brighton.

"Publishers now understand the importance of libraries' grassroots contact with local readers, and that they can attract huge audiences for author events," says Miranda McKearney, Director of The Reading Agency.



Every library authority in England will be paired with a local author. The 149 authors and libraries will be working together in very different

ways. Some will hold a one-off event, while others will take place in a 'residency'.

To help libraries with planning for the Reader Meets Writer programme, The Reading Agency has a toolkit advising library staff on devising an event based on the type of author and audience, and gives tips to help libraries, authors and publishers get what they want from an event.

Reading Partner publishers are offering book trailers for plasma screen in libraries, designing author promotions exclusive to libraries and distributing sample chapters from first authors to library-linked reading groups.

[www.yearofreading.org.uk](http://www.yearofreading.org.uk)

## Warwickshire makes things plain in Spain

Ayub Khan, Warwickshire's Head of Libraries, was invited to speak at an international conference in Madrid by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. Ayub spoke about Warwickshire's programme of reshaping the role of the library in the community.

Key to Ayub's presentation was the changing face of the library. Warwickshire's strategy has shifted, with library staff now being repositioned not as 'custodians of knowledge' but as 'knowledge navigators'.

Ayub said: "It is our strategy to make the library an integral part of the community. As libraries were conceived in an era when many did not have access to education or books, we have had to adapt its role.

"Now we are looking to enhance the traditional role and make the library a centre of the community.

"And through partnerships



**Ayub Khan, who was invited to talk libraries in Madrid, with Tracey Baker, Librarian at Warwick Library.**

with the community, such as supermarkets or adult education providers, we can extend the library's influence."

Ayub commented about his visit: "Clearly, Warwickshire (and the UK in general) has a reputation for innovation in its libraries that is attracting some very complimentary attention from our counterparts across the world."

## Wigan to stage 'biggest ever' reading campaign

A Year of Reading was launched in Wigan and Leigh with the support of writer and broadcaster Stuart Maconie and Hollyoaks star Leah Hackett – to tie in with National Year of Reading. This is Wigan Borough's biggest ever reading campaign and will include a series of different themed events.

Stuart and Leah, who is a former library assistant at Tyldesley Library, visited Leigh Library for a storytelling session (see picture on front cover). Stuart Maconie said: "As a patron of Wigan Libraries, an author and self-confessed book lover, I am thrilled at the

prospect of being here to launch this special year of reading. Reading is one of the few pleasures in life that offers no prejudice, no age restriction and no cost – the only limitation being your level of imagination.

"Our libraries offer a free passport to wherever your mind will take you. I would encourage one and all to get involved this year, visit a library, and start turning those pages – you never know where it might lead!"

*"...libraries offer a free passport to wherever your mind will take you,"*

**author and broadcaster  
Stuart Maconie**

## Funding pledged in Wales upgrading

Sixteen libraries in Wales are getting a makeover this year as part of a programme of upgrading. Welsh Assembly Government Heritage Minister, Rhodri Glyn Thomas, announced that £2.5m would be invested in Welsh libraries, including £1.5m for upgrading current library buildings.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas made the announcement while officially opening new facilities at Cwmbran Library, which received £100,000 from the Assembly Government's Community Learning Libraries capital programme last year.

The Minister also said that in 2009 and in 2010 the funding available for library modernisation projects will rise to £3m a year.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas said: "Creating a network of Welsh libraries fit for the twenty-first century is a priority for this Government."

Research commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government showed that the poor state of many of Wales' libraries was a turn-off for people.

In addition to the capital investment, the Welsh Assembly Government is investing £1m annually in developing online services, greater partnership working between libraries, marketing libraries and developing skills.

The investment in libraries is part of the Welsh Assembly Government Libraries for Life strategy, published in May.

## New teenage space for Hull centre

A new teenage-friendly library and IT facility in Ings, Hull, is on its way to being built following a grant of £10,000 from Awards for All. The money will go towards the new, multi-purpose 'Learn-Ings Zone', a dedicated area of newly-refurbished Ings Customer Service Centre. It will give teenagers a new educational and social meeting place as well as a direct link to Hull's library service.

Alison Houldridge, Library Assistant at Ings Road Library, is one of the team behind the

new facilities. She said: "When addressing the needs of the young people in the area, we knew many of them felt reluctant to go into our local library as it wasn't the 'cool' thing to do.

"We carried out a full consultation process with the young people over a 10-month period to address their needs. The result is a combination of a library/study/IT area with a meeting place that will enable more young people to access our services."

There is £9,500 still to raise.