



Annual Review 2023

Registered charity number 1149664

Who we are

Our core belief is that to pass on a good read – to give a book – is a transaction of lasting worth.

We research and carefully select every book that goes out to our projects. Whether it's for a primary school pupil or prison reading group member, a brand new book gives them the opportunity to enjoy their own reading experience.



Books:

500+ for Books in the Nick

900+ for Off The Record/Children Heard & Seen/Cianna's Smile

1000+ for Book Rooms on prison wings

1500+ for school projects

3000+ for Raising Readers

'32.1% of children said that being given books would make them want to read'

National Literacy Trust*

'74.6% children and young people who enjoyed reading at school also enjoyed reading in their free time.'

National Literacy Trust*

*Christina Clark, Irene Picton & Martin Galway, 'Children and Young People's Reading in 2023', National Literacy Trust

What we got up to in 2023...

'Books can connect prisoners with their families, especially when partners read the same title and offer something to break the ice in phone calls or visits. Books also connect prisoners with the wider world and help create an interest and a stake in society and culture outside.'

Sarah Turvey, Director of Prison Reading Groups

This year the founders of Prison Reading Groups, Sarah Turvey and Jenny Hartley, were awarded OBEs in the **King's Birthday Honours** for their services to prisoners.

In June we successfully pitched at **The Funding Network's Summer Connector** to a room of enthusiastic and generous supporters.

We were thrilled to be chosen as last year's Daily Express Christmas charity campaign: **Books Change Lives**. We received many wonderful letters of support and donations which will fund our next Whole School Reading Project.

Books for First Nighters has grown and is now in 46 prisons, 10 more than last year.



Die Another Day and Alex Rider stars Toby Stephens backs the Daily Express Christmas appeal in partnership with the inspirational reading charity



Raising Readers

Raising Readers connects families who are affected by a parent in prison through books and reading. Prisoners choose a children's book from a display in the library to send home to their child. We provide bookplates for a special message – this gives parents the opportunity to do something meaningful, despite the distance and difficult circumstances. A copy is also given to the parent to share over the phone or during a visit. In less than 2 years the project has grown and is now running in 27 prisons.



'...giving me and my daughter books gave us something we can share together and we read chapters to each other and it is amazing, it really brings us closer together even though we are apart.'

Mum, HMP Downview

'The *Tiger Who Came to Tea* was a good conversation piece as not only does my daughter like it, my partner and I remember it from our own childhood.'

Dad, HMP Warren Hill



'[I signed up for the project] to stay in contact with my siblings and make them realise that no matter where I am I'm still thinking about them.'

Brother, HMP Warren Hill

'Thank you for the chance to be as close as was possible to my little girls on both their birthdays and to still have a part in their bedtime I really can't explain how grateful I am.'

Dad, HMP Holme House



Book Rooms Books in the Nick Royal Society of Literature

In 2014, HMP Wormwood Scrubs asked us to help set up **Book Rooms** on all 5 of their wings. They are kept organised – and decorated – by residents.

Since 2015, GAB has supplied custody suites with books. We started **Books in the Nick (BITN)** with the Metropolitan Police when an officer saw the positive impact that giving a book had on a detainee.

Prisoners unable to access books in English are, in effect, imprisoned again by language. Fellows of the **Royal Society of Literature** generously help us to build bridges of words in foreign languages by donating their books.



'... the boys will be extremely grateful even if they can't show it personally, you should see the smiles on the lads' faces when I wheeled the wheelbarrow [of books] onto the Wing.'

Former resident

'It also cuts down on some aggressive behaviour as the detainees are occupied and they feel that staff are also looking out for them.'

Met officer



HMPYOI Isis What Happens Next

HMPYOI Isis has almost 600 young men with a very restricted regime to keep them apart. Can books/reading bring them and staff together? Our three-year project is looking for and implementing ways to support reading and readers within the prison. Not many of the young men see themselves as readers but many read. We want to make reading more accessible and relevant to them: bookshelves on each wing, a book group in each house block where they can meet and discuss a book; workshops on reading to, and with, children before each Family Day, plus incentives to read and read widely. The foundations are (almost) laid. We have put hundreds of books on the existing shelves selected from books proven to be popular with the young men.

David Kendall

'This is really worthwhile what you're doing.'


Prisoner

'Lovely afternoon with dads at HMPYOI Isis choosing books for a Family Day. Nice they took the bookplates to create messages, and one dad took the books so he could practice reading them. Wanted to really wow his kids :)'

David Kendall

'Burglar Bill, can you get me that?...I loved that book when I was a kid and I really want to read it to my children.'

Prisoner



What Happens Next?
Choose a book for your child, with a bookplate to fill in and make it a special gift to give on the Family Day...

WHAT IS IT?
Explore why books matter for your kids and how you can help them enjoy reading.
'An eye-opener on how important it is to read with your kids.'
'I haven't stopped thinking about it and all the stories I'm going to read with my kids.'

GIVE A BOOK INTERESTED? Contact PACT **IPRG**

Partner Projects



Book Clubs in Schools provides all the resources for schools to run peer-led book clubs with the focus on reading for pleasure. Since 2018 we have provided over 4,000 books to the most disadvantaged schools they work with.

'Being part of the book club helped me feel less isolated during lockdown.'

OTR Participant



Children Heard and Seen support children, young people and their families who are impacted by parental imprisonment. As well as providing books for children, we offer our programmes such as Making it Up and volunteer at their summer camp.



Cianna's Smile offers support and education to families affected by Sickle Cell Anaemia in the UK. They have set up an online book club for the children they work with – and we send books for 6 different age groups who meet to chat about what they have read.



Off the Record is a charity providing free mental health support to 11–25 year olds. We have supported their book club with free books since 2017. We were delighted to be invited to join in one of their sessions this year.

'Our students are very grateful! The literature they are being exposed to outside of the curriculum has been enjoyed by many.'

Caroline Reynolds, Southfields Academy

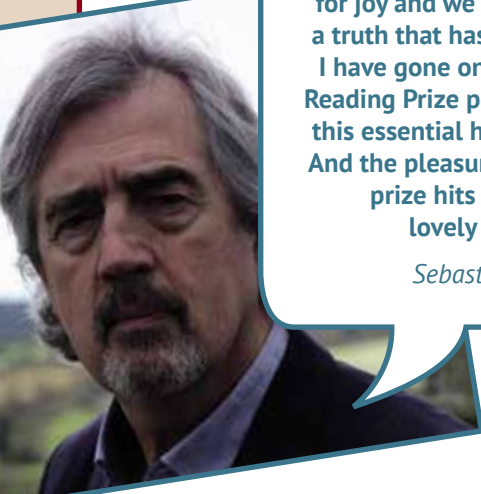
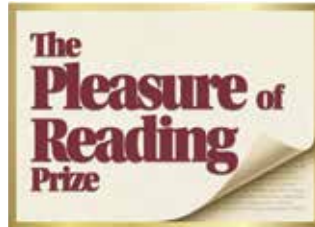
'Give a Book has been an instrumental part of ensuring our book club can run and be a consistent offer for young people to access. We believe in creating spaces for young people to meet others, do things they enjoy and to feel a sense of community. Book club has offered this.'

Martha Baker, OTR



Pleasure of Reading Prize

The **Pleasure of Reading Prize 2023** was awarded to Irish novelist, playwright and poet Sebastian Barry. The prize recognises an author, writing in English, who gives pleasure through their work. This year's judges included Bloomsbury authors Kevin Jared Hosein and Stephen Buoro, James Naughtie, and author Ruth Scurr. The prize is sponsored by Bloomsbury Publishing and generously supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation.



'John McGahern said we must write for joy and we must read for joy, a truth that has only got truer as I have gone on. The Pleasure of Reading Prize perfectly celebrates this essential human imperative. And the pleasure of receiving the prize hits home with a lovely accuracy.'

Sebastian Barry



'Sebastian Barry's writing – is always delineated with the prowess of a first-rate storyteller, a shimmering introspection and psychological depth that instructs and nourishes, and a broad tonal range that offers that rare blend of aesthetic and emotional pleasure.'

Stephen Buoro

'Mr Barry folds a dreamy blanket over a landscape of realism and human drama. The prose itself, tintured with the experience of a poet and playwright, expresses the many spells, cadences and pleasures of language, most apt for a prize titled for the pleasure of reading.'

Kevin Jared Hosein

Wyke Regis Primary School

We were first put in touch with **Wyke Regis** in the summer of 2022 by Chesil Reading Project who work in the Weymouth and Portland areas. The year 2 cohort had missed out significantly on school over the pandemic – missing crucial years of learning and the opportunity to socialise with their peers. In 2022–2023, we created three mini libraries stocked with brand new books, visited the school and arranged for Jonathan Meres, author of the wonderful *Noodle the Doodle* series, to do a virtual visit. The children even met Pablo the labradoodle, the inspiration for Noodle. We also adapted **Page to Picture**, our creative book cover design project.



'The children thoroughly enjoyed the talk – I don't think we've ever seen them so still for so long!'

Year 2 teacher



'From the bottom of our hearts – thank you. Everything you have done for us as a school has really helped to grow the children's love for books and reading.'

Catherine Anders, Deputy Head

'Thank you also for gifting the children a copy of your book. They were thrilled to be able to take a book home, and the parents were so grateful too. I overheard one parent say she couldn't wait to read it too!'

Year 2 teacher

Volunteering with Give a Book

There are various ways to volunteer with us both in person and remotely – get in touch with alison@giveabook.org.uk to have a chat.



Prison Reading Groups

PRG currently supports 72 reading groups in 60 prisons. Volunteers work with prison staff to deliver a monthly session with the focus on reading for pleasure.



Remote Opportunities

Develop content for prison resources – can you recommend a good book or do you know any fun facts?



Family Days

Volunteers go into prison to create an inviting display of books, help children choose and encourage families to read together.



Store Days

Help us pack books at our book cave in Brentford. Meet the team over a cup of coffee and a flapjack. If you work for a large corporate you can bring along a small team – up to 6 people.



Fundraising for Give a Book

We are also working with schools and other children's charities and there are ad hoc opportunities.

Sign up for Easyfundraising to raise money as you shop online. Could you run a 10k for Give a Book or host a coffee morning to raise funds? All ideas are welcome.



'Helping at Give a Book gives me a warm feeling [meeting other volunteers] and being part of something that makes a difference to individuals.'

Fran, volunteer



A message from our Executive Director

'Some of my best friends have been books' an Express reader told us. We have many friends to thank this year-- everyone involved in the Express campaign, the writers and artists who have visited our schools and prisons, from Simon Callow reciting Dickens to Toby Stephens electrifying us all with the birth of Frankenstein. Generous new supporters include—Make My Day Better, World of Books, The Funding Network, The Lightbulb Trust and the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund. Pleasure comes in the book requests from the Secure Accommodation Network – from *Mister Men* to the complete works of Freud. Other highlights – the shout of joyful thanks to Mima in assembly at Wyke Regis, the prisoners who had a whip-round, or those who told us what they valued most in the group – *'This is us, together'*. Our Patron is incomparable. The GAB Team is exemplary – hard working, inventive and, thank goodness, good humoured. Our advisory and trustee boards show dedication beyond anything asked of them. My heartfelt thanks to them all.

Victoria Gray

A final word from our Patron

I've spent the past year getting increasingly aware of books as physical objects. This is due to a period of physical immobility due to a fall. Naturally books have been more important than ever. Not only books but the shape and weight of books. There is always much talk about the books we would take on a desert island. I should now like to make sure that my desert island book is long but wonderfully slim and in highly readable print.

And with a pretty bright cover so I could find it easily in my book- stocked sitting room. Or rather my book-stocked island.

Lady Antonia Fraser



Patron

Lady Antonia Fraser, CH, DBE

Trustees

Joanne Barnett

Adeela Khan

Eleni Meleagrou

Sarah Moorehead (Chair)

Sarah Turvey, OBE

Caroline Waldegrave, OBE

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