

Reading Group Sets in Isle of Wight Libraries

September 2012

Only titles from this list are available. Titles from old lists are no longer available

The Abortionist's Daughter by Elizabeth Hyde (12 COPIES)

Two weeks before Christmas, Diana Duprey, an outspoken abortion doctor, is found dead in her swimming pool. A national figure, Diana inspired passion and ignited tempers, but never more so than the day of her death. Her husband Frank, a long time attorney in the DA's office; her daughter Megan, a freshman in college; the Reverend Stephen O'Connell, founder of the town's pro-life coalition: all of them quarrelled with Diana that day and each one has something to lose in revealing the truth. Meanwhile the detective on the case struggles for the answers — and finds himself more intimately involved than he ever could have imagined.

The Angel's Game by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (8 copies)

In an old mansion in the heart of Barcelona, a young man, David Martin, an aspiring writer, receives a mysterious letter from a French editor, promising literary stardom if he will fulfil just one task. But the character is not all that he seems, and soon David has entered into a pact that will lead him to question everything he values.

Assegai by Wilbur Smith (9 copies)

1913. Leon Courtney is in British East Africa guiding rich and powerful men from America and Europe on safaris in the Masai tribal territories. One of his clients a Count, has a company which builds aircraft for the Kaiser's army. Leon hadn't bargained on falling in love with Eva, the Count's mistress.

Atonement by Ian McEwan (8 copies)

Atonement is the novel for which Ian McEwan will always be remembered. Enthralling in its depiction of childhood, love and war, class and England, at its centre is a profound and profoundly moving exploration of shame and forgiveness.

Beloved by Toni Morrison (8 copies)

Afro-Americans -- Social conditions -- 19th century. It is the mid-1800s. At Sweet Home in Kentucky, an era is ending as slavery comes under attack from the abolitionists. The worlds of Halle and Paul D. are to be destroyed in a cataclysm of torment and agony. The world of Sethe, however, is to turn from one of love to one of violence and death - the death of Sethe's baby daughter Beloved, whose name is the single word on the tombstone, who died at her mother's hands, and who will return to claim retribution.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (9 copies)

Narrated in the all-knowing matter-of-fact voice of Death, witnessing the story of the citizens of Molching. By 1943, the Allied bombs are falling, and the sirens begin to wail. Liesel shares out her books in the air-raid shelters. But one day, the wail of the sirens comes too late.

Blue Shoes of Happiness by Alexander McCall Smith (6 copies)

The seventh instalment of Alexander McCall Smith's series brings more adventures for Precious Ramotswe and her fine assistant Mma Makutsi, including an encounter with a cobra, a sinister blackmail plot, a rather tight-fitting pair of blue shoes, as well as plenty more bush tea and Botswana skies.

Blue Slipper Bay by Wendy Harris (14 COPIES)

Sophie, bereft after the loss of her mother and her husband's betrayal, walks out of her demanding profession and her home seeking refuge with her friend, Jill, on the Isle of Wight. She doesn't suspect that she is about to be drawn into another crisis.

The Bolter by Frances Osborne (12 copies)

Idina Sackville first met scandal when she left her very rich husband and two small children for a penniless army officer in 1918. She went on to marry and divorce a total of five times and be the founder and 'high priestess' of White Mischief's scandalous Happy Valley of Kenyan settlers. Here, her great-granddaughter tells her story.

Burning bright by Tracy Chevalier (10 COPIES)

Against the backdrop of a city anxious over the bloody French Revolution, a surprising bond forms between Jem whose family have moved from Dorset and streetwise Londoner Maggie Butterfield. Their friendship takes a dramatic turn when they become entangled in the life of their neighbour, the poet and printer William Blake.

Case Histories by Kate Atkinson (15 copies)

Full of suspense and heartbreak, 'Case Histories' is a feat of bravura storytelling that conveys the mysteries of life, its inanities and its hilarities. Jackson is 45 but feels much older. Surrounded by death, intrigue and misfortune, his own life is brought sharply into focus.

The Cellist of Sarajevo by Steven Galloway (12 copies)

Tense and heartbreaking to its last page, 'The Cellist of Sarajevo' shows how life under seige creates impossible moral choices. When the everyday act of crossing the street can risk lives, the human spirit is revealed in all its fortitude - and frailty

Cloud Atlas by David Mitchell (12 copies)

A reluctant voyager crossing the Pacific in 1850, and a young Pacific Islander witnessing the nightfall of science and civilization - these and the other narrators of 'Cloud Atlas' hear each other's echoes down the corridor of history, and their destinies are changed in ways great and small.

The Cranford Chronicles by Mrs Gaskell (7 COPIES)

Based on three Elizabeth Gaskell novels, "The Cranford Chronicles" follows the small absurdities and major tragedies in the lives of the people of Cranford, a small Cheshire market town, during one extraordinary year. In this witty and poignant story the railway is pushing its way relentlessly towards the town from Manchester, bringing fears of migrant workers and the breakdown of law and order. The arrival of handsome young Doctor Harrison causes yet further agitation not just because of his revolutionary methods but also because of his effect on the hearts of the ladies. Meanwhile Miss Matty Jenkyns nurses her own broken heart after she was forced to give up the man she loved when she was a young girl.

Days from a Different World by John Simpson (NF) (6 COPIES)

'I have already touched on my childhood in "Strange Places, Questionable People". But the further through life I get the more I want to revisit it. I want to look at the whole of my childhood, the England I grew up in and my family.' This is not a mere exercise in nostalgia, rather it is a journey through the England of the late 1940s in all its shabby wonder, which also tells the somewhat strange and often deeply painful story of John Simpson's family. Here we meet his father and his grandmother, still living in the small and rather depressing south London suburb which his family built, dominated and, finally, declined with. We meet the grandfather who drank the family money away and abandoned his wife and children, and the grandfather who toured the country with a Wild West show. We learn, too, of the broken marriages and the unfulfilled lives, of the people who died, and the lives which were just beginning. Candid, beautifully written and touching, "Days from a Different World" will enchant all those who read it.

December by Elizabeth H. Winthrop (15 Copies)

11-year-old Isabelle hasn't spoken for months, and, as December begins, the situation is getting desperate. As her parents spiral around Isabelle's impenetrable silence, she herself emerges, in a fascinating portrait of an exceptional child, as a bright young girl in need of help yet too terrified to ask for it.

The dig by John Preston (7 COPIES)

In the long hot summer of 1939 Britain is preparing for war, but Mrs Pretty. A widowed farmer, suspects that the strange mounds on her land hold buried treasure.

The Divide by Nicholas Evans (9 COPIES)

Two backcountry skiers find the body of a young woman embedded in the ice of a remote mountain creek. All through the night police work with arc lights and chainsaws to prise her out. Identifying her doesn't take so long. Abbie Cooper is wanted for murder and her picture is on law enforcement computers all across America. But how did she die? And what was the trail of events that led this golden child of a loving family so tragically astray? From the number one bestselling author of THE HORSE WHISPERER, master storyteller Nicholas Evans, comes this powerful new novel, an epic thriller of the human heart. In a journey of discovery and redemption, from the streets of New York to the daunting grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, it tells the heart-rending tale of a family fractured by divorce. As both parents and children struggle in search of lost happiness, some devastating truths unravel. THE DIVIDE is the story of a great love betrayed and of the yearnings and needs, and the dashed hopes and disillusionments that connect and separate all men and women.

Down River by John Hart (9 copies)

Adam has been trying to wipe out the memory of his family's rejection. When his best friend summons him back to North Carolina, he has no choice but to return. Adam has just been acquitted of murder, and no-one trusts him. And when people start turning up dead, Adam is the prime suspect. He alone can clear his name.

Engleby by Sebastian Faulks (10 COPIES)

Mike Engleby says things that others dare not even think. When the novel opens in the 1970's, he is a university student, having survived a traditional school. A man devoid of scruple or self-pity, Engleby provides a witheringly frank account of English education.

The Farm by Richard Benson (NF) (14 COPIES)

It was like being the village idiot with O-levels. I jack-knifed trailers, got outwitted by even the dimmest animals and was dragged through a hedge backwards on a tractor ...' Richard Benson was never cut out for the family farm, but he returned from London when his dad had to sell up and found that their shared loss was part of a profound change in rural life. In the house after the sale, dad gave a heavy raspy sigh and sank against my mum. Everything seemed to freeze for a moment as the clock kept ticking ...'

The Forgotten Garden by Kate Morton (7 COPIES)

On the eve of the First World War, a little girl is found alone after a gruelling ocean voyage from England to Australia. All she can remember is that a woman she calls the Authoress had promised to look after her. But the Authoress has vanished. So starts the haunting second novel from the author of 'The House at Riverton'.

The Good Husband of Zebra Drive by Alexander McCall Smith (6 copies)

Precious Ramotswe is experiencing staffing difficulties. Her relationship with her assistant is strained. But the work of the agency must continue. Mr J.L.B. Matekoni becomes involved in the agency's work when he investigates an errant husband. But can a man investigate such matters as competently as one of the ladies?

Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (13 COPIES)

The sweeping novel from the author of 'Purple Hibiscus', shortlisted for the Orange Prize, and winner of the Commonwealth Writers Award. This highly anticipated novel from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is set in Nigeria during the 1960s, at the time of a vicious civil war in which a million people died and thousands were massacred in cold blood. The three main characters in the novel are swept up in the violence during these turbulent years. One is a young boy from a poor village who is employed at a university lecturer's house. The other is a young middle-class woman, Olanna, who has to confront the reality of the massacre of her relatives. And the third is a white man, a writer who lives in Nigeria for no clear reason, and who falls in love with Olanna's twin sister, a remote and enigmatic character. As these people's lives intersect, they have to question their own responses to the unfolding political events. This extraordinary novel is about Africa in a wider sense: about moral responsibility, about the end of colonialism, about ethnic allegiances, about class and race; and about the ways in which love can complicate all of these things.

The House at Riverton by Kate Morton (12 COPIES)

Summer 1924: On the eve of a glittering Society party, by the lake of a grand English country house, a young poet takes his life. The only witnesses, sisters Hannah and Emmeline Hartford, will never speak to each other again. Winter 1999: Grace Bradley, 98, one-time housemaid of Riverton Manor, is visited by a young director making a film about the poet's suicide. Ghosts awaken and memories, long-consigned to the dark reaches of Grace's mind, begin to sneak back through the cracks. A shocking secret threatens to emerge; something history has forgotten but Grace never could.

How to Talk to a Widower by Jonathan Topper (10 COPIES)

When Doug Parker married Hailey - beautiful, smart and ten years older - he left his carefree Manhattan life behind to live with her and her teenage son, Russ, in the suburbs. Three years later, Hailey has been dead for a year, and Doug, a widower at 29, just wants to drown himself in self-pity and Jack Daniels. But his family has other ideas...Russ is furious with Doug for not adopting him after Hailey died, and has fallen in with a bad crowd. Claire, Doug's irrepressible and pregnant twin sister, has just left her husband and moved in, uninvited, determined to turn his life around. Then there's Debbie, their younger sister, engaged to Doug's ex-best friend and maniacally determined to pull off the perfect wedding at any cost. Soon, Doug finds himself trying to forge a relationship with Russ, reconnecting with his own eccentric nuclear family, and reluctantly dipping his toes into the shark-infested waters of the second-time-around dating scene. It isn't long before his new life is spinning hopelessly out of control...

Human Traces by Sebastian Faulks (8 COPIES)

"Human Traces" explores the question of what kind of beings men and women really are. Jacques Rebiere and Thomas Midwinter, both sixteen when the story starts in 1876, come from different countries and contrasting families. They are united by an ambition to understand how the mind works and whether madness is the price we pay for being human. As psychiatrists, they travel on a quest from the squalor of the Victorian lunatic asylum to the crowded lecture halls of the renowned Professor Charcot in Paris; from the heights of the Sierra Madre in California to the plains of unexplored Africa. Their search is made urgent by

the case of Jacques' brother Olivier, for whose severe illness no name has yet been found. Thomas' sister Sonia becomes the pivotal figure in the volatile relationship between the two men. It threatens to explode with the arrival in their Austrian sanatorium of an enigmatic patient, Fraulein Katharina von A, whose illness epitomises all that divides them. As the concerns of the old century fade and the First World War divides Europe, the novel rises to a climax in which the value of being alive is called into question. This is Sebastian Faulks' most ambitious novel yet, with scenes of emotional power recalling his most celebrated work, yet set here on an even larger scale.

The Ice Cream Girls by Dorothy Koomson (8 copies)

Aged 18, Poppy and Serena were witnesses to a tragic event. Amid heated public debate and scrutiny, the teens were dubbed 'The Ice Cream Girls' by the press and forced to go their separate ways. Now 20 years later, Poppy is keen to set the record straight, while Serena wants no one in her present to find out about her past.

Innocent Traitor by Alison Weir (6 COPIES)

Lady Jane Gray was born into times of extreme danger. Child of a scheming father and a ruthless mother, for whom she was merely a pawn in a dynastic power game with the highest stakes, she lived a life in thrall to political machinations and lethal religious fervour.

The Island by Victoria Hislop (7 COPIES)

On the brink of a life-changing decision, Alexis Fielding longs to find out about her mother's past. But Sofia has never spoken of it. All she admits to is growing up in a small Cretan village before moving to London. When Alexis decides to visit Crete, however, Sofia gives her daughter a letter to take to an old friend, and promises that through her she will learn more. Arriving in Plaka, Alexis is astonished to see that it lies a stone's throw from the tiny, deserted island of Spinalonga - Greece's former leper colony. Then she finds Fortini, and at last hears the story that Sofia has buried all her life: the tale of her great-grandmother Eleni and her daughters and a family rent by tragedy, war and passion. She discovers how intimately she is connected with the island, and how secrecy holds them all in its powerful grip...

Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy (6 COPIES)

The story of a struggle between the flesh and the spirit. It concerns Jude Fawley, a young Wessex villager of exceptional promise, who goes to Oxford, contracts a loveless marriage and becomes embroiled in a doomed love affair with his cousin.

Juliet Naked by Nick Hornby (10 copies)

Annie lives in a washed-up English seaside town where her partner of convenience, Duncan, immerses himself in the esoterica of an obscure American singer-songwriter, Tucker Crow. When Tucker releases a demo version of his album, Juliet, Duncan's and Annie's divergent reactions pull them apart.

Library of the Dead by Glen Cooper (6 copies)

A murderer is on the loose: nicknamed the Doomsday Killer, he's claimed six victims in just two weeks, and the city is terrified. Even worse, the police are mystified: the victims have nothing in common, defying all profiling, and all that connects them is that each received a sick postcard in the mail before they died.

Life of pi by Yann Martel (9 copies)

Pi lives in Pondicherry, India, where his father owns the city's zoo. The family decides to immigrate to Canada, but tragedy strikes at sea. In the lifeboat are five survivors: Pi, a hyena, a zebra, a female orang-utan and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger.

The Little Stranger by Sarah Waters (8copies)

In a dusty post-war summer in rural Warwickshire, a doctor is called to a patient at Hundreds Hall. Home to the Ayres family for over two centuries, the Georgian house, once grand and handsome, is now in decline. But are the Ayreses haunted by something more sinister than a dying way of life? Originally published: 2009.

Love in the Present Tense by Catherine Ryan Hyde (12 COPIES)

"So much of how it was started when that cop got out and came up to me. But I didn't know all this when it first happened. I didn't know there would ever be a Leonard, or that this man would be his father, or that anybody would have to die..." Mitch is a 25-year-old with commitment issues. Leonard is a five-year-old kid with asthma and vision problems, who captivates everyone he meets. Pearl is Leonard's teenage mother, who's trying to hide a violent secret from her past. Life has given Pearl every reason to mistrust people, but circumstances force her to trust her neighbour Mitch. And one day, a man from Pearl's past arrives to take her away. She knows that if she is to preserve her dignity, she must go with him. With a heart full of agony, Pearl drops Leonard off with Mitch and never returns. Pearl, Leonard and Mitch each have a story to tell. As their lives unfold, profound questions arise about the **nature of love and family. How do you go on loving someone who** can't be there for you? The answers are heartbreaking, but ultimately triumphant, as Leonard and Mitch grow up side by side and piece together the layered truths and fictions of their almost magical lives. For readers who loved "About a Boy" and "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime" comes "Love in the Present Tense", from the bestselling author of "Pay It Forward".

Lovely Bones by alice Sebold (9 copies)

A huge bestseller in America, this is a novel about life and death, forgiveness and vengeance, memory and forgetting. 14-year-old Susie Salmon, now dead, looks down on her family and friends from heaven.

The Luminous Life of Lilly Aphrodite by Beatrice colin (9 copies)

This novel tells the story of an orphaned daughter of a cabaret dancer and her rise from poverty and anonymity to film stardom, all set against the rise and fall of Berlin, the background of WWI, the debauchery of the Weimar era, the run-up to WWII, and the innovations in art and industry that accompanied it all.

March by Geraldine Brooks (11 COPIES)

Set during the American Civil War, "March" tells the story of John March, known to us as the father away from his family of girls in "Little Women", Louisa May Alcott's classic American novel. In Brooks' telling, March emerges as an abolitionist and idealistic chaplain on the front lines of a war that tests his faith in himself and in the Union cause when he learns that his side, too, is capable of barbarism and racism. As he recovers from a near-fatal illness in a Washington hospital, he must reassemble the shards of his shattered mind and body, and find a way to reconnect with a wife and daughters who have no idea of the ordeals he has been through. As Alcott drew on her real-life sisters in shaping the characters of her little women, so Brooks turned to the journals and letters of Bronson Alcott, Louisa May's father, an idealistic educator, animal rights exponent and abolitionist who was a friend and confidante of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. The story spans the vibrant intellectual world of Concord and the sensuous antebellum South, through to the first year of the Civil War as the North reels under a series of unexpected defeats

The Memory Keeper's daughter by Kim Edwards. (7 COPIES)

It's 1964 and Dr David Henry finds himself delivering his wife's twins. Relieved, he sees that his son is born healthy, but recognises the signs of Down's Syndrome in his daughter's face. In a split-second decision that will haunt their family forever, he asks a nurse to take his daughter away.

Mr Golightly's Holiday by Salley Vickers (8 copies)

Golightly Enterprises is now somewhat in decline and Mr Golightly needs to rethink the whole operation. He decides to take a holiday in the village of Great Calne giving him time to reconsider the dwindling appeal of the international bestseller which made his company what it once was.

Mister Pip by Lloyd Jones (14 COPIES)

On a remote South Pacific island, threatened by uprising, Matilda and her classmates find their lives surprisingly intertwined with those of a boy called Pip, and a man named Mr. Dickens

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult (6 COPIES)

The only reason Anna was born was to donate her cord blood cells to her older sister. And though Anna is not sick, she might as well be. By age thirteen, she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots so that her sister, Kate, can somehow fight the leukemia that has plagued her since she was a child. Anna was born for this purpose, her parents tell her, which is why they love her even more. But now that she has reached an age of physical awareness, she can't help but long for control over her own body and respite from the constant flow of her own blood seeping into her sister's veins. And so she makes a decision that for most would be too difficult to bear, at any time and at any age. She decides to sue her parents for the rights to her own body.

My Favourite Wife by Tony Parsons (14 copies)

Into the booming, gold-rush city of Shanghai fly Bill and Becca Holden with their small daughter Holly. Their new home is Paradise Mansions - a luxurious apartment block full of 'second wives'. When Becca goes home, a friendship between a lonely family man and a neglected mistress grows into something more.

Netherland by Joseph O'Neill (12 copies)

In early 2006, Chuck Ramkissoo is found dead at the bottom of a New York canal. In London, a Dutch banker named Hans van den Broek hears the news, and remembers his unlikely friendship with Chuck and the off-kilter New York in which it flourished: the New York of 9/11, the powercut and the Iraq war.

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro (7 copies)

Kathy, Ruth and Tommy were pupils at Hailsham - an idyllic establishment situated deep in the English countryside. The children there were tenderly sheltered from the outside world, brought up to believe they were special, and that their personal welfare was crucial. But for what reason were they really there ?

The 19th Wife by David Ebershoff (5 copies)

Jordan returns to visit his mother in jail. As a teenager he was expelled from his family & community, a secretive Mormon offshoot sect. Now his father has been shot dead & one of his wives is accused of the crime. Over a century earlier, Ann Eliza Young, the 19th wife of prophet & leader of the Mormon Church, tells her story.

Notes from an Exhibition by Patrick Gale (7copies)

When troubled artist Rachel Kelly dies painting obsessively in her attic studio in Penzance, her saintly husband and adult children have more than the usual mess to clear up. She leaves behind an extraordinary and acclaimed body of work - but she also leaves a legacy of secrets and emotional damage that will take months to unravel.

North and South by Mrs Gaskell (5 COPIES)

This is one of the earliest novels of industrial alienation, tellingly linked to the plight of 19th-century women. It tells of the relationship between Margaret Hale, a girl from the old rural south, and John Thornton, a mill owner from the new industrial north.

On Chesil Beach by Ian McEwan (11 copies)

It is July 1962. In a hotel on the Dorset coast, overlooking Chesil Beach, Edward and Florence, who got married that morning, are sitting down to dinner in their room. Neither is entirely able to suppress their anxieties about the wedding night to come.

One Day by David Nicholls (6 copies)

15th July 1988. Emma and Dexter meet for the first time on the night of their graduation. Tomorrow they must go their separate ways. So where will they be on this one day next year? And the year after that? And every year that follows?

The Other Queen by Philippa Gregory (6 COPIES)

An historical novel from the author of 'The Other Boleyn Girl' and 'The Boleyn Inheritance', in which Mary, Queen of Scots, is placed under house arrest with the newly-married Bess of Hardwick and the Earl of Shrewsbury, but fights to regain her kingdom and more.

The other side of the bridge by Mary Lawson (14 COPIES)

Two brothers, Arthur and Jake Dunn, are the sons of a farmer in the mid-1930s, when life is tough and another world war is looming. Arthur is reticent, solid, dutiful and set to inherit the farm and his father's character; Jake is younger, attractive, mercurial and dangerous to know - the family misfit. When a beautiful young woman comes into the community, the fragile balance of sibling rivalry tips over the edge.

Then there is Ian, the family's next generation, and far too sure he knows the difference between right and wrong. By now it is the fifties, and the world has changed - a little, but not enough.

These two generations in the small town of Struan, Ontario, are tragically interlocked, linked by fate and community but separated by a war which devours its young men - its unimaginable horror reaching right into the heart of this remote corner of an empire. With her astonishing ability to turn the ratchet of tension slowly and delicately, Lawson builds their story to a shocking climax. Taut with apprehension, surprising us with moments of tenderness and humour, The Other Side of the Bridge is a compelling, humane and vividly evoked novel with an irresistible emotional undertow.

The Outcast by Sadie Jones (10 copies)

1957, and Lewis Aldridge is travelling back to his home in the South of England. He is straight out of jail and 19 years old. His return will trigger the implosion not just of his family, but of a whole community.

The Pirate's Daughter by Margaret Cezair-Thompson (13 copies)

Spanning 30 years of Jamaican history, 'The Pirate's Daughter' is a tale of passion and recklessness, of two generations of women and their battles for love and survival, and of a nation struggling to rise to the challenge of hard-won independence

A Quiet Belief in Angels by R.J.Ellory (8 copies)

In 1930s Georgia, 12 year-old Joseph Vaughan hears of the brutal murder of a young girl, the first of a series of killings that will take 10 lives in the subsequent decade. Compelled by fear and duty, Joseph and his friends establish The Guardians, a group of children determined to protect the people of Augusta Falls

The Rainbow by D H Lawrence (6 COPIES)

Set in the rural midlands of England, this classic novel recounts the lives of three generations of the Brangwen family. When Tom Brangwen marries a Polish widow, Lydia Lensky, and adopts her daughter Anna as his own, he is unprepared for the conflict and passion that erupts between them. Condemned on publication for its open treatment of sexuality and "unpatriotic" spirit, Lawrence explores themes and characters which he later developed in Women In Love.

Random Acts of Heroic Love by Scheinmann (9 copies)

In this debut novel, Danny Scheinmann paints a dramatic portrait of two men sustaining their lives through the memory of love; two men whose hidden connections are revealed in a stunning climax that lives long in the heart.

Reading Lolita in Tehran by Azar Nafisi (6 COPIES)

For two years before she left Iran in 1997, Azar Nafisi gathered seven young women at her house every Thursday morning to read and discuss forbidden works of Western literature. They were all former students whom she had taught at university. Some came from conservative and religious families, others were progressive and secular; several had spent time in jail. Shy and uncomfortable at first, they soon began to open up and speak more freely, not only about the novels they were reading but also about themselves, their dreams and disappointments. Their stories intertwined with those they were reading - "Pride and Prejudice", "Washington Square", "Daisy Miller" and "Lolita" - their Lolita, as they imagined her in Tehran. Nafisi's account flashes back to the early days of the revolution when she first started teaching at the University of Tehran amid the swirl of protests and demonstrations. In those frenetic days, the students took control of the university, expelled faculty members and purged the curriculum. Azar Nafisi's luminous tale offers a portrait of the Iran-Iraq war viewed from Tehran and gives us a glimpse, from the inside, of women's lives in revolutionary Iran.

Remarkable Creatures by Tracy Chevalier (6 copies)

In the year of the 150th anniversary of 'Origin of the Species', set in a town where Jane Austen was a frequent visitor, Tracy Chevalier once again shows her uncanny sense for the topical.

Restless by William Boyd (13 COPIES)

It is 1939. Eva Delectorskaya is a beautiful 28-year-old Russian emigree living in Paris. As war breaks out she is recruited for the British Secret Service by Lucas Romer, a mysterious Englishman, and under his tutelage she learns to become the perfect spy, to mask her emotions and trust no one, including those she loves most. Since the war, Eva has carefully rebuilt her life as a typically English wife and mother. But once a spy, always a spy. Now she must complete one final assignment, and this time Eva can't do it alone: she needs her daughter's help.

The Resurrectionist by James Bradley (15 copies)

London 1826. Gabriel Swift arrives to study with Edwin Poll, the greatest of the city's anatomists. It is his chance to find advancement by making a name for himself. But instead he finds himself drawn to his master's nemesis, Lucan, the most powerful of the city's resurrectionists and ruler of its trade in stolen bodies.

The Return by Victoria Hislop (11 copies)

Mercedes is a spirited young Spanish girl whose passion is dancing. Her life is turned upside down by the Spanish Civil War & the oppression of Franco's dictatorship. When her brothers & her lover disappear in the night, taken for interrogation by the army, she must find a way to flee, even if that means leaving her home & family forever.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy (9 COPIES)

A father and his son walk alone through burned America, heading through the ravaged landscape to the coast. This is the profoundly moving story of their journey. "The Road" boldly imagines a future in which no hope remains, but in which two people, 'each the other's world entire', are sustained by love. Awesome in the totality of its vision, it is an unflinching meditation on the worst and the best that we are capable of: ultimate destructiveness, desperate tenacity, and the tenderness that keeps two people alive in the face of total devastation.

The Road Home by Rose Tremain (6 copies)

Lev is on his way to Britain to seek work, so that he can send money back to eastern Europe to support his mother and little daughter. He struggles with the mysterious rituals of 'Englishness', and the fashions and fads of the London scene. We see the road Lev travels through his eyes, and we share his dilemmas

Rocken Edge by Wendy K Harris 6 copies

Clare, a traumatised teenager clutching a baby, arrives on the Isle of Wight on a bitter winter's day searching for a friend she met on her journey from Ireland. Rachel, oblivious to the plight of the girl outside, sits in her seafront cafe lamenting her Italian lover for whom she has risked her livelihood and her heart.

The Rose of Sebastopol by Katharine McMahon (10 copies)

1855, Rosa Barr, a young Englishwoman, travels to the Crimea determined to work as a nurse. She never returns. Three people have been intimately connected with her: her cousin, a soldier and adventurer; a doctor, traumatised by the war and harbouring a secret passion; and her cousin Mariella, who is left to discover the truth.

Round-Heeled Woman: My Late-life Adventures in Sex and Romance by Jane Juska (NF) (6 COPIES)

'Round-heeled' is an old-fashioned term for a promiscuous woman of easy virtue. It's a surprising way for a respectable English teacher of a certain age, with a passion for the novels of Anthony Trollope, to describe herself, but then that's just the first of many surprises to be found in this poignant, funny, unique memoir. Inspired by Eric Rohmer's film *Autumn Tale*, Jane Juska, a smart, energetic divorcée, decided she'd been celibate too long, and placed a personal ad in her favourite newspaper, *The New York Review of Books*. The response was overwhelming, and Juska took a sabbatical from teaching to meet some of the men who replied. And since her ad made it clear that she wasn't expecting just hand-holding, her dates zipped from first base to the full monty in record time. Juska is a totally engaging, perceptive writer, funny and frank about her exploits. It's high time someone revealed the fact that older single people are as eager for sex and intimacy as their younger counterparts. Jane Juska's brave, honest memoir will probably raise eyebrows and blood pressure, but it will undoubtedly appeal to the very large audience of grown-up readers who will be fascinated and inspired by her daring adventure.

Salmon fishing in the Yemen by Paul Torday (15 COPIES)

This is the story of Dr Alfred Jones, a fisheries scientist - for whom diary notable events include the acquisition of a new electric toothbrush and getting his article on caddis fly larvae published in 'Trout and Salmon' - who finds himself reluctantly involved in a project to bring salmon fishing to the Highlands of the Yemen ... a project that will change his life, and the course of British political history forever. With a wickedly wonderful cast of characters - including a visionary Sheikh, a weaselly spin doctor, Fred's devilish wife and a few thousand transplanted salmon - *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* is a novel about hypocrisy and bureaucracy, dreams and deniability, and the transforming power of faith and love.

The savage garden by Mark Mills (12 COPIES)

A beautiful Tuscan villa, a mysterious garden, two hidden murders - one from the 16th century, one from the twentieth - and a family driven by dark secrets, combine in this evocative, intriguing mystery set in post-War Italy. In 1958, Adam Strickland, a young Cambridge scholar, travels to the Villa Docci in Tuscany to study a sixteenth-century garden. Designed and laid out by a grieving husband to the memory of his dead wife, it is a mysterious world of statues, grottoes, meandering rills and classical inscriptions. But tragedy has hit the Docci family more recently. The German occupation during World War 2 had a devastating impact on them, and the tensions between collaborators and partisans were played out within their own tight circle. Adam is fascinated by the Doccis and increasingly aware that there are dangerous secrets hidden within the family domain. The garden itself starts to exercise a powerful influence over his imagination, its iconography seeming to point to some deeper, darker truth than was first apparent. And what really lay behind a killing at the villa towards the end of the war? Past and present, love and intrigue, intertwine in an evocative mystery which vividly captures the experience of an innocent abroad in the uncertain world of post-War Italy.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd (10 COPIES)

Lily has grown up believing she accidentally killed her mother when she was four. She not only has her own memory of holding the gun, but her father's account of the event. Now fourteen, she yearns for her mother, and for forgiveness. Living on a peach farm in South Carolina with her father, she has only one friend: Rosaleen, a black servant whose sharp exterior hides a tender heart. South Carolina in the sixties is a place where segregation is still considered a cause worth fighting for. When racial tension explodes one summer afternoon, and Rosaleen is arrested and beaten, Lily is compelled to act. Fugitives from justice and from Lily's harsh and unyielding father, they follow a trail left by the woman who died ten years before. Finding sanctuary in the home of three beekeeping sisters, Lily starts a journey as much about her understanding of the world, as about the mystery surrounding her mother.

The secret river by Kate Greenville (10 COPIES)

After a childhood of poverty and petty crime in the slums of London, William Thornhill is sentenced in 1806 to be transported to New South Wales for the term of his natural life. With his wife Sal and children in tow, he arrives in a harsh land that feels at first like a death sentence. But among the convicts there is a whisper that freedom can be bought, an opportunity to start afresh. Away from the infant township of Sydney, up the Hawkesbury River, Thornhill encounters men who have tried to do just that: Blackwood, who is attempting to reconcile himself with the place and its people, and Smasher Williams, whose fear of this alien world turns into brutal depravity towards it. As Thornhill and his family stake their claim on a patch of ground by the river, the battle lines between old and new inhabitants are drawn. The Secret River joins a tradition of grand historical fiction that stretches from Thomas Keneally's *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* and Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*.

The Secret Scripture by Sebastion Barry (10 copies)

Nearing her 100th birthday, Roseanne faces an uncertain future, as the mental hospital where she's spent the best part of her adult life prepares for closure. Over the weeks leading up to this upheaval, she talks often with her psychiatrist Dr Grene. This relationship intensifies as he mourns the death of his wife. Originally published: 2008.

The Sepulchre by Kate Mosse (11 copies)

Researching a biography of the composer Claude Debussy, Meredith Martin also seeks the key to her own complex legacy. Armed with a piece of piano music and a photograph, she soon becomes immersed in the story of a tragic love, a missing girl, an unquiet soul, and the events of one cataclysmic night more than a century ago.

The Shack by William P.Young (1 COPIES)

Mackenzie's daughter, Missy has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she has been murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later Mack receives a note, apparently from God, inviting him back to the shack.

The Shakespeare curse by J.L Carrell (8 copies)

'Macbeth' is a famously cursed play. Some of Kate Stanley's friends question her choosing to direct it for the 400th anniversary of its first performance. Bizarre ritual objects begin to turn up at rehearsals, and it becomes clear someone is trying to send a message in the form of very dark ancient magic.

A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian by Marina Lewycka (10 COPIES)

For years, Nadezhda and Vera, two Ukrainian sisters, raised in England by their refugee parents, have had as little as possible to do with each other - and they have their reasons. But now they find they'd better learn how to get along, because since their mother's death their aging father has been sliding into his second childhood, and an alarming new woman has just entered his life. Valentina, a bosomy young synthetic blonde from the Ukraine, seems to think their father is much richer than he is, and she is keen that he leave this world with as little money to his name as possible. If Nadezhda and Vera don't stop her, no one will. But separating their addled and annoyingly lecherous dad from his new love will prove to be no easy feat - Valentina is a ruthless pro and the two sisters swiftly realize that they are mere amateurs when it comes to ruthlessness. As Hurricane Valentina turns the family house upside down, old secrets come falling out, including the most deeply buried one of them all, from the War, the one that explains much about why Nadezhda and Vera are so different. In the meantime, oblivious to it all, their father carries on with the great work of his dotage, a grand history of the tractor.

Slam by Nick Hornby (12 copies) (Teenage)

There's only one skateboarder, and his name's Tony Hawk. Not only is Hawk the world's best skater, he's also good to talk to. So I talk to Tony Hawk, and Tony Hawk talks back. Because just when it seemed like everything had come together for me, I had to go and screw it all up. It only took two seconds. But all of me knew.

So many ways to begin by Jon McGregor (6 COPIES)

Coventry Museum curator David Carter cannot help but wish for more out of life. But Auntie Julia's careless words, years earlier, have left David restless in the knowledge that his whole life has been a lie.

Songs of the Humpback Whale by Jodi Picoult (9copies)

This novel portrays an emotionally charged marriage that changes course in one explosive moment. The author uses five voices to tell a complex tale of love, friendship and a Faulknerian family history.

Suite Francaise by Irene Nemirovsky (5 COPIES)

'Suite Francaise' is a lost masterpiece written in World War II France, telling the spellbinding story of a group of characters living under Nazi occupation. Originally published: London: Chatto & Windus, 2006.

The Sorrow of Sisters by Wendy K Harris (7 COPIES)

Forty-nine year old Jane sits in her glass-walled designer home tapping out lucrative novels. She has accepted her childlessness, adores her comfortable husband, Chas and copes with her irascible father, Henry. But she is feeling dulled by the weight of her own repetitive fiction. Then Aunt Lillian dies and leaves her Wraith Cottage on the Isle of Wight. Jane has never heard of Lillian and Henry refuses to enlighten her. But Jane's curiosity has been aroused and she decides to investigate. Her inheritance reveals a story more extraordinary than she could have imagined. After suffering a heart attack at the age of 42, George is given the heart of a 19-year-old. Soon he is acting like a teenager, is a friend - instead of a jailer - to his children, and wants to change the world - just as soon as he shakes off his hangover. But he slowly realises that being young again is not all it is cracked up to be.

Starting Over by Tony Parsons (10 copies)

After suffering a heart attack at the age of 42, George is given the heart of a 19-year-old. Soon he is acting like a teenager, is a friend - instead of a jailer - to his children, and wants to change the world - just as soon as he shakes off his hangover. But he slowly realises that being young again is not all it is cracked up to be.

The Steep Approach to Garbadale by Iain Banks (5 copies)

Dark family secrets, a long-lost love affair and a multi-million pound gaming business lie at the heart of this Iain Banks' novel.

Suite Francaise by Irene Nemirovsky (5 COPIES)

'Suite Francaise' is a lost masterpiece written in World War II France, telling the spellbinding story of a group of characters living under Nazi occupation.

The Suspitions of Mr Whicher Or The Murder at Road Hill House by Kate Summerscale (5 copies)

In the village of Road in Wiltshire during the summer of 1860, a family awakes to discover that a gruesome murder has taken place in their home. The guilty party is surely still among them. Jack Wilcher of Scotland Yard, the most celebrated detective of his day, has the unenviable task of conducting the investigation.

The Tenderness of Wolves by Stef Penney (9 COPIES)

As winter tightens its grip on the isolated settlement of Dove River, a woman steers herself for the journey of a lifetime. A man has been brutally murdered and her 17 year old son has disappeared. To clear her son's name, she has no choice but to follow the tracks leaving the dead man's cabin.

Testimony by Anita Shreve (8 copies)

At a New England boarding school, a sex scandal is about to break. Even more shocking than the sexual acts themselves is the fact that they were caught on videotape. A Pandora's box of revelations, the tape triggers a chorus of voice that details the ways in which lives can be derailed or destroyed in one foolish moment.

Then we came to the end by Joshua Ferris (11 COPIES)

'Then We Came to the End' is about how we spend our days and too many of our nights. It is about being away from friends and family, about sharing a stretch of stained carpet with a group of strangers we call colleagues. The novel is the story of your life, the story of our times

The Thirteenth Tale by Diane Setterfield (5 copies)

Angelfield House stands abandoned and forgotten. It was once the imposing home of the March family. Fascinating, manipulative Isabelle, Charlie, her brutal and dangerous brother, and the wild untamed twins, Emmeline and Adeline. But Angelfield house conceals a chilling secret whose impact still resonates. Now Margaret Lea is investigating Angelfield's past and the mystery of the March family starts to unravel. What has the house been hiding? What is its connection with the enigmatic author Vida Winter? And what is it in Margaret's own troubled past that causes her to fall so powerfully under Angelfield's spell?

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini (15 copies)

'A Thousand Splendid Suns' is a chronicle of Afghan history, and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, and the salvation to be found in love.

Two Caravans by Marina Lewycka (12 copies)

In a Kent field, and around their caravans, a group of strawberry pickers celebrate a birthday. But what lies behind the buy-one-get-one-free offers at the supermarket and who picks the strawberries? The Ukrainians, the Poles, the Chinese? And although he can't pick strawberries, there's also the dog!

Under the Dome by Stephen King (9 Copies)

It's a bright Autumn morning in the small town of Chester's Mill. Claudette Sanders is having a flying lesson and Dale Barbara is hitching a ride out of town. Neither make it to their intended destinations, for an invisible barrier has descended over the town. Originally published: London:

The Visible World. By Mark Slouka (13 copies)

This is a story about memory and concealed histories, and about the way deeply hidden secrets of the past, eventually force their way into present.

The Welsh Girl by Peter Ho Davies (12 copies)

This novel traces a perilous wartime romance as it explores the bonds of love and duty that hold us to family, country, and ultimately, our fellow man.

We are all Made of Glue by Marina Lewycka (7 copies)

In the year of the 150th anniversary of 'Origin of the Species', set in a town where Jane Austen was a frequent visitor, Tracy Chevalier once again shows her uncanny sense for the topical.

We Need to Talk About Kevin by Lionel Shriver (9 COPIES)

Two years ago, Eva Khatchadourian's son, Kevin, murdered seven of his fellow high-school students, a cafeteria worker, and a popular algebra teacher. Because he was only fifteen at the time of the killings, he received a lenient sentence and is now in a prison for young offenders in upstate New York. Telling the story of Kevin's upbringing, Eva addresses herself to her estranged husband through a series of letters. Fearing that her own shortcomings may have shaped what her son has become, she confesses to a deep, long-standing ambivalence about both motherhood in general and Kevin in particular. How much is her fault? Lionel Shriver tells a compelling, absorbing, and resonant story while framing these horrifying tableaux of teenage carnage as metaphors for the larger tragedy - the tragedy of a country where everything works, nobody starves, and anything can be bought but a sense of purpose.

When Will There Be Good News ? by Kate Atkinson (7 copies)

In rural Devon, six-year-old Joanna witnesses an appalling crime. 30 years later the man convicted of the crime gets out of prison. In Edinburgh, 16-year-old Reggie works as a nanny for a doctor. But Dr Hunter has gone missing & Reggie seems to be the only person who is worried. DCI Louise Monroe is also looking for a missing person.

The White Tiger by Avarind Adiga (13 copies)

The story of a man's journey from Indian village life to entrepreneurial success. Dazzling... With the White tiger, Adiga sets out to show us a part of India that we hear about infrequently: its underbelly. Welcome to an India where Microsoft call-centre workers tread the same pavement as beggars who burn street rubbish for warmth.

The White Queen by Philippa Gregory (5 copies)

The White Queen' tells the tale of one woman's ambitious ascent to royalty during the Wars of the Roses and the unsolved mystery around her sons' imprisonment in the Tower.

The Whole Day Through by Patrick Gale (7 copies)

It's a day in the life of a 40-something woman. She has recently been obliged to move in with her elderly mother because the latter is a committed, lifelong, naturist who no conventional care home would admit.

Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel (6 copies)

England, the 1520s. Henry VIII is on the throne, but has no heir. Cardinal Wolsey is his chief advisor, charged with securing the divorce the pope refuses to grant. Into this atmosphere of distrust and need comes Thomas Cromwell, first as Wolsey's clerk, and later his successor.

The Woman in the Fifth by Douglas Kennedy (8 copies)

When Harry Ricks arrives in Paris on a bleak January morning he is a broken man. He is running away from a failed marriage and a dark scandal that ruined his career as a film lecturer in a small American university. With no money and nowhere to live, Harry swiftly falls in with the city's underclass, barely scraping a living.

The Woman in White by Wilkie Collins (9 copies)

The Woman in White was the original and most influential of the sensation novels of the 1860s. Through a series of diary entries and written testimony, the narrative unravels the mysterious connection between Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick.