



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Edinburgh student wins the 2009 Penguin Orange Readers' Group Prize

London, 27 May 2009: Edinburgh student, Jen Campbell, has won the 2009 Penguin Orange Readers' Group Prize. As part of her prize she will receive a cheque for £1,000 and a pair of tickets to the Orange Prize for Fiction 2009 awards ceremony in London on 3rd June.

Now in its eighth year, the prize is the UK's only annual award for reading groups and forms part of Orange's portfolio of literary partnerships. This year, individuals were asked to demonstrate how they had made reading social and submissions were made via the online book community www.spinebreakers.co.uk.

Jen Campbell recently finished her English Literature degree at Edinburgh University, where she ran her online book forum with over 100 topics for discussion. It proved so popular that she launched the Book Club and Obsessive Book Club in August 2008. There are now over 5,000 international members with a broad age range from 13 – 50, hailing from Australia to Finland. The online nature of the Book Club means members are able to suggest a diverse range of books and post comments at any time.

Jen Campbell commented: "Looking at the shortlist I really didn't expect this at all - thank you so much! I owe a lot to Pete, Cheryl and Saz who let me set up the subforum, and the members who help make it what it is.

"I'm definitely going to use some of the prize money to run a competition where members can email about why they love reading to win book tokens. Thank you again, I'm over the moon."

The three runners up are:

- **Eliot Reading Group, (Liverpool).** Inspired by the Ruskin Reading Group (see below) Dr Celia Bell started this group for patients with severe mental health problems in November 2008 at Ashworth Hospital. The membership of the group is open and different patients and staff attend each week.
- **North London Reading Group, (London).** Paul Drinkwater began the group and its website in 2007 with a simple web page asking if anybody wanted to join his reading group. Over 100 enquiries later, there is now a network of over 100 people across North London with four additional sister groups.
- **Ruskin Reading Group, (Liverpool).** Dr David Fearnley formed this reading group in February 2008 within a high security psychiatric hospital with the help of the Get into Reading Project, associated with the University of Liverpool. Patients, staff, visitors and students all meet weekly on the ward. The project helps build patients confidence as well as being a therapeutic experience.

The six youth panel members chosen to shadow the judging process of the official Orange Prize for Fiction 2009 selected the shortlist of four from a wide variety of entries. Kate Mosse, author, Orange Prize Honorary Director and Chair of judges for the 2009 Readers' Group Prize, selected the winner.

Kate Mosse commented: "Congratulations to Jen Campbell on winning the 2009 Penguin Orange Readers' Group Prize. It's a great achievement to run such a well supported and vibrant online Book Club and succeed in attracting such a huge number of international book lovers. There's no doubting her commitment to making reading, often a private passion, as social and community-based as possible.

"From the point of view of the Orange Prize for Fiction itself, it's interesting to see this new generation of online reading groups in virtual spaces, rather than taking place in workplaces or members' homes. We hope that Jen's success will inspire others who love reading but do not have the time to meet in-person to explore the concept of online book groups."

Anna Rafferty, Digital Marketing Director from Penguin UK commented; “Well done Jen! Facilitating over 5,000 readers discussing all over the world, day or night, is a hugely impressive achievement and a thoroughly deserving winner.”

For further information:

www.spinebreakers.co.uk

www.readersgroupprize.com

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Notes to Editors:

Penguin

Penguin (www.penguin.co.uk) was established in 1935, is one of the world's leading consumer publishing businesses and is part of Pearson plc, the international media company with market leading businesses in education, business information and consumer publishing. Penguin publishing comprises the Allen Lane, Fig Tree, Hamish Hamilton, Michael Joseph, Penguin, Penguin Classics, Puffin and Viking imprints.

Penguin has offices in 15 countries and runs over 50 reader and community websites, including www.spinebreakers.co.uk, the only online community for teenage book lovers, by teenage book lovers.

Penguin's Reading Groups website www.penguin.co.uk/readers has been running since 2001 and supports tens of thousands of 'real life' book groups as well as facilitating virtual reading groups and online book discussions.

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