

BCA rejigs editorial

Bertelsmann-owned BCA has restructured and expanded its editorial department after revealing plans to launch six new clubs a year (*The Bookseller*, 10th December 1999).

Alison Black has been promoted to senior managing editor with responsibility for general clubs. She will continue as managing editor of Worldbooks. Cathy Atkinson has been made managing editor for catalogues, oneshots, specialist and culture group clubs. All will report to editorial director Chris Holifield. Maureen Waller has been made fiction editor-in-chief.

World Book Day 2000 gears up

Schools throughout the UK will receive 50,000 World Book Day packs this week in readiness for the event on 10th March.

The Book Tokens-sponsored packs will include WBD activity ideas, £1 World Book Day Book Tokens, posters, stickers, Maths Year 2000 information and a letter from the Children's laureate Quentin Blake.

The packs will also include activity ideas to go with the 35 titles being promoted as WBD super reads for children and teenagers for the first time as part of WBD. The titles featured in the scheme include a number of big-name contemporary and classic authors including J K Rowling, Mick Inkpen, Michael Rosen, Allan Ahlberg, Quentin Blake, Anne Fine, Ted Hughes, Dick King Smith, Lynne Reid Banks and Terry Pratchett.

The Book Tokens replace the £1 vouchers used in previous years and will be issued in flow-wrapped packs rather than in sheets for ease of use. They will be valid from 6th March to 25th March on purchases of books or audio books worth £1.95 or more or for the *Children's Book of Books*.

WBD will also launch the national poll for the nation's favourite author next week. Booksellers who would like polling packs may call Gill Cronin or Sharon Down at the BA on 020 7834 5477.



WBD: Pratchett, Rowling and Blake



Odds-on winner: racehorse trainer Jenny Pitman recently visited the Newbury branch of W H Smith to sign copies of her autobiography (Bantam, £6.99, 0553504916).

Cunningham quits Element

Barry Cunningham, who helped set up Element Children's Books and, as publishing director of Bloomsbury Children's, discovered



J K Rowling, has left the company to set up a new publishing venture with "a leading industry player".

Mr Cunningham's departure comes against the background of a rationalisation and redundancy programme at Element in the weeks before Christmas.

David Alexander, Element chief executive, said it would continue to run and develop the children's list. Mr Cunningham had left voluntarily. A total of 15 redundancies have now been finalised, eight of which were voluntary. The company planned to complete its consolidation this year by outsourcing a number of editorial, sales and design activities, measures that should enable it to continue its track record of strong expansion, Mr Alexander said.

"When a company gets to about £20m turnover you've either got to make a massive investment in infrastructure and staff or make a positive move in the other direction. There are some exciting plans."

Mr Cunningham was unavailable for comment as *The Bookseller* went to press.

Penguin reassures over action

Joel Rickett

Penguin has reassured booksellers that a high-profile libel action to take place next week over Deborah Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust* does not affect their right to continue selling the title. The case has been brought by revisionist historian David Irving and is scheduled to begin in the High Court on 11th January. It is expected to last for up to three months.

In 1996, Mr Irving issued writs against Penguin, the author, and four Waterstone's booksellers. In his statement of claim, Mr Irving said the title painted him as "an Adolf Hitler partisan who wears blinkers and skews documents and misrepresents data in order to reach

historically untenable conclusions, specifically those that exonerate Hitler". Other objections lodged in the statement included denying the author's categorisation of him as a "Holocaust denier".

The case against the Waterstone's employees was dropped after the title was withdrawn from the branches concerned, and the chain's head office assumed responsibility for the decision to stock the book.

Helena Peacock, head of Penguin's legal department, said that the publisher would always protect booksellers in the event of legal action against any of its titles. "We would normally expect to indemnify booksellers who are selling the book in the course of their business. But given that he withdrew against

Waterstone's in 1996, it would be very surprising if he put an injunction out now."

But Sydney Davies, trade and industry manager of the Booksellers Association, urged wariness: "We advise booksellers to treat such cases with some caution. It's up to individual booksellers to take a decision as to whether the claimant has a case or not."

Penguin is confident that the claims made in the book will be vindicated in the libel action, in which Professor Lipstadt is co-defendant. "We're very, very confident about the case because of the evidence that our experts have put together," Ms Peacock said. Mr Irving was unavailable for comment as *The Bookseller* went to press.