

**Suggested Reads for Reading Groups:new titles added 2011.**

**Please see accompanying attachment on LibrariesWest for the comprehensive list.**

The following novels are all available in multiple copies through your local library. We update the list annually, so please let us know if you read a book you think should be included. You may post your review/notes of reading group discussion on the Libraries West website, or ask for a reader review card at your library.

The books are listed in alphabetical order by author and cover a range of genres and styles. Many groups are enjoying working their way through it. This is just a small selection of what's available, most of the authors have written more books. The majority are also available in audio and Large Print format. The book details have been extracted from publisher and online bookseller information. For further ideas it's also worth trying [www.whichbook.net](http://www.whichbook.net) and also publications such as The Book Club Bible.

**All of the following titles had more than 12 copies available to borrow across LibrariesWest at the time the list was compiled (May 2011)**

**TCS=Talking cassette, TCD=Talking CD, TDG=Playaway, LP=Large Print  
Also see the free audio download service on the LibrariesWest website.**

**Ackroyd, Peter**

**Clerkenwell Tales**

Peter Ackroyd opts for full immersion in *The Clerkenwell Tales* after dipping a toe, or ten, in the Middle Ages with *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination*. *The Clerkenwell Tales* is a gripping novel about murder and religious and political intrigue in 14th century London.

**2TCS/6LP**

**Alison, Rosie**

**The very thought of you (350 pages)**

As Hitler prepares to invade Poland, many children are evacuated from London to escape the impending Blitz. Torn from her mother, eight-year-old Anna Sands is relocated with other children to a large Yorkshire estate. This title tells a story of love, loss and complicated loyalties, combining a narrative with subtle psychological observation.

**3LP**

**Amirrezvani, Anita**

**The blood of flowers (384 pages)**

A stunning and evocative first novel which will have on the market the impact of THE KITE RUNNER, THE SHADOW OF THE WIND or SMALL ISLAND. Publication of THE BLOOD OF FLOWERS was one of "the" publishing events of 2007.

**Athill, Diana**

**Somewhere towards the end (192 pages)**

Diana Athill will be ninety in December, 2007. This book tells the story of what it means to be old: how the pleasure of sex ebbs, how the joy of gardening grows, how much there is to remember, to forget, to regret, to forgive - and how one faces the inevitable fact of death.

**8LP**

**Byatt, A.S.**

**The children's book (624 pages)**

Olive Wellwood is a famous writer. For each of them she writes a separate private book, bound in different colours and placed on a shelf. In their house near Romney Marsh they play in a story-book world - but their lives, and those of their cousins, children of a city stockbroker, are already inscribed with mystery.

**6TCD/2TDG**

**Coetzee, J.M**

**Summertime (320 pages)**

A young English biographer is working on a book about the late writer, John Coetzee. He plans to focus on the years from 1972-1977 when Coetzee, in his 30s, is sharing a run-down cottage in the suburbs of Cape Town with his widowed father. This, the biographer senses, is the period when he was 'finding his feet as a writer'.

**Colin, Beatrice**

**The luminous life of Lilly Aphrodite (416 pages)**

A rich, romantic historical novel showcasing the glamour, spectacle and theatrical energy of the Weimar Republic.

**Connolly, John**

**Reapers**

They are the Reapers, the elite among killers. Men so terrifying that their names are mentioned only in whispers. The assassin Louis is one of them. But now Louis, and his partner, Angel, are themselves targets.

**1TCS, 1TDG**

**Dick, Philip K**

**Minority report**

Imagine a future where crimes can be detected before they are committed, and criminals are convicted and sentenced for crimes before committing them.

**Davidson, Andrew**

**The gargoyle (502 pages)**

A young man is fighting for his life. Into his room walks a bewitching woman who believes she can save him. Their journey will have you believing in the impossible. A Richard and Judy Best Read 2009 pick

**Dunant, Sarah**

**Sacred hearts (480 pages)**

Sarah Dunant's latest novel is set in the convent of Santa Caterina, in the northern Italian city of Ferrara. The year is 1570. The story revolves around two women who had entered holy orders for different reasons.

**4TCD/2TDG/8LP**

**Erskine, Barbara**

**Hiding from the light**

A gripping tale of witchcraft and romance, past and present, as the modern day characters are caught up in a battle that has been raging for hundreds of years.

**4TCS/2LP/5TCD**

**Foulds, Adam**

**The quickening maze (272 pages)**

Based on real events in Epping Forest on the edge of London around 1840, this book centres on the first incarceration of the great nature poet John Clare.

**1TCD/7LP**

**Furst, Alan**

**Kingdom of Shadows (274 pages)**

It must be daunting for an author to be compared to Graham Greene, John Le Carré and Robert Harris, but Alan Furst's much acclaimed sequence of novels demonstrate the virtues of his predecessors. It's 1938, and a sinister tide of Fascism is growing in strength throughout Europe.

**4LP**

**Galloway, Steven**

**The cellist of Sarajevo (288 pages)**

Snipers in the hills overlook the shattered streets of Sarajevo. Knowing that the next bullet could strike at any moment, the ordinary men and women below strive to go about their daily lives as best they can. Kenan faces the agonizing dilemma of crossing the city to get water for his family.

**4TCD/5LP**

**Geras, Adele**

**Hester's Story**

Hester Fielding was once the leading ballerina of her day. Her life is the stuff of drama: a bleak Yorkshire childhood transformed by the discovery of her amazing gifts as a dancer; a dangerous love affair that can only lead to heartbreak; and a secret that would topple her from her pinnacle of fame if it ever came out....

**4TCS/3TCD/8LP**

**Hill, Susan**

**The man in the picture**

A mysterious depiction of masked revellers at the Venice carnival hangs in the college rooms of Oliver's old professor in Cambridge. Its eerie secret is revealed by the ageing don. The dark art of the Venetian scene, instead of imitating life, has the power to entrap it. To stare into the painting is to play dangerously with the unseen demons it hides, and become the victim of its macabre beauty...

**Hornby, Nick**

**Juliet, naked (256 pages)**

Annie lives in a dull town on England's bleak east coast and is in a relationship with Duncan which mirrors the place; Tucker was once a brilliant songwriter and performer, who's gone into seclusion in rural America. When Annie dares to go public on her dislike of his latest album, there are quite unexpected consequences for all three.

**1TCD/6LP**

**Jensen, Liz**

**The rapture (352 pages)**

An environmental disaster movie of a thriller.

**7TCD/3TDG/5LP**

**Kellerman, Jesse**

**The brutal art (416 pages)**

A thing of beauty is a joy forever - or at least until it kills you.

**5TCD/1TDG/8LP**

**Locke, Attica**

**Black water rising (448 pages)**

On a dark night, out on the Houston bayou to celebrate his wife's birthday, Jay Porter hears a scream. Saving a distressed woman from drowning, he opens a Pandora's Box. Not the lawyer he set out to be, Jay long ago made peace with his radical youth, tucked away his darkest sins and resolved to make a fresh start.

**Mantel, Hilary**

**Wolf hall (672 pages)**

Winner of the Man Booker Prize 2009 'Lock Cromwell in a deep dungeon in the morning,' says Thomas More, 'and when you come back that night he'll be sitting on a plush cushion eating larks' tongues, and all the gaolers will owe him money.'

**8TCD/4TDG/7LP**

**Mawer, Simon**

**The glass house (416 pages)**

Inspired by a real house, an amazing modernist symbol, Simon Mawer has written his best novel yet, a story guaranteed to dazzle and intrigue the reader.

**Moore, Lorrie**

**A gate at the stairs (336 pages)**

Twenty-year-old Tassie Keltjin, a 'half-Jewish' farmer's daughter from the plains of the Midwest, has come to university. When she takes a job as a part-time nanny to a couple who seem at once mysterious and glamorous, Tassie is drawn into the life of their newly-adopted child and increasingly complicated household.

**5TCD**

**Moore, Wendy**

**Wedlock (520 pages)**

'The remarkable story of one woman's triumph over years of appalling violence and abuse'  
DAILY EXPRESS.

**3LP**

**Munro, Alice**

**Too much happiness (320 pages)**

Contains stories about Svengali men, and radical women who outmanoeuvre them, about destructive marriages and curdled friendships, about mothers and sons, and about moments which change or haunt a life.

**6LP**

**Murdoch, Iris**

**The Bell**

**The Bell** (1958) is not the first (and certainly not the last) of Murdoch's novels to deal with issues of faith and belief in the modern world, and her treatment of spiritual and moral idealism thwarted by the reality of human desires and failings is a recurrent theme in her novels. What makes **The Bell** so intriguing is, however, the rich patterning of imagery and symbolism onto such a strong central story-line.

**1TCS/2TCD**

**O'Brien, Edna**

**In the forest**

Despite the controversy that surrounded the publication of this book, O'Brien has created a tense yet sensitively-written story, woven delicately with both mythology and modern sociological issues.'THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST. Not surprisingly this "true crime" novel makes for sombre and uncomfortable reading. O'Brien is unquestionably skilled at deploying language to create a highly charged atmosphere.

**2TCS/2TCD/11LP**

**Parks, Tim**

**Cleaver**

Cleaver, like the fairly similar "Judge Savage" before it, is a wonderful insight into a troubled mind as it tries to evaluate its past. Cleaver, a famous television presenter, escapes into the Italian mountains to live entirely alone for several months after his son releases an "autobiography" of sorts in which he openly criticises every aspect of his father's life before killing him off at the end.

**3LP**

**Osborne, Frances**

**The bolter (336 pages)**

'This is a truly astonishing book. Frances Osborne has not just brought to life a dizzyingly rich and scandalous slice of social history, she has produced a tragic and deeply moving tale as well. It is far more gripping than any novel I have read for years' Antony Beevor.

**8LP**

**Pelecanos, George. P**

**The way home (320 pages)**

How far will a father go to save his son? A page-turning story of rebellion, greed, and the high price of a second chance from 'one of the finest crime writers in America' THE TIMES.

**3TCD/7LP**

**Qui, Xiaolong**

**The Mao Case**

The usual enjoyable mix of murder, poetry and contractions of contemporary Chinese culture. Chen is a splendid creation, with his facility for quoting Tang Dynasty poetry and T S Eliot, his quiet devotion to his duty, his unhappy love life and his appreciation of good food. Independent on Sunday

**5LP**

**Quick, Matthew**

**The silver linings playbook (256 pages)**

Pat Peoples has a theory that his life is actually a movie produced by God, and that his God-given mission in life is to become emotionally literate, whereupon God will ensure a happy ending - which, for Pat, means the return of his estranged wife Nikki. When Pat goes to live with his parents, however, everything seems changed.

**1LP**

**Rankin, Iain**

**The Complaints**

'The precisely rendered police procedure is impressive, but it is what lies beneath - the heartbeat of Midlothian, the quiet cunning of Malcolm Fox - that resonates. Rankin's strength resides in a kind of fingertip search of the urban scene, exposing the underbelly of a city scarred by violence'. Willy Maley *TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT*

**7TCD/3TDG/6LP**

**Smith, Tom Rob**

**Child 44 (480 pages)**

In Soviet Russia, Leo Demidov is after a killer that the State denies exists. But he's in danger himself - from the country he's trying to protect.

**8TCD/14LP**

**Tearne, Roma**

**Brixton beach (432 pages)**

Opening dramatically with the horrors of the 2005 London bombings, this is the profoundly moving story of a country on the brink of civil war and a child's struggle to come to terms with loss.

**4TCD**

**Toltz, Steve**

**A fraction of the whole (720pages)**

From his prison cell, Jasper Dean tells the unlikely story of his scheming father Martin, his crazy Uncle Terry and how the three of them upset - mostly unintentionally - an entire continent.

**Verghese, Abraham**

**Cutting for stone (560 pages)**

Marion and Shiva Stone, born in a mission hospital in Ethiopia in the 1950s, are twin sons of an illicit union between an Indian nun and British doctor. Bound by birth but with widely different temperaments they grow up together, in a country on the brink of revolution, until a betrayal splits them apart. But fate has not finished with them.

**1TCD/2TDG**

**Winthrop, Elizabeth H**

**December (384 pages)**

A novel of spellbinding emotional power about a family in crisis by a highly talented young author