



January 15th, 2016

Vera author backs reading event at hospital

Ann Cleeves, bestselling crime novelist and creator of TV's popular detective Vera Stanhope, dropped in at South Tyneside District Hospital to support an event to encourage health staff in a challenge to read six books in six months.

Ann gave a talk as part of the Reading Ahead scheme, which aims to change people's perception of reading, opening up opportunities and building their confidence.

Ann's critically-acclaimed books, many of which have been inspired by the North East where she lives, have been translated into 20 languages. Her latest novel, *The Moth Catcher*, is another investigation for Vera set in Northumberland. There have so far been five series of Vera, the ITV adaptation of her novels starring Brenda Blethyn as the unconventional sleuth. Some scenes for the next series, which will go out in early February, were shot at South Tyneside District Hospital last summer. There have also been two series of *Shetland*, based on her *Shetland* novels, and a new six-part series started on BBC One on Friday (January 15th).

Reading Ahead is being promoted at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust through Bridges to Learning, a partnership between Unison, the Open University and the Workers' Educational Association to encourage workers in the health, social care and education sectors to develop in their jobs through participating in learning and training. The books for the challenge are being provided by Unison and Jarrow Library.

Ann said: "This is a brilliant project and I'm delighted to be involved. Reading is an escape and a challenge and helps us see the world through other people's eyes."

Hazel Kjebekk, the Trust's Bridges to Learning project worker, said: "We were thrilled when Ann agreed to come along. I'm sure her enthusiasm for the written word will inspire more people to read for pleasure, which is a gateway to opportunities in many areas of life."

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Pictured above: Celebrated crime novelist Ann Cleeves, who gave a talk at South Tyneside District Hospital

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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