

Indie Twinning

It's more important than ever for independent publishers and booksellers to be supporting each other. In 2020 one of the exciting strands of Independent Bookshop Week activity we developed was the Indie Twinning initiative. Independent publishers and independent bookshops teamed up to develop bespoke programmes of activity throughout the campaign. We'd like to build on this strand of activity for 2021.

Feedback from booksellers and publishers that participated in the Independent Bookshop Week Indie Twinning initiative identified the following benefits:

- Reaching new readers and connecting with new people
- Building social media followers and engagement
- Driving sales; online and in-store
- Creating media opportunities
- Reminding consumers of the importance of small/independent businesses
- Where the publisher and / or its authors are local to the bookshop, using it as an opportunity to emphasise the positive impact and benefits of shopping locally
- Most booksellers and publishers reported that they very much saw this as the start of a longer-term partnership

Endorsements:

"Independents - booksellers & publishers - need to stick together now more than ever! Plus we are total suckers for a collaboration - especially if there's a playlist & some dancing! Nina at Rough Trade Books was a peach to work with ... and dammit we had fun!" **Helen Stanton, Forum Books**

"Nick and Mel were a dream to work with and, even though we've been in the same room previously it was nice to meet in a socially distanced way and have a good conversation. We're certainly hoping to continue working in partnership with The Rabbit Hole - we love the indie twinning concept - and exploring other partnerships that materialised as a result of Independent Bookshop Week. So we'd be happy to be involved in all and any future iterations." **Dave Windass, Wrecking Ball Press**

"The Saraband twinning worked brilliantly. It was a chance to experiment, collaborate and strengthen our online activity as two independents. We both benefited from each other's creative input and put together a simple and effective campaign." **Will Smith, Sam Read**

If you would like to take part in a partnership, here are some suggestions that you may wish to factor into your plans:

- Bespoke branding for your partnership, possibly combining the publisher and bookshop logos
- Branded social media assets
- Schedule of integrated social media posts, each partner tagging the other, perhaps highlighting a particular title a day. Link to bookshop website to drive sales
- Select a title, or a number of titles, yet to be published to focus on and drive pre-orders
- Reciprocal digital content – e.g. a piece from the bookseller to sit on the publisher website or blog and vice versa
- A themed playlist for sharing on social media and, for those shops with a license, for playing in-store

- Twitter chats, Facebook Lives, Instagram Lives, or any other sort of virtual author events
- If it is safe to do so, organise in-store events and signings. Some authors may feel comfortable doing stock signings
- Bespoke signed bookplates
- Signed stock
- Book groups using the partner publisher's titles
- Dedicated window and / or table displays

If you would like to get involved, please email emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk