

Anna Robinson to Ted Rogers: 21/08/08 by email.

Right - the new book is called Hackney: That Rose-Red Empire - he describes it as a 'work of documentary fiction'. It is essentially a work of love about Hackney - and I guess someones got to...

The Olympics Scam is a piece for the London Review of Books - viewable on their website, which if you read it you'll see is nowhere near as rude about the Olympics as it might sound. There is one paragraph that highlights the encroachment by developers onto the marshes and other than that he only says that the relationship between government and developers is like "Dr Frankenstein with a Google Earth program and a remote-control laser scalpel." - which you've got to admit is true and very funny!

As I've been discussing doing this with him for ages - pulling it as controversial is not something he won't comment on and that will be far harder to deal with than a bit of digging at the developers (and it is them - not the sports persons that he is commenting on!)

Anna Robinson

Reader Development Manager

Hackney Libraries

Rose Lipman Building

De Beauvoir Road

London N1 5SQ

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Edward Rogers

**Sent:** 21 August 2008 12:24

**To:** Anna Robinson; Anita Kane

**Subject:** RE: Iain Sinclair

Thanks, both. I'll have a word with Comms later.

Incidentally, I'm chuffed to bits about this festival. He's an internationally renowned author and I think it's a major coup for us to be able to launch one of his books

Ted

Interim Head of Libraries, Archives and Information  
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17 Reading Lane  
London  
E8 1HH

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Anita Kane

**Sent:** 21 August 2008 13:46

**To:** Edward Rogers; Anna Robinson

**Subject:** RE: Iain Sinclair

Hear hear!!

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Edward Rogers

**Sent:** 21 August 2008 13:50

**To:** Anita Kane; Anna Robinson; Anita Kane; Anna Robinson

**Subject:** RE: Iain Sinclair

Nevertheless, don't have any discussions with anybody outside the Council until I've had a chance to talk to Communications

Thanks

Ted

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**From:** Anna Robinson  
**Sent:** 28 August 2008 17:03  
**To:** Edward Rogers  
**Subject:** iain sinclair - again

The writer I'm sure I was told was a former Hackney leader - wasn't - it is Ken Worpole and he is one of the people that set up Centerprise.

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I am reading Living With Honour: a pagan ethic by Emma Restell Orr

Of course

Ted

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**From:** Anna Robinson  
**Sent:** 28 August 2008 15:42  
**To:** Edward Rogers  
**Subject:** Iain Sinclair presents:

So - the idea is Iain Sinclair chooses a number of writers/artists to present in celebration of his long awaited Hackney Book. The gallery is the venue - an exhibition of art by artists chosen by Sinclair - will run throughout.

Proposed events: Exhibition private view, book launch for 'Hackney, That Rose-Red Empire' - organised in collaboration with Penguin Books, book launch for re-publication of Patrick Wright's book - A Journey Through Ruins - organised in collaboration with OUP, - other events not as yet fixed but could include Stewart Home, Nicola Barker, Will Self, Sebastian Bell and/or Nigel Fountain - all of whom are writers Sinclair is friendly with and has mentioned in the new book. Doing a literary walk in collaboration with Archives and poet Jude Rosen is another probable event.

I am at the stage of having had a number of discussions with Iain Sinclair and with Anna Ridley of Penguin Books - so we are on course to having things pretty settled. My own schedule is that I would be getting I.S to pin down who he'd like to ask to read/exhibit the week after next and preparing it for artwork by the end of September - early October at the latest

Anna Robinson

Reader Development Manager

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Extract from notes of 1-1  
meeting Kim Wright / Nicola Baker  
5/9/08

**Ian Sinclair**

KW to raise with Ben, once NB has provided the background briefing.

**From:** Edward Rogers  
**Sent:** 08 September 2008 09:21  
**To:** Anna Robinson  
**Subject:** RE: Iain Sinclair presents:

Anna

Have you got a spare 20 minutes this afternoon when we can discuss making a case for this?

Thanks

Ted

**From:** Anna Robinson  
**Sent:** 08 September 2008 09:32  
**To:** Edward Rogers  
**Subject:** RE: Iain Sinclair presents:

My place or yours!

**From:** Edward Rogers  
**Sent:** 08 September 2008 09:59  
**To:** Anna Robinson  
**Subject:** RE: Iain Sinclair presents:

Can you do 3pm here?

Thanks

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**From:** Anna Robinson  
**Sent:** 08 September 2008 10:05  
**To:** Edward Rogers  
**Subject:** RE: Iain Sinclair presents:

Yes - see you then

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I am reading Living With Honour: a pagan ethic by Emma Restell Orr

Thanks

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**From:** Edward Rogers  
**Sent:** 17 September 2008 12:33  
**To:** Nicola Baker; Nicola Baker  
**Subject:** Iain Sinclair

Let me know what you think

Ted

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Attachment:

### **Iain Sinclair book launch – risk analysis**

The launch of Iain Sinclair's latest book 'Hackney that Red Rose Empire' is scheduled to take place at Stoke Newington Library in March 2009. Sinclair is a local author of national status who has lived near London Fields for most of his life. Starting his career as a novelist and poet, his latest genre is psycho-geography – a study of the more colourful aspects of society, architecture and topography in a specified area, and his interest is in London and specifically Hackney. Sinclair's writing is often abrasive, questioning and anti-establishment, although he also celebrates the idiosyncratic and diverse nature of London society.

Hackney Libraries have been in contact with the publishers, Penguin, over the arrangements for the launch, and a week in March 2009 has tentatively been agreed.

There are a number of risks associated with going ahead with the event, and others in stopping it at this stage.

#### Risks in going ahead with the event:

- The pre-publication statement on Amazon includes Once an Arcadian suburb of grand houses, orchards and conservatories, Hackney declined into a zone of asylums, hospitals and dirty industry. Persistently revived,

reinvented, betrayed, it has become a symbol of inner-city chaos, crime and poverty. Now, the Olympics, a final attempt to clamp down on a renegade spirit, seeks to complete the process: erasure disguised as 'progress'.

- The book may contain criticism of London Borough of Hackney or its actions. It is possible that a high profile event such as this may be attended by the press and the fact that the book was launched in an London Borough of Hackney building could lead to adverse publicity. Whilst this is likely to be only reported locally, there is a small chance that it could be reported in the national press.
- The book is likely to contain criticism of the 2012 Olympics, and the 'gentrification' process that Sinclair throughout east London. It is possible some observers may perceive an implied support of these views.
- Given the high number of media professionals who live in the borough, the event is likely to get a good deal of publicity.
- It is possible that Sinclair sees the event as an opportunity to embarrass the council. However, given his support for Hackney Libraries in the past, and the involvement of Penguin who have a vested interest in not offending a library authority, this is not likely.

#### Risks in cancelling the event

- Sinclair is a local author, and has links with other local authors. Hackney Libraries is well supported by local authors but any act that could be viewed as censorship is likely to damage this relationship. There is a strong likelihood that Sinclair will be able to broker other author events at Hackney Libraries – for example Nicola Barker, Will Self and Stewart Home, all of whom are friends of Sinclair and have Hackney connections.
- Sinclair has supported Hackney Libraries in the past by appearing at the Write to Ignite literature festival. At the last festival he steered the debate away from comments made by a member of the audience which were critical of the Dalston development back to the discussion of literature.
- Sinclair is a major author. A launch of this nature will raise the profile of Hackney Libraries, and increase the credibility of the service. Given the high number of media professionals who live in the borough, the event is likely to get a good deal of publicity.
- Sinclair is ideally placed to portray the Council in a bad light if the event were cancelled, and he suspected that his voice was being censored. He has access to publicity at a national level and there is a high risk that he would use a national platform (for example Radio 4's Front Row) to voice his criticism both of the cancellation and of his perception of why the event was cancelled.
- Cancellation of a library event on the grounds of the legal content of a work runs contrary both the ethics of the profession and to the principle of the Stock Acquisition Policy which states that Hackney will adhere to the CILIP Policy on Intellectual Freedom and Censorship.

### Recommendation

Clearly there are risks associated with both running and cancelling the event. However, both the likelihood and consequences of the risks from cancelling are higher. It is therefore recommended that the event be run.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Edward Rogers  
**Sent:** 17 September 2008 12:38  
**To:** Nicola Baker; Nicola Baker  
**Subject:** Iain Sinclair

Correct version attached

Ted

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Hackney Libraries have been in contact with the publishers, Penguin, over the arrangements for the launch, and a week in March 2009 has tentatively been agreed.

There are a number of risks associated with going ahead with the event, and others in stopping it at this stage.

#### Risks in going ahead with the event:

- The pre-publication statement on Amazon includes 'Once an Arcadian suburb of grand houses, orchards and conservatories, Hackney declined into a zone of asylums, hospitals and dirty industry. Persistently revived, reinvented, betrayed, it has become a symbol of inner-city chaos, crime and poverty. Now,

the Olympics, a final attempt to clamp down on a renegade spirit, seeks to complete the process: erasure disguised as 'progress'.

- The book may contain criticism of London Borough of Hackney or its actions. It is possible that a high profile event such as this may be attended by the press and the fact that the book was launched in an London Borough of Hackney building could lead to adverse publicity. Whilst this is likely to be only reported locally, there is a small chance that it could be reported in the national press.
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- Given the high number of media professionals who live in the borough, the event is likely to get a good deal of publicity.
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### Recommendation

Clearly there are risks associated with both running and cancelling the event. However, both the likelihood and consequences of the risks from cancelling are higher. It is therefore recommended that the event be run.

**From:** Nicola Baker  
**Sent:** 17 September 2008 12:49  
**To:** Kim Wright  
**Subject:** Iain Sinclair book launch  
Kim

Following our discussions last week I attach a risk analysis of the proposed book launch. Please let me know how you would like us to proceed.

Nicola

Nicola Baker  
Assistant Director; Culture  
London Borough of Hackney  
020 8356 2560

### **Iain Sinclair book launch – risk analysis**

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### Recommendation

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**From:** Polly Rance  
**Sent:** 22 September 2008 17:03  
**To:** James Willsher  
**Subject:** RE: Two things

Firstly, I think we should inform Iain Sinclair's publishers (via library services) that with apologies we will be unable to host the book launch in one of the borough's libraries but would be happy to suggest alternative private venues in the borough such as independent bookshops. If then pushed for a reason we will say that we do not wish it to appear that Hackney Council condones or endorses the content of the book which is in direct contradiction to our stated aims and policies around the 2012 legacy. If Sinclair decides to take it to media we will then respond in an appropriately robust fashion.

[REDACTED]

Polly Rance  
Head of Media and External Relations  
London Borough of Hackney  
020 8356 3323  
07985 692964  
[www.hackney.gov.uk](http://www.hackney.gov.uk)

From: Polly Rance  
Sent: 24 September 2008 22:33  
To: Nicola Baker  
Cc: Kim Wright  
Subject: RE:

Dear Nicola

We clearly need to find a solution to this issue and I appreciate your concerns. It is clear that we cannot allow the event to go ahead. I have discussed this with The Mayor and his direction was clear. He feels, as do I, that we should not host an event on Council premises promoting a book which has an overtly contraversial and political (albeit non-party) agenda, and actively promotes an opinion which contradicts our aims and values as an organisation - in this case the 2012 games and legacy, which Sinclair's book will seek to 'expose' as a con being perpetrated on the people of the East End. My suggestion via James was that we write to the publishers and let them know that we feel it would be inappropriate for the Council to host the event, but offer to assist them by suggesting other local venues such as independent book shops. If pushed we can explain that we do not wish it to appear that the Council is in anyway condoning or endorsing the content of Sinclair's book. I have discussed the potential PR ramifications of this with Jules and he is comfortable with this approach, in that it is honest, straightforward and a position he would feel comfortable defending.

I am aware that Sinclair is a highly respected writer who has written for many years about Hackney, and there is clearly a certain appeal to his particular brand of urban romanticism, but I just don't think we can square this circle.

Please let me know if you have any further concerns about our suggested approach.

All the best

Polly

From: "Nicola Baker" <Nicola.Baker@Hackney.gov.uk>  
To: "Kim Wright" <Kim.Wright@Hackney.gov.uk>  
Sent: 1/10/08 9:26 AM  
Subject: FW:

Kim

It would be very helpful to have a final position on this by the end of the week if at all possible please.

Nicola

-----Original Message-----

From: Kim Wright

Sent: 01 October 2008 09:49

To: Nicola Baker

Subject: RE:

it's a non runner I'm afraid

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Nicola Baker

**Sent:** 01 October 2008 09:49

**To:** Edward Rogers

**Subject:** Iain Sinclair

Kim has come back with a negative. Sorry.

Nicola Baker

Assistant Director; Culture

London Borough of Hackney

020 8356 2560

OK. I will deal with this

Ted

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