



EMBARGOED until 00:01am Thursday 28 May

Booksellers Association Steps in to Ensure Maximum Stability for Members with Bertline Purchase

London. 28 May 2020. The BA Group has today stepped in to support members dependent on Bertrams' Bertline by acquiring the bookselling system.

With Bertrams currently up for sale, and over 250 independent bookshops facing uncertainty as to the future of the stock control system, the BA Group's technology arm, Batch, will take over the running of Bertline to provide consistency to BA members.

The transition will complete at the end of June, with both Bertrams and the BA Group working closely together to ensure a smooth handover period. The BA Group will be communicating directly with those of its members who use the system about the development to keep them up to date.

Meryl Halls, Managing Director at the BA, commented: *"The BA Group has focussed all its energy since the start of the COVID crisis on putting in place mechanisms to maintain maximum stability for high street bookselling as it strives to return to full strength after the enormous body shocks of the virus and its ongoing impacts. The purchase of Bertline by the BA Group is in line with this motivation – to preserve stability for the independent sector, to secure a crucial supply chain tool for over 250 independent booksellers, and to minimise disruption to the supply chain, and to the effectiveness of high street bookshops reliant on the Bertline system. We intend to continue business as usual for our bookseller members, and we are delighted at the swift and responsive reaction of Bertrams' CEO, Raj Patel, to our approach to step in to secure the system for the future. We look forward very much to working on the smooth transition with the Bertrams team and hope that our indie members who are Bertline users see a clearer future, and one less anxiety as they enter the re-opening phase of the crisis."*

Andy Rossiter, BA President, added: *"As a long-time user of Bertrams and the Bertline system, I am both proud and delighted that I am BA President at the point where the BA Group – albeit in vexed circumstances – has been able to step in and secure the future for the Bertline system at a time when its loss would have been another body blow to independent bookselling. I have used Bertline for the entire period I have run my three shops with my wife, Victoria, and have been engaged and active in its development as a user. Securing this essential ordering and stock control tool is a huge vote of confidence in the indie bookselling sector by the BA Group, and I can think of no better home for it than with the Batch suite of services. Batch has proven itself an invaluable tool for bookshops of all sizes for many years, and as the technology arm of the BA, is uniquely well-placed to continue the provision of the service to BA members."*

Fraser Tanner, Managing Director at Batch, said: *"I am delighted to announce that Batch has managed to secure Bertline for the book trade. As a key part of the supply chain and embedded in the operations of so many BA members, we could not stand by as the uncertainty of Bertline's future was unfolding, adding as it did to the difficult situation that booksellers were already facing. Raj Patel of Bertrams was keen to work with us so we can provide a continuity of service at what is a uniquely challenging time. There will be a period of transition as we move to support everyone on the system, so we will ask you to bear with us over the next few months. I wholeheartedly believe that Batch's innovative technology can bring benefits in many areas, and my team and I will do our*



very best to help the many wonderful publishers and booksellers across the country as they continue to serve their customers."

Raj Patel, CEO at Bertrams, said: *"I am really grateful to the Booksellers Association in taking charge of a much-loved system developed in tandem with the independent bookshops over the years. Bertline has been the system of choice for hundreds of bookshops across the country. I know Bertline is in good hands and will be further developed by BATCH and representatives of our book industry."*

Batch will be contacting members in the coming weeks with more details, with members able to contact the mail@batch.co.uk support email in the interim.

...Ends...

For media enquiries, please contact: **Edwina Boyd-Gibbins or Ben McCluskey at Midas Public Relations on edwina.boyd-gibbins@midaspr.co.uk / ben.mccluskey@midaspr.co.uk or 020 7361 7860.**

Notes to Editors

About The Booksellers Association (BA)

The Booksellers Association is a membership organization for all booksellers in the UK & Ireland, and we represent over 95% of specialist booksellers selling new books. The BA exists to support, advise and work with its members to create excellent products for booksellers. These range from National Book Tokens, our gift card which prompts increased footfall and keeps gift spending in the book trade, and Batch, our award-winning payments service, which saves time, money and hassle when settling invoices and organising returns, to a full range of money-saving affinity deals, a free Business Support Helpline and a whole range of tailored events, marketing and promotional campaign work, including Books Are My Bag, World Book Day, the Christmas Books catalogue and Independent Bookshop Week.

About Batch

Batch is the secure electronic payments and information system that was designed by the BA to save booksellers time and money. Batch is a web based system that can be used by all bookstores of any size. Batch provides free EDI feeds for integration into stock control systems and accounts packages, such as QuickBooks and Xero. Batch Returns simplifies the returns process and helps to reduce waste in the supply chain. All its services are free to booksellers. The system is used around the world in over 80 countries.