

# TeenLibrarian

Monthly Newsletter  
www.teenlibrarian.co.uk



This month's edition of Teen Librarian Monthly marks the fourth anniversary of the creation of the newsletter.

This month we take a look at an intergenerational project from the LB of Enfield with Angela Shoosmith (who also shares ideas on running a Carnegie Awards Quiz). Fiona Hulkins lets us know about the Lockdown that took place at Folkstone Library and Liz Rose shares an idea for a no cost library event.

I would like to thank all those that have contributed articles and ideas over the past years and also to all the subscribers as without the writers and readers TLM would not exist.

This month's Eight Questions With... interview is with Luisa Plaja author of *Split by a Kiss* and *Swapped by a Kiss*.

## Intergenerational IT Project

The new John Jackson Library, in Bush Hill Park, Enfield was given nearly a million pound lottery grant for community-focused refurbishment. As part of our commitment to providing IT training to older members of the community, we organized an Intergenerational IT project that paired a person over 50 with a student volunteer from a local school. This pilot project involved a course of four hour-long sessions that took place during the month of March. We worked directly with a school to recruit 10 student volunteers, and seven older learners signed up through the library to participate.

Prior to the first session, the students were trained in working with older people and using our learning materials. We introduced them to MyGuide, an online programme designed to introduce new computer users to IT through short modules covering a range of topics. MyGuide works best when initially supported one-on-one, but after the user gains confidence, the modules can be self-guided.

Each week the students were paired with one of the older learners and worked at their own

pace using the modules that suited the older learners best. Most of the learners had some prior experience with computers and were competent users of the mouse and keyboard. Many had specific questions regarding online shopping and their emails that the students were able to answer.

The feedback from the older learners ranged from positive to very enthusiastic. We all celebrated with a pizza party and the older learners were very grateful to the students for their time. The students did a fantastic job and took away with them some valuable experience. We hope to offer the programme more regularly beginning in the autumn term.

## Lockdown at Folkestone Library

The Lockdown was an all-night event for teenagers at Folkestone Library, based on similar events that have been held by Kent Youth Services at C@fe-IT. C@fe-IT is the location for Kent's Headspace, providing books, advice and Internet facilities at a venue close to the library. The Lockdown was run in partnership with local youth workers and took place from 8.30pm on Friday 30th October until 8am on Saturday 31st October.

We had originally decided on a maximum of 20 participants but the demand was high and we increased the number to 30. By the date of the Lockdown, the event was fully subscribed with a 'reserve' list of young people who wanted to attend.

The library was decorated in a Halloween theme and there was a fancy dress competition. Staff as well as teenagers entered into the spirit and we had a good collection of monsters, zombies, witches and a couple of clowns!

Youth Services provided a range of entertainment, including Warhammer games, Xbox consoles and a music system. We also arranged for the internet to be available all night. The young people had sandwiches at midnight and breakfast at 6am, and snacks were on sale throughout the event.

There was a considerable amount of work involved in setting up for the Lockdown and several of the young people assisted the library staff and youth workers with this. The event itself was attended by the Librarian, three members of Youth Services staff and five volunteers. Clearing up in the morning was a daunting task, but it was a case of 'many hands make light work' and the library was spick and span by opening time on Saturday.

The Lockdown was a fun way to raise the profile of the library with this group of young people, most of whom visit the library rarely or never. It provided an opportunity to connect with teenagers in a relaxed atmosphere (and for them to show the librarian how to play Guitar Hero!)

Feedback from young people Feedback and consultation forms were given out and completed by 22 of the young people. These collected their opinions on the event, as well as information about their reading preferences and frequency of visiting the library. This data will be very useful for directing future activities with teenagers, stock selection, choice of teen magazines etc.

Of the 22 people who filled in feedback forms, 10 use the library less than once a year and 5 never come into the library. 4 are regular users (visit the library once a month or more)

Comments about the Lockdown included: 'Great fun,' 'I love it,' 'Quiet but cool' and 'Awesome.'

## Carnegie Quiz

2010 will be the sixth year that Enfield Libraries have hosted a Carnegie Quiz event as a finale to Carnegie Shadowing. It's run like a pub quiz, with teams of about 5-10 students from local secondary schools answering questions in rounds: five questions per shortlisted title. Last year we had twelve schools and over 100 students crowded into the Palmers Green children's library on the day of the event, which we hold on or the day before the Carnegie winner is announced. Since becoming an annual event, competition has grown between schools and the winners go home with certificates, a small (edible) prize and school pride. Here are a few tips on holding your own Carnegie Quiz:

- Get schools on board early and offer to visit their shadowing groups.
- If your library can afford it, buy extra sets of the shortlisted titles to loan out to the schools during the shadowing period.
- Alert the press: this kind of thing looks great in the local paper.
- Snacks are a must: we hold the quiz event right after school, so the young people are ravenous. Feed them.
- Share the work: ask colleagues to do the questions for their favourite title.
- Have enough staff and answer sheets at the ready to quickly tally the answer points. If necessary, ask a tie-breaker question- something numerical is good (e.g. how many teen books does your library carry).
- Have a local Carnegie Winner: the students to vote on their favourite shortlisted book as they filter into the library. We tally the votes during the quiz and announce an "Enfield Carnegie Winner" along with the quiz-team winners.

For examples of questions or quiz day timetables, contact [angela.shoosmith@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:angela.shoosmith@enfield.gov.uk)

## Event Ideas

### Screenprinting

An informative article on the hows of screenprinting courtesy of the Guardian.

<http://bit.ly/bKvEak>

This could be used to create posters for libraries as well as T-shirt design workshops.

### Boardgames

One idea for a no budget activity is to run a session based around board games (providing staff are willing to lend their games!) My TRG (at their own request) are going to play Cluedo after our discussion on "Hound of the Baskervilles" in June.

Edited by: Matthew Imrie

Articles by: Angela Shoosmith, Fiona Hukins, Liz Rose & Matthew Imrie

Special thanks go to Luisa Plaja for answering the Eight Questions With... interview

## Eight Questions With... Luisa Plaja

### **Q1 What made you decide to write for Teenagers?**

I've always loved teen fiction. My earliest attempts at writing for publication were short love stories for teen magazines and my first was published when I was 14. Being firmly into established adulthood hasn't changed my reading tastes, so writing for teenagers seems natural.

### **Q2 How do you get into the heads of your characters?**

I've worked for years as a Linguist, and I think a lot of it is rooted in word choice. I figure out how my characters speak - accent, favourite words, any catchphrases, style of humour, how likely they are to say what they really mean - and that's my starting point for discovering everything I need to know about them.

### **Q3 Do you know instinctively what will appeal to Teens or is it more a hit or miss process?**

I definitely write for myself and not with a teen audience in mind. I write about what appeals to me and I tell myself my favourite kinds of stories: about identity, romance, friendship, family and coming of age.

### **Q4 What is the most satisfying part of the writing process for you?**

Every stage has its ups and downs so it's hard to say! First drafts can be exhilarating. I don't plan (or if I do, I don't manage to stick to the plan) so when I write a first draft I surprise myself, sometimes pleasantly. Then I have to sit back and make sense of what I've written, which can be painful, but can also be fun. I love the final stages when the structure of the story is in place and I can fiddle with individual words. Since publication, however, I've discovered the most amazingly satisfying thing in the world: receiving messages from readers who've loved my stories.

### **Q5 Do you ever read the works of other Teen/YA authors? If yes what can you recommend?**

Yes, all the time! I edit a teen fiction news and review site called Chicklish (<http://www.chicklish.co.uk>). I've had a lot

less time to read recently, though, and I've been relying on input from other reviewers. I'm a fan of the more light-hearted end of the teen fiction spectrum and I love humour in books. Authors I recommend include Sarra Manning, Jaclyn Moriarty and Meg Cabot.

### **Q6 Are any of your novels based on personal experiences?**

There are definitely bits and pieces of my experience in all my books, but it's all fictionalised, of course! The culture shock in *Split by a Kiss* is partly based on time I spent in the USA. The girls in my second novel, *Extreme Kissing*, are from the London suburb where I grew up. My third novel is set on Dartmoor, near where I live now. More than locations, though, the novels are based on emotions I remember clearly from my teenage years.

### **Q7 What are you working on at the moment?**

Yes, I'm working on a sequel for *Split by a Kiss*. It's called *Swapped by a Kiss* and it's a body swap book, in the tradition of *Freaky Friday* by Mary Rodgers (a childhood favourite of mine). The main character is one of the American girls from the first book, and she swaps with a British character, reversing the culture shock. It will be out in April 2010, published by Corgi at Random House Children's Books.

### **Q8 Do you ever do Library visits to Teen Reading Groups? If yes, what is the best way to get into contact with you or your agent about it?**

I'd happily consider it and I have already been in touch with Devon Libraries. You can contact me through the form on my website: <http://www.luisaplaja.com>