



Editorial

Welcome all to the final edition of Teen Librarian Monthly for 2011!

This has been a rocky year for library services and has been mirrored in the life of Teen Librarian. Having lost my job as librarian due to the massive cuts in local authorities, I am now a school librarian. The uncertainty that the year has been filled with has affected the monthly release of TLM but from 2012 I am hoping to get back to a regular monthly release.

This month there is news of the latest Scottish book Trust authors live with Kjartan Poskitt.

Eileen Brock in Norfolk is also looking for help under teens got talent so if anyone can give her advice please send her an e-mail. Still staying with the looking for information there is a link to a new gaming in libraries survey for a CILIP Update article.

Those of us that live in or near London are lucky enough to get the chance to see the stage adaptation of Howl's Moving Castle at Southwark Playhouse. A reminder about the TS Eliot Poetry Shadowing I also included. I am a bit late to the Shout About School Libraries party but there is information on what it is and how to get involved. This month I am also resurrecting an old TLM idea – each month from now I will run a library activity idea and will be open to submissions of ideas old and new from subscribers.

The Eight Questions With... author interview this month is with Carnegie Award winning author Mal Peet.

In closing I would like to say thank you for reading and please feel free to send me ideas and articles for 2012!

Authors Live: Murderous Maths with Kjartan Poskitt



Date: Thursday 1st December

Time: 11am - 11.40am

Age group: P4-S2 (8 - 14 years)

Venue: Your classroom, library or home computer: <http://bit.ly/v8uANk>

If you miss the live event you can watch or download the video from 8th December 2011 using the same link.

Event info:

Kjartan Poskitt is a mathematician like no other: he will entertain pupils with maths tricks, crack them up with jokes about mathematical formula and engage pupils with complex algebra. This event will take place on Thursday 1st December 2011 at 11am. The nationwide event is part of the Meet our Authors programme, run by Scottish Book Trust, Scotland's leading agency for the promotion of literature, reading and writing and sponsored by Scottish Friendly Assurance, one of Scotland's leading providers of tax-free family savings and investment solutions.

Meet our Authors includes an exclusive series of authors' events streamed live over the internet to provide young people, parents and teachers with the chance to get up close and personal with some of the world's leading children's writers. The programme is the first of its kind in the UK. Anyone can watch by visiting: <http://bit.ly/v8uANk>

Kjartan Poskitt will be the 10th children's author to take part in the Meet our Authors project which began in 2010. To date more than 400,000 children across the UK have taken part in the webcasts
Author biography:

Kjartan is a freelance everything. Since getting his engineering degree he worked on Saturday morning TV (including BBC's Swap Shop!), presented science and maths programmes, warmed up thousands of studio audiences, toured his one man show, played a lot of pub pianos very loudly and has been Widow Twankey. In recent months he has been touring the country demonstrating mathematical tricks and oddities from his books.

His books have been translated in up to 20 languages and include the "Murderous Maths" series, "The Gobsmacking Galaxy", "Isaac Newton and his Apple", the "Warp Maze" with cartoonist Stephen Appleby, 4 books in his notorious "Killer Puzzles" series, handbooks on Practical Jokes and Secret Codes, 6 support books for the BBC Schools series "Megamaths" and a GCSE maths guide.

He has also written songs and scripts and worked as a games consultant for a wide range of children's TV shows and his music for TV includes the original theme for the BBC's "BRUM" and the long running "SMART" series.

Meet Our Authors on Facebook

We set up a Meet Our Authors Facebook page where you will find back ground information, interviews, video clips and weblinks all about the programme. We also feature a great competition for each of the events which you can enter (Facebook account needed).

<http://www.facebook.com/meetourauthors>

Teens Got Talent

Norfolk Library & Information Service continually investigates ways of attracting teens to the library. One of the recent brainstormed suggestions was to hold a 'Teens Got Talent' or 'Teen X Factor' event. Has anyone out there run one or something similar that they wouldn't mind sharing information about eg organising, music licences needed, what went well, pitfalls? If so please contact me:
eileen.brock(at)Norfolk[dot]gov[dot]uk

Gaming in Libraries Survey

Organised by John Kirriemuir to gather information for a forthcoming regular column in CILIP Update: <http://bit.ly/rFVNPk>

Howls Moving Castle: the Play



Fusing live action and pioneering projection, Southwark Playhouse's Christmas show will recreate the magic of Diana Wynne Jones' classic novel in our newest performance space, The Vault. **Howl's Moving Castle** will be directed and designed by **Davy and Kristin McGuire** ([The Icebook](#)) with original music composed by **Fyfe Dangerfield** (lead singer and songwriter of BRIT Award nominated British band [Guillemots](#)) and featuring narration from Stephen Fry.

Sophie is an 18 year old girl who toils in the hat shop opened years ago by her late father. One day she finds she has unexpectedly angered the evil Witch of the Waste and finds herself trapped within a spell that turns the young Sophie into an old woman.

Sophie takes shelter in the home of Howl, a

strange but flamboyant wizard whose magical castle can move between various lands and dimensions powered by Calcifer, a fire demon. She embarks on a journey to break her own spell and the one binding Howl and Calcifer together only to discover that there is a lot more to heartless Howl than meets the eye.

Suitable for all ages 7 upwards!
<http://southwarkplayhouse.co.uk/>

The T S Eliot Prize Shadowing Scheme 2011

A great way to introduce secondary school pupils to the best in contemporary poetry.

The T S Eliot Prize Shadowing Scheme provides an excellent opportunity for students to engage with the best new poetry by shadowing the judges of the T S Eliot Prize for Poetry. Two poems from ten collections shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize are available [to download](#) from 1 November.

The Shadowing Scheme is run by the Poetry Book Society in collaboration with the English and Media Centre. Students are encouraged to read the poems and to take part in a poll to vote for their choice of winner. There is also a competition for individual 'A' level (or equivalent) students to write the best 500 word rationale for their choice of poet.

Prizes for the winning student include tickets to the T S Eliot Readings and the award ceremony in January 2012, with the chance to meet the winning poet, and a complete set of the 10 shortlisted titles.

For further details, please visit the Poetry Book Society website at www.poetrybooks.co.uk/projects/15. The Scheme starts on 1st November and a teachers' guide is available on the emagazine website at www.emagazine.org.uk.

Shout About School Libraries and School Library Services

The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the School Library

Association (SLA) want everyone to start SHOUTING ABOUT School Libraries and Schools Library Services.

While recent media focus has been on the closure of public libraries, ASCEL, CILIP and the SLA are asking people to lend their voices to a major new campaign to lead the fight to ensure children and young people across the country have access to proper library resources whether on-site, as part of a cluster of schools or through local authorities' Schools Library Services.

School librarians and Schools Library Services expertise are essential in helping children navigate the digital world and improve information literacy skills. What use is a classroom of PCs connected to the internet if children don't know how to use them effectively?

CILIP Chief Executive Annie Mauger, who represents librarians working in both the public and private sector explains, "A library is more than a room full of books. It should be run by trained professionals who encourage reading, advise on using information and help children develop essential literacy and research skills. All children and young people should have access to the benefits they bring. Currently this is not the case. We are launching this campaign to SHOUT ABOUT the great job librarians in school libraries and school library services do and the threats they are facing"

A recent study for the Times Education Supplement (TES) found that some 600, 000 children no longer had access to a Schools Library Service.

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/shoutabout>

Activity Ideas: From Page to Screen

This is a fairly old and well-used idea for running with teen library groups but with the plethora of films based on YA titles having been released, and even more coming up it may be time to dust it off and possibly even run a year of cinematic YA fiction. The first novel I will suggest is *I know what You Did Last Summer* by Lois Duncan, originally released in 1973 it was loosely adapted into a slasher film. According to what I have read, Lois was banned from the set during filming and was not impressed with the movie once it was done. This could also be used to generate discussion about the differences between the films and the novels they were based on. As an additional research activity, group members can be set the task of researching authors reactions to books that have been filmed.

So far the film I am most looking forward to in 2012 is the adaptation of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* due for release in March 2012. The actress Jennifer Lawrence who plays Katniss Everdeen also had a lead role on the film *Winter's Bone* which was based on the novel of the same name by Daniel Woodrell. The films and novels could all be compared and contrasted which, depending on the teen audience could fill up hours of conversation.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chobsky

Other recent adaptations include:

- *The Secret of the Unicorn* by Herge
- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney
- *I am Number Four* by Pittacus Lore
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte the latest adaptation of this novel is notable for being the first to feature Black British actors as Heathcliff - Solomon Glave and James Howson as the young and older versions.
- *Breaking Dawn* part 1 by Stephenie Meyer scarcely needs a mention as does *Harry Potter and the Deathly*

Hallows part 2 by J.K. Rowling but I will throw them in anyway.

- *Sherlock Holmes 2* – based on the character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, it may also be worth comparing the Victorian films with the modernised television version and the books.
- *The Eagle of the Ninth* by Rosemary Sutcliffe
- *Beastly* by Alex Flinn
- *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo is due imminently
- *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick

Slightly older adaptations:

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Journey to the Centre of the Earth by Jules Verne

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

Coraline by Neil Gaiman

It is not only on the big screen that you can find YA novels, several have made their way onto the television:

- *The Vampire Diaries* by L.J. Smith
- *Gossip Girl* by Cecily von Ziegesar
- *Pretty Little Liars* by Sara Shepard

The titles I have detailed here are just a fraction of the available adaptations, it is possible to run a monthly Page to Screen club for over a year if that is what you would like to do. If not you could always keep a talk prepared, and possibly also show the film to the group (with the appropriate permissions from the distributor).

Q1 What influenced your decision to write for teenagers?

Well, I'd spent about ten years writing for primary school children and I'd got a bit bored. So I thought I'd jump up an age-range or two. I wrote *Keeper* as a teen novel, then I started getting fan letters from kids aged between nine and twelve. So I thought, 'OK, I got that wrong, age-wise.' In the following books I cranked up the subject-matter and the style, made the books a bit more demanding, more 'grown up'. Lately, critics have accused me of writing 'adult' books disguised as Teen Fiction. I happen to think that teenagers will read anything they like or think is good, so what the hell.

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

It's a weird process that I only partly understand. I start with the bare bones of a story-line. Then I ask myself 'If this character does the things I want him or her to do, what kind of person does he/she need to be?' In this way, a shadowy figure emerges from the mist. Then I make it speak. I try to get the voice, first. If I get that right, the character takes on a life of its own. Sometimes my characters will do or say things that surprise me. I start to discover who they are. It's not a process that I'm in complete control of.

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

Neither. I'm not young, so obviously I don't have a 'teen instinct'. But of course I know what teenagers are reading. A quick glance at the best-seller lists or the internet will tell you that. At the risk of sounding snotty, I'm not very interested in writing the kind of genre stuff that's already popular. (Although I'd probably be richer if I did.) Lovesick vampires and teenage secret agents bore me. I try to write the kind of books that I would like if I were a teenager. That I'd have liked to have read back then, if they'd existed.

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

Now and again – once a day, if I'm lucky - I write a bit that surprises me by being better than what I had in my head.

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

I'm a huge admirer of both Patrick Ness and Philip Reeve because they do brilliantly what I can't do at all, which is write huge, multi-part narratives that are full of invention but make sense as a whole. Meg Rosoff is wicked in both the original and modern sense of the word. Tim Bowler's books all have a beautiful, passionate darkness. Geraldine McCaughrean and Anne Fine both write magical prose. But the best two books I've read recently that are about being a teenager aren't written by 'Teen' novelists. They are *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell and *A Complicated Kindness* by Miriam Toews.

Q6 Are any of your novels based on personal experiences?

That's a tricky question. Your personal experiences, especially your emotional experiences, are always there in your writing. I mean, what else have you got to work with? But unless you're writing a straight autobiography or memoir, they're reshaped and filtered to suit the purposes of the story. I have vivid memories of my footballing days, but they didn't take place in a South American jungle, like *El Gato's*. My most recent novel, *Life: an Exploded Diagram* is sort of autobiographical in that like its central character, Clem, I grew up as a working-class boy in Norfolk and was a teenager during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He resembles me, but isn't me. His family resembles mine, but not that closely. And very unfortunately I never had a love affair with a sexy posh girl called Frankie. But hey, if you can't reinvent your life, what's the point of being a novelist?

Q7 Are you working on anything new at the moment or do you have anything planned?

I'm always working on something. It may look like I'm only gazing blankly at the wall, but I call it work. I'm about halfway through a novel with two interlocking story-lines. One is about a crazy religious cult in 1920s Canada, the other is the misadventures of a mixed-race orphan from Liverpool who is deported to Canada to be a farm boy. Both parts are based on historical facts, but I've taken outrageous liberties with them. I've also got

parts of three other novels lurking somewhere on my hard drive and sometimes my attention wanders off in their direction.

Q8 Do you ever do library visits to Teen Reading Groups?

Sure. I'm doing two sessions later this month at my local library, in fact. I think they're a great idea, and I always (well, nearly always) enjoy them and get a lot out of them, although, when I'm really deep into a new book or up against a deadline I sometimes have to say No. They're usually arranged through Ruth, my publicist at Walker Books: ruth.maurice@walker.co.uk