

TeenLibrarian

Monthly Newsletter

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BRAVEREADER

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Editorial

Welcome to the July issue of Teen Librarian Monthly!

For many of us in School Libraries the end of the school year is upon us and for our friends and colleagues in the Public Library Service the Summer Reading Challenge has begun. To those School Librarians beginning their summer holidays I wish you all a great break, for Public Librarians I say good luck with the influx of keen young readers! I will be working for most of the summer sorting out the amalgamation of Senior & Junior School Libraries (more news on that in August or September).

There has been a lot going on in the Library and Book worlds! The 80th Carnegie and 60th Kate Greenaway Medals were awarded – and yes my predictions last month were a bit off but I cannot fault the judge's choices! Still sticking with CKG – the first meeting focusing on CKG and Diversity was held on the 12th July, I am looking forward to hearing news on what was discussed in due course!

The past month was also exciting on a personal note as on the 17th July I participated in the @YAFictionados #YATakeover on twitter and interviewed Neil Gaiman, our chat focused on his Carnegie Medal winning novel *The Graveyard Book*, you can read the interview here:

<http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2017/06/18/yatakeover-neil-gaiman-interview/>

The other exciting news is that in June the National Library of Scotland picked up on some of the posters I have designed and tweeted an image of my Star Wars Library poster which was retweeted by Mark Hamill (more details here: <http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2017/06/29/mark-hamill-tweeted-my-star-wars-poster/>)

This month the main feature is a report by Librarian Pamela Berry on Lightbulb Moments - the joint School Library Association and Youth Libraries Group Conference that took place in Harrogate at the end of June.

Before you get to that comprehensive and informative read we have news on the launch of the Scottish School Library Development Strategy, links to two book lists and two posters that are free to download for library use.

TLM also has news about US Publisher Quirk Books BookPOP offer to Librarians in the US and UK as well as a link to the New York Times Guide on How to Raise a Reader.

Bravereader: the Scottish School Library Development Strategy

On the 4th July news broke that owing to a sustained campaign by dedicated school library campaigners, the Scottish government has agreed to work on developing a school library strategy.

Full details are available on the CILIP Scotland site here:

<http://www.cilips.org.uk/development-school-library-strategy-begin-autumn/>

Book Lists

During June and July I put together two book lists ahead of the new school year, the first one is a list of Feminist Fiction, Graphic Novels & Non-Fiction and can be accessed here:

<http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2017/06/26/feminist-fiction-graphic-novels-non-fiction-a-list-in-progress/>

The second is a list of 11 titles dealing with Sex & Sexuality advice for teenagers:

<http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2017/07/03/sex-sexuality-11-books-for-teens/>

Posters

I put together *Bravereader* to celebrate the Scottish School Library Development strategy – you can see it on the cover of this issue of Teen Librarian Monthly, if anyone would like to download a copy you may do so here:

<http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2017/07/04/scottish-school-library-development-strategy/>



The television version of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* was released in June, to promote the books in the library I made poster with the famous pig-latin motto *Nolite te Bastardes Carborundum* (Don't Let the Bastards Grind You Down). Somewhat ironically I was told to censor the poster as *Bastardes* was considered unsuitable for a school environment, so there are two versions to choose from here:

<http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2017/06/26/poster-nolites-te-bastardes-carborundum/>

#SLAYLG17 Conference Report

~Pamela Berry

In the lead-up to this year's joint SLA + YLG conference, dubbed #SLAYLG17, I often joked to my friends that really it was a ruse. SLAYLG was for trainee watchers, not for librarians who focus on youth literature and non-fiction for minors.

By the close of the conference, it was clearly both.

Now, as any Buffy fan will tell you, a watcher is a trainer or guardian for a slayer (girl who is meant to save the world by killing monsters and demons and vampires). They are usually British trained librarians, partly due to the location of the watcher's council, in London. As a watcher's role often requires a lot of research, teaching ability and adaptability to the lives of their typically teenage charges.

#SLAYLG17 was my first proper librarian conference. At the time of writing this, I am still completing my masters in library and information management, and currently hold the student chair of the North West YLG. I often find reports boring, a tad clinical, though necessary. The point of this article is to illustrate what it was like to be at the SLA-YLG conference, and a diary log feels the best way forward.

It was expensive to attend, as these things usually are. My advice for those of you considering masters yourselves in the future, start saving a little pot of money somewhere where you can't touch it. Even if you only put a pound a week in, you'll need it so that you can attend events such as an SLA or YLG conference, providing you have membership of the appropriate group. I know I can

safely say it was the option of a Harry Potter fancy dress dinner party on the Friday evening that really sold it to me. As a proud member of Hufflepuff, I was determined to do my house proud. I didn't win the fancy dress competition though, that prize went to a lady dressed as Rita Skeeter. But a little more on that later.

The residential weekend conference itself ran from Friday lunch time to Sunday lunch time on the weekend of 23-25th June 2017. The theme was lightbulb moments, powered by librarians, held at the Majestic hotel in Harrogate. It was held as a joint conference this year due to celebrating the 80th anniversary of the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway medals. If you want to know a little more about the Carnegie, then look up the Carnegie anniversary blog by Jake Hope, who is the current vice-chair of the YLG (at the time of writing).

On arrival at the hotel, I checked in, registered for the conference and at finding I didn't know anyone present, I asked a group of school librarians, who turned out to be from the north-west if I could join them for tea /coffee whilst we waited for lunch to be served before starting the day's activities. I've since kept in touch with a few of them via twitter.

Following lunch, the exhibition opened and we were led to the formal welcome and introduction, which explained what was going to happen during the weekend. The exhibition, is basically the room where all the displays from the various companies, reps and publishers' houses attending the conference were kept. I don't think I've ever seen as many ARCS / Proofs in my life as I did in that room.

The formal introduction was hosted by the chairs of the SLA and YLG, and had various readings from the children's poet, Sue Hardy-Dawson, who is based in Harrogate.

Following on was a presentation from Amnesty international and Chicken Shed theatre, 'Dreams of Freedom'. The two presenters talked about how the amnesty award as part of the CILIP Carnegie scheme came to be, how chicken shed started and how the two groups came to be working together on various children's theatre projects in the coming weeks and in the future. My favourite moment from their talk was how they could show the positive effect that chicken shed was having on children, and how books were helping children to express themselves in ways that they had previously found difficult.

After this there was an option to attend a 75th famous five birthday tea with the publisher Anne McNeil, however, due to poor signage I was unable to find the location for it, something which happened again on the Saturday morning 'breakfast sessions'.

Lost room hiccups aside, the following session was a presentation by Paula Wride, a librarian and archivist from the well-beloved children's literature archives, Seven Stories. This focused on the legacy of Eileen Colwell, who was a pioneer in the field of children's librarians, and a founder of the Carnegie award. Eileen herself was one of the first people to insist that children should be allowed their own library, tailored to their needs.

This led into the publishers' roadshow, during which various publishers did very fast 'elevator pitches' about the books they had brought proofs or advance copies of with them so that the librarians and book buyers (for school or public libraries) could see what the hottest and newest titles for next year would be. My favourite pitch came from Anderson press who wore 'votes for women' sashes to promote a new YA title inspired by the suffragette movement. As a Mancunian (Manchester is the birthplace of Emmeline Pankhurst) it is a piece of history that is very dear to my heart. I had spoken to Harriet from Anderson Press very briefly earlier in the day and explained my own link to Manchester's feminist history, she saved me a proof of that title.

After the roadshow, everyone dashed off to their rooms to get ready for the Harry Potter 20th anniversary dinner. I'd made my own version of a Hufflepuff uniform for the party, and was easily the first-person ready to go.

There was a short drinks reception to celebrate Bounce's 15th, at which various authors were meant to be in attendance, but I was far too busy taking pictures with everyone in costume to notice who was present. There were some amazing efforts including Luna Lovegood, Remus Lupin, Professor Trelauney, Mad-eye Moody, Rita Skeeter, death eaters, Hagrid, moaning Myrtle, several Hogwarts students and one woman had worn a dress with all the original book covers printed upon it.



The dining room had been decorated with themed bunting and posters, and each guest had a bookmark, door hanger and stickers at their seat, along with a quiz sheet and two bottles of wine on every table. I sat with the school librarians who I had met earlier in the day, and so my table comprised of Mad-Eye Moody, Rita Skeeter, Luna Lovegood, two Gryffindor students and two muggles.

Part way through the dinner, the winners of the fancy dress competition were announced. Rita Skeeter came 1st, Hagrid was 2nd, and moaning Myrtle, complete with toilet seat was 3rd. The atmosphere in the room was great, as a casual cosplayer myself I was enjoying seeing how much effort everyone had put into their outfits.

Later, after eating, we had a talk from Laura Dockrill, YA author of *Aurabel*, (and other children's books) and the upcoming *Big Bones*. Laura did readings from a few of her books and signed the sampler of *Big Bones* for me. Unfortunately, the wine had gone to my head after the long day so I didn't join everyone at the bar after leaving the dining room, and went to bed instead.

Saturday 24th

I got up around 7.30 am on the Saturday, feeling a little tired but otherwise ok. I joined a few people who I recognised from the North West YLG committee for breakfast. There were more vegan options at breakfast than I had expected to see, and so I filled up as much as I could as portion sizes the day before had been even smaller than the vegetarian options, which were smaller than the omni food options. So, if any of you reading this are vegan, my advice is to pack a box of snack bars such as Perkier or Nakd just in case you don't get enough to eat.

I had hoped to attend the *Aliens Love Underpants* 10th Anniversary breakfast session but unfortunately couldn't find the room. Ah Well!

At 8:50am there was a Welcome to the Day introduction for the day delegates, leading into "The Big Debate: Has the Carnegie Medal helped or hindered getting controversial books published?" This

discussion was led by Joy Court, with the main discussion between authors Melvin Burgess, Kevin Crossley-Holland, Gillian Cross, Will Hill and Lisa Heathfield with the publisher's perspective from Liz Cross of Oxford Children's Books. Key points raised during the discussion was how few YA titles make it into the winning selection for the Carnegie award, but also how the award has highlighted titles that have had controversial topics woven into their main plots.

As part of the conference, attendees could select optional sessions to attend during the Saturday. Selection took place prior to arrival. The first session optional session started at 9.45am, ending at 11am with a coffee morning to celebrate 30 years of *Where's Wally*. We all received *Where's Wally* tote bags as part of it.

The first session was looking at 'Illuminating inclusion', as led by Jake Hope. Eagle eyed readers might remember Jake from the Carnegie anniversary blogs during which Jake has been reading and reviewing all the past winning titles, which is no mean feat, especially as being a part of the Carnegie team means reading all 140 long list titles as part of the role. This session looked at themes of inclusion within children's and YA fiction. The author, Glenda Millard, whose novel, *Stars at Oktober bend* was shortlisted for the Carnegie award was meant to be present to discuss her novel, but couldn't make it due to illness. Instead, her publisher stepped in her place to deliver a reading from the novel.

Following on from the *Where's Wally* coffee morning, the second session focused on 'Teenage mental health & reading'. This session was led by Nicola Morgan, a leading expert in children's mental health, and writer of mental health guides for children. The authors who took part were Sara Barnard, Tamsin Winter and Katie Thistleton. Both of Sara and Tamsin's latest novels look at selective mutism aimed at different age brackets, as *A Quiet kind of thunder* is YA, and *Being Miss Nobody* is aimed at 9-11+ readers.

Katie Thistleton, who some may recognise as being a host of CBBC (I must admit that the only reason I knew who she was is from watching the remake of *The Worst Witch*, on CBBC) has a book due out later this year, entitled *Dear Katie* in which Katie, with the help of a team of suitable experts and advisors, invited fans to write letters to her in which she might give them advice, the outcomes of which were added to the book. Katie did explain that some of the letters she had received were truly heart-breaking, and that she and her team arranged for help for those people as she knew that their needs were greater than the book would be able to offer. These submissions were not included to protect the privacy of those individuals. Main topics that will be included in the final book will include advice on how to deal with bullying, making friends, first kiss, and where to get advice for various topics that might not have been included.

Lunch was held at 12.55 – 1.55, with the third session after that. For the third session, which was led by Amy McKay, winner of the librarian of the year award, was entitled 'stealth librarian'. This was easily one of my favourite talks of the conference, and one of the two occasions where the idea of a librarian being a watcher joins into one. The main section of Amy's session was how she teaches the pupils at her school how to survive a zombie apocalypse. Dealing with zombies 101 is something a watcher would know exactly what to do about. Now, zombies aren't real, unless you're doing a zombie walk of course. However, the point of the exercise was to encourage participants to think about all the types of fiction they consume, as well as to build familiarity with the library. I'll admit I'm rather jealous of the pupils that get to take part in some of Amy's activities as they looked amazing. If I ever get to work as a school librarian, or in a situation where the audience is YA, this is something I want to run.

The final optional session of the day I'd opted for the exhibition. If any of you reading this get attend a similar conference, always opt to do the exhibition last. The pictures of my haul will explain why!



During the exhibition, attendees get the opportunity to speak with publishers, and pick up arcs, proofs, samples and advance copies of books. As many exhibitors bring finished and currently released books, you can often get some of these as well if you time it right as they don't usually want to take books home with them again. My favourites that I received included the hardback V&A edition of *Little Women*, Hufflepuff edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and *Goodbye Days* by Jeff Zentner.



At 16.25 there was a tea break with 'Dear Zoo @ 35'. The author, Rod Campbell in conversation with Stephanie Barton. This session was quite sweet, as Rod explained the inspiration behind some of his characters, including how Buster was based on the child of a neighbour of whom he had spent time with and had adored very much. It was great to see some of the sketches that were used in the creation of his books.

Following on from Rod Campbell's talk was a speech by Chris Riddell, 'My Love Affair with Librarians', introduced by Kevin Crossley-Holland. Chris set up an overhead projector and did a live drawing of Kevin Crossley-Holland, whilst Kevin talked about some of the work that he and Chris had done leading up to Chris becoming (now former) children's laureate and how Chris Riddell himself feels about librarians. Chris also showed some of his other sketches and shared anecdotes from his work history as well as a few light-hearted jokes looking at the current socio-political situation in the UK.

After the speech from Chris Riddell with Kevin Crossley-Holland, everyone went to get dressed for the Gala dinner. As it was a more formal occasion, I opted for a blue 50's style dress for the gala dinner. After getting ready, I joined everyone for a drinks reception which lead into the formal ballroom where the exhibition had been previously held. We were informed that we had a present from Lane Smith, as he was disappointed that he could not make the occasion, and so we all received a signed copy of the Kate Greenaway award winning book, *There was a Tribe of Kids*.

During the dinner, several speeches were given, including Carnegie, Kate Greenaway and Amnesty Honour Presentations and YLG Honorary Membership (given to Chris Riddell). After food was served, the guests could approach the authors present to have their books signed. I had books by Chris Riddell, Gillian Cross, Lauren Child signed, along with a proof of Sarah Crossan's new novel signed as

well. Anne Fine was present, and I had hoped to have her sign a book for me, but she left early due to illness in her family.

After the gala dinner there was the option to go into the bar, but I opted to go pack my bags ready for the following morning.

Sunday 25th

I got up around 7am and went down to breakfast, then attended the breakfast session, 'A Murder Mystery Breakfast with Katherine Woodfine and Robin Stevens'. Unfortunately, Katherine Woodfine herself was not present as her mother was ill and she stayed home to help her out. During the session, Robin Stevens talked about her novel, *The Guggenheim Mystery*, the sequel to Siobhan O'Dowd's *The London Eye Mystery*. Of which she was approached by the Siobhan O'Dowd trust to work on the book. Robin also had audience members vote on elements of a fictional crime which was then solved by Robin.

A very short AGM (think general committee members meeting) for the YLG was held at 9am, followed by an AGM for the SLA. I opted to use the time during the SLA AGM to check out of my room prior to attending the welcome introduction for the day at 9.50am.

After introductions were given, the first talk of the day was looking at 'The Forgotten Tradition of Radical Children's Literature and its Relevance Today' by Professor Kim Reynolds (Newcastle University and OUP). Elements of the talk looked at youth self-publishing and at Enid Blyton's work in which the female had equal roles with the male (famous five is an example of this). The talk ended with a reading from *we found a hat* by Jon Klassen which was quite pleasant, as I am used to reading stories to children at my local public library, it's been a very long time since somebody has read to me.

There was a short comfort break before the next talk, which was David Almond and Lauren Child in conversation. Both authors talked about highlights of their careers and Lauren's hopes for her children's laureate role.

Following on from this was the last talk of the day, 'Young People's Mental Health and Reading' by Natasha Devon, Self Esteem Team. Natasha's talk highlighted how there is a growing need to help young people navigate societal and peer pressure as the online world is harder to escape from, and how targeted advertising can encourage more self-shaming now more than ever. Natasha showed some of the activities she runs during her school sessions and gave examples of reactions that school pupils often had during her sessions. The message that I took away from Natasha's talk is how we (as librarians, supporters, teachers) need to provide teens and young people with the tools they need to avoid mental health issues being created or made worse, including showing boys and young men that there is more than one way to be strong. And also to show girls and young women that the images they aspire to are often false (eg photoshop, sfx).

Afterwards, there was a short closing remarks talk from the SLA and YLG Chairs leading into the farewell lunch at 1pm and then home time!

Hope you've all enjoyed my diary log of the SLA + YLG conference! Check out #SLAYLG17 on twitter for pictures and conference highlights by some of the speakers and attendees.

Pamela, @puffybooks

